PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2004–05

COMPRISING PERIOD
21 February—10 March 2005

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21 February 2005

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 21 February 2005

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Countries at Risk of Instability

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit published on 17 February a report entitled "Investing in Prevention: An International Strategy to Manage Risks of Instability and Improve Crisis Response". I will place copies of this report to Government in the Library of the House today. It follows the publication by the Strategy Unit in November 2003 of its Strategic Audit, which recommended increased strategic focus on instability and conflict prevention. The report contains the Strategy Unit's analysis of the main risk factors associated with conflict and instability and a series of recommendations by the Strategy Unit for how to address these. Preventing conflict and building stability are fundamental to the Government's foreign policy. This report by the Strategy Unit provides further material on which to draw in support of this agenda and Departments will be looking carefully at its recommendations.

TRANSPORT

Air Transport Judicial Reviews

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): On Friday 18 February, the High Court endorsed the key policies of the Air Transport White Paper, published in December 2003 (Command paper 6046). This judgment means that the Government's support for two new runways in the south-east of England in the period up to 2030 has been upheld.

I have arranged for copies of the judgment (case reference CO/1314/2004 and CO/1339/2004) to be available in the Library of the House.

Following the judgment, the Government will continue to support a new runway at Stansted as the first new runway in the south-east. It is for the airport operator to bring forward detailed proposals. These will be taken through the planning system in the normal way.

The Judge agreed that the decision making process which led to the adoption of the policies in the White Paper was lawful subject to two minor qualifications. These were that the Government were too prescriptive with regard to the exact positioning and capacity of the runways at Stansted and Luton—this should be a matter for a planning inquiry. At Luton the airport operator's option will need full consultation before being taken forward.

These are very important matters for local people and they will be able to express their views at a future planning inquiry, but the Government strongly agree with the Judge's comments that these are minor in relation to the national policies set out in the White Paper. The main thrust of the White Paper has been upheld and the Government will not therefore be appealing.

Together with the decision taken by the Judge on 21 January to dismiss the Judicial Review application in relation to the policy on Gatwick Airport, this judgment leaves the way open for the Government to pursue their White Paper programme.

This judgment allows the Government to pursue their objectives as set out in the White Paper and I confirm that we will do so as efficiently and effectively as possible.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Industrial Injuries and Prescribed Diseases

The Minister for Work (Jane Kennedy): The Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) Amendment Regulations 2005 were laid before Parliament on Friday 18 February 2005. The regulations implement, from 7 March 2005, the recommendations set out in the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council's reports "Osteoarthritis of the Hip" (Cm 5977) and "Conditions due to Biological Agents" (Cm 5997).

The recommendations made in these reports were that three diseases should be added to the list of prescribed diseases and the prescription for five existing diseases be amended.

The three additional diseases were:

Osteoarthritis of the hip in farmers. Osteoarthritis of the hip is a disabling condition common in the general population. However, robust evidence was found that the risk of osteoarthritis of the hip was consistently increased in farmers employed for 10 years or more.

Lyme disease for workers exposed to a source of borrelia. This disease has emerged relatively recently. Evidence indicates that there is a greater than doubled risk of contracting Lyme disease in certain groups of workers exposed to borrelia bacteria (the causative agent of Lyme disease).

Anaphylaxis in healthcare workers exposed to natural rubber latex products. Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening form of allergic reaction which can be triggered in individuals sensitised by a variety of allergens encountered inside and outside the work environment. However, the most common occupational cause of anaphylaxis in which sensitisation has occurred in the workplace is exposure to natural rubber latex products. There is clear evidence of increased risk of occupational sensitisation in healthcare workers.

Five existing diseases are to be amended:

Anthrax. Anthrax is generally contracted by exposure to infected herbivorous animals or their products, as reflected in the current prescription. There is potential for infection in other circumstances therefore the prescription has been widened to include work involving contact with anthrax spores.

Ankylostomiasis. This disease was originally prescribed in relation to mining. This disease is now rare in the developed world, but remains common in other parts of world. The potential exists for ankylostomiasis to be contracted abroad and introduced into the workforce. The prescription has been revised to refer to any work involving contact with sources of ankylostomiasis to reflect the modern day occupational risk.

Viral hepatitis. Recent evidence shows different types of viral hepatitis are contracted in different ways which affects the type of workers at risk. There was evidence of consistently increased risk for i) infection by hepatitis A for work involving contact with raw sewage, ii) infection by hepatitis B and C for work involving human blood or blood products or other sources of hepatitis B and C viruses.

Occupational asthma and allergic rhinitis. The use of natural rubber latex products is widespread. Many individuals encounter latex products during the course of their work and evidence indicates there is increased risk of developing hypersensitivity to the latex, which include rhinitis and asthma. Exposure to natural rubber latex products has been added to the list of prescribed causes of occupational asthma and allergic rhinitis.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 22 February 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Spring Supplementary Estimate

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. David Miliband): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Cabinet Office DEL will be decreased by £3,953,000 from £258,005,000 to £254,052,000.The gross administration costs limits will be decreased by £1,753,000 from £217,028,000 to £215,275,000 and the net administration cost limits decreased by £2,155,000 from £2,97 7,000 to £822,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

£'000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	-3,953	254,052	0	254,052
Capital	-2,000	29,000	0	29,000
Depreciation*	0	-50,147	0	-50,147
Total	-5,953	232,905	0	232,905

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from a machinery of government transfer of £370,000 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Internal Audit Service, transfer of £8,489,000 parliamentary counsel office funding to other Government Departments, draw down of end-year flexibility of £5,000,000 to cover anticipated cost pressures, transfer of £45,000 to the security and intelligence agencies (SIA) to cover resource cost of a modernisation project and the transfer of £49,000 from the countries at risk of instability (CRI) budget back to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from the transfer of £2,000,000 capital to SIA towards a modernisation project.

TREASURY

Spring Supplementary Estimate (Inland Revenue)

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Inland Revenue departmental expenditure limit will be increased by £133,643,000 from £3,358,210,000 to £3,491,853,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £94,530,000 from £3,075,757,000 to £3,170,287,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

£'000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	94,530	2,846,006	331,418	3,177,424
Capital	39,113	314,429	-	314,429
Depreciation*	-27,813	-180,408	-	-180,408
Total	105,830	2,980,027	331,418	3,311,445

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from increases in gross administration costs, mainly, £61,544,000 met from the central reserve to enable the GOGGS East building to be brought onto the Department's balance sheet. A further increase of £29,000,000 and £3,400,000, which is also being met from the central reserve for continued work on child trust fund and for team bonus payments, respectively. The Treasury are to transfer £99,000, for the cost of capital in respect of the GOGGS East building. Cabinet Office will be transferring £1,790,000, due to the change in funding arrangements for the Parliamentary Counsel Office; and, Department for Work and Pensions are transferring £1,661,000, for child benefit work on the payment modernisation programme and the child benefit cheque payment service. These transfers are partially off set by a transfer of £2,964,000 to the Treasury to meet the costs of the transfer of tax policy work for the first half of the financial year.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from an increase of £97,477,000 from the central reserve to enable the GOGGS East building to be brought onto the Department's balance sheet. This increase is partially offset by an accounting adjustment of £58,364,000, in relation to the assets transferred to CapGemini the Department's new IT service provider.

Spring Supplementary Estimates (National Savings and Investments)

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Stephen Timms): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, National Savings and Investments DEL will be *increased* by £5,500,000 from £172,026,000 to £177,526,000 and the administration costs limits will be *increased* by £5,500,000 from £172,026,000 to £177,526,000. Within DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are set out in the table:

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	5,500	177,526		177,526
Capital		500		500
Depreciation*		-2,860		-2,860
Total	5,500	175,166		175,166

** Depreciation which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from end year flexibility being drawn down to support expenditure on major project commitments. Such projects include the work being carried out for compliance with evidence of identity requirements, Internet development work and also for some of the

savings accounts implementation. There have also been some planned increases in the level of direct marketing expenditure that is being carried out to ensure that net financing targets are being met.

There is no change in the capital element of DEL.

Spring Supplementary Estimates (Office for National Statistics)

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Stephen Timms): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Office for National Statistics DEL will increase by £12,631,000 from £178,004,000 to £190,635,000. The Office for National Statistics winter supplementary incorrectly overstated the administration costs limit. This supplementary corrects the position. The administration costs limit will increase by £4,472,000 from £152,990,000 to £157,462,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

£'000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	4,472	157,811	-	157,811
Capital	8,159	32,824	-	32,824
Depreciation *	-	-13,837	-	-13,837
Total	12,631	176,798	-	176,798

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from the draw down of £4,679,000 administration costs end year flexibility as set out in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (Cm 6293). This is partially offset by a transfer of £207,000 in total to other Government Departments in relation to work to develop the neighbourhood statistics programme. The transfers comprise £171,000 to the Home Office and £36,000 to HM Customs and Excise.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from the draw down of £8,229,000 capital end year flexibility as set out in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (Cm 6293). This is partially offset by a transfer of £70,000 to HM Customs and Excise in relation to work to develop the neighbourhood statistics programme.

The administration costs limit will be increased by £4,472,000 from £152,990,000 to £157,462,000.

Spring Supplementary Estimates (HM Customs and Excise)

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the HM Customs and Excise departmental expenditure limit will be increased by £135,698,000 from £1,407,608,000 to £1,543,306,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £34,018,000 from £1,218,491,000 to £1,252,509,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	51,418	1,378,450	-	1,378,450
Capital	84,280	163,856	1,000	164,856
Depreciation*	-53,168	-97,948	-	-97,948
Total	82,530	1,444,358	1,000	1,445,358

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

administration costs increases of £53,168,000 from the Central Reserve to enable the GOGGS East building to be brought onto the Department's balance sheet; a transfer of £85,000 from HM Treasury for the cost of capital charges in respect of GOGGS; and a transfer of £36,000 from the Office for National Statistics in respect of data development work. These are partially offset by a transfer of £1,271,000 to HM Treasury to meet the costs of the transfer of tax policy work for the first half of the financial year and virement from administration costs to programme expenditure of £18,000,000; and

programme expenditure changes relating to virement from administration costs to programme expenditure of £18,000,000; and a transfer to the Home Office to meet additional costs of anti-terrorism work of £600,000.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from increases of £84,210,000 from the central reserve to enable the GOGGS East building to be brought onto the Department's balance sheet; and £70,000 from the Office for National Statistics in respect of data development work.

Spring Supplementary Estimates (Government Actuary's Department)

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Stephen Timms): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Government Actuary's departmental expenditure limit will be increased by £130,000 from £1,309,000 to £1,439,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	0	1,071	-	1,071
Capital	130	368	0	368
Depreciation*	0	-416	-	-416
Total	130	1,023	0	1,023

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from the partial draw down of capital end-year flexibility (EYF) of £130,000. This is required to meet the costs arising from the replacement of pension's valuation software and the implementation of a document management system.

Spring Supplementary Estimates (HM Treasury)

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, HM Treasury DEL will be increased by £6,383,000 from £251,764,000 to £258,147,000 and the

administration costs limits will be increased by £7,883,000 from £152,509,000 to £160,392,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	7,883,000	212,597,000	37,975,000	250,572,000
Capital	-1,500,000	7,575,000	0	7,575,000
Depreciation*	-8,638,000	-16,292,000	0	-16,292,000
Total	-2,255,000	203,880,000	37,975,000	241,855,000

* *Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

an increase in total Treasury administrative costs of £7,883,000 resulting from:

the Treasury's offices at 1 Horse Guards Road being held at a valuation based on commercial property market rents. There are indications of a fall in market rents in the Victoria/Whitehall area during 2004–05, which would give rise to an accounting charge. To cover the estimated charge, £9,000,000 will be drawn from a fund of End Year Flexibility (EYF) ring fenced for the purpose;

the Treasury's Spending Review 2002 settlement set in-year administration funding at a level lower than forecast spending, anticipating that the shortfall would be met from a draw down of EYF. The projected shortfall in 2004–05 is up to £3,000,000, which will be drawn from EYF accordingly;

the funding consequences of the transfer of tax policy functions from the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise to the Treasury. These were partly dealt with in the Winter Supplementary Estimate, but a further £4,235,000 of funding in relation to the first part of 2004–05 remains to be transferred to the Treasury in order to properly account for the transfer, in accordance with the *Resource Accounting Manual*;

a transfer of £184,000 from HM Treasury to the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise for the cost of capital on GOGGS East land following its transfer to said departments;

the completion of the refurbishment of 1 Parliament Street (the east end of the building formerly known as Government Offices Great George Street), this required the Treasury to transfer assets relating to 1 Parliament Street from its books to the books of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. There is an accounting profit of £8,168,000 to the Treasury on the disposal;

an increase in the Office of Government Commerce' (OGC) appropriations in aid (A in A) of £725,000 and a matching £725,000 increase in expenditure for the engagement of consultants on behalf of other bodies;

an increase in A in A programme of £300,000 and a matching £300,000 increase in spend for the Office of Paymaster General to bring the Estimate in line with forecasts;

an increase in A in A programme of £240,000 and a matching £240,000 increase in spend for Pool Re renegotiation costs;

a DEL neutral switch of £1,390,000 programme from non-voted to voted for Request for Resources 3 from the OGC's Efficiency Challenge Fund allocation; and

a decrease in A in A programme of £875,000 and a matching £875,000 decrease in spend due to the transfer of the Whitehall Systems[1] from OGC to OGCbuying.solutions.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

a partial draw down of capital eyf of £22,433,000 and the subsequent transfer of that funding to Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise for the transfer of the 1 Parliament Street assets referred to above. These changes net to zero;

a partial draw down of eyf of £1,500,000 by HM Treasury for the purchase of information systems software and hardware;

an increase in non-operating A in A of £11,550,000 and a loan of £8,550,000 both related to the transfer of the Whitehall Systems from OGC to OGCbuying.solutions.

[1] The Whitehall Systems are backup heating and electricity power systems, previously operated and accounted for by OGC. Responsibility for them is being transferred to OGCbuying.solutions. OGC is surrendering its funding for cost of capital charges. OGCbuying.solutions is paying £11.55m for the assets, £3m in cash and £8.55m via a loan from OGC.

	£
Administration costs changes in detail:	
Accounting profit on disposal of 1 Parliament Street assets	-8,168,000
Funding for cost of capital charges on 1 Parliament Street assets	-184,000
Funding for costs of tax policy functions in the first part of 2004–05	4,235,000
Estimated accounting charges on revaluation of 1 Horse Guards Road	9,000,000
Funding for other Treasury administration costs	3,000,000
OGC engagement of consultants	0
Net total effect on admin DEL	7,883,000

DEFENCE

Votes A 2005–06

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): Ministry of Defence votes A 2005–06, will be laid before the House on 22 February as HC 291. This outlines the maximum numbers of personnel to be maintained for service in the armed forces for financial year 2005–06. Copies of these reports will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Armed Forces Pay Review Body Report 2005

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): The 2005 report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body has been published today. Copies of the report are available in the Vote Office and in the Library of the House. I wish to express my thanks to the chairman and members of the review body for their clear and wide-ranging report.

The AFPRB has recommended an increase in basic military salary of 3 per cent. for all other ranks and officers. The AFPRB has also recommended increases in the rates of specialist pay (eg flying pay, submarine pay, diving pay and hydrographic pay), and in accommodation charges. The AFPRB also recommended a 5 per cent. increase to rates of longer separated service allowance and longer service at sea bonus which are designed to compensate for separation.

The additional cost to the defence budget will be £216 million. This will be met within existing Departmental expenditure limits.

The AFPRB's recommendations are to be accepted in full, with implementation effective from 1 April 2005.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Spring Supplementary Estimates

The Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality (Alun Michael): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs DEL will be increased by £103,689,000 from £3,178,447,000 to £3,282,136,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £38,101,000 from £357,572,000 to £395,673,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	80,531	2,467,116	682,540	3,149,656
Capital	23,158	227,350	103,980	331,330
Depreciation*	0	-101,733	-97,117	-198,850
Total	103,689	2,592,733	689,403	3,282,136

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from (i) take up of end-year flexibility of £42,464,000 programme resources and £37,902,000 administration resource; (ii) take up of £384,000 administration resources from the Cabinet Office for Parliamentary Counsel costs; (iii) take up of £28,000 of programme resources from Department for Transport to fund coastal protection measures; (iv) take up of £524,000 of programme resources from Department for Trade and Industry for the Red Meat Industry Forum; (v) transfer of £500,000 of programme resources to the Department for International Development to fund projects in eastern Europe, Caucasus and central Asia; (vi) transfer of £42,000 to Department for Trade and Industry to fund the Sustainable Development round table; (vii) transfer of £105,000 of programme resources to the Department for Trade and Industry for the Farm Business Advice service; (xiii) transfer of £44,000 of programme resources to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Infrastructure Investment programme; (ix) transfer of £80,000 of administration resources to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for contributions related to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

An additional £60,000 transfer from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be taken up in the 2005–06 Winter Supplementary.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from: (i) take up of end-year flexibility of £23,158,000 capital.

The increases are offsetting inter-departmental transfers and take-up of end-year flexibility, and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Spring Supplementary Estimates

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr Bill Rammell): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary Eestimate, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office departmental expenditure limit (DEL) will be increased by £46,199,000 from £1,883,444,000 to £1,929,643,000 and the administration costs limit will be decreased by £21,151,000 from £793,006,000 to £771,885,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	35,374	1,607,192	212,118	1,819,310
Capital	10,825	101,533	8,800	110,333
Depreciation*	0	-106,218	-26,800	-133,018
Total	46,199	1,602,507	194,118	1,796,625

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

RfR1

I. Reserve claims of £402,000 for the Emergency Disaster Reserve; £9,957,000 for Consular Premium collected in the UK and £7,755,000 for international organisations subscriptions;

II. PES transfers from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and DEFRA of £160,000 each for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea;

III. A PES transfer from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) of £32,000 in respect of the Year of Science in China;

IV. A PES transfer from the Cabinet Office for £65,000 for the funding of the Parliamentary Counsel Office;

V. A PES transfer to the Security and Intelligence Agencies (SIA) of £1,400,000 for language training. Income and expenditure has also been increased by £1,400,000 to reflect this;

VI. A PES transfer to the Security and Intelligence Agencies (SIA) of £562,000 for planned programme activity;

VII. A PES transfer of to the Home Office of £1,000,000 in respect of European Residence Permits;

VIII. A reduction of £12,553,000 in respect of Overseas Price Movements;

IX. Increases in income and expenditure of £50,700,000 relating to increased visa and consular activity;

X. Increases in income and expenditure of £445,000 relating to increased postage recoveries and other sundry receipts;

XI. Increases in income and expenditure of £160,000 relating to increased receipts for international organisation subscriptions;

XII. An increase in income and expenditure of £38,086,000 relating to other government departments' contributions to the UK presence in Iraq. Of this £11,236,000 is vired to capital.

RfR2

XIII. Take up of £23,347,000 end year flexibility;

XIV. Draw down of £110,000,000 from the Peacekeeping Main Estimate Provision of which £90,000,000 is transferred to the Ministry of Defence;

XV. A PES transfer of £12,551,000 from DFID for programme activity;

XVI. A PES transfer of £49,000 from the Cabinet Office relating to a forecast underspend on the Countries at Risk of Instability Pilot because of a forecast underspend;

XVII. Draw down of £6,000,000 from the Departmental Unallocated Provision;

XVIII. PES transfers of £2,237,000 to the Security and Intelligence Agencies, £2,200,000 to the Ministry of Defence and £6,500,000 to DFID for planned programme activity.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

I. A reduction of £411,000 due to Overseas price movements;

II. £11,236,000 vired from administration for other Government Departments' contribution to UK presence in Iraq.

British Detainees (Iraq)

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): During the course of my statement of 11 January to the House, *Official Report*, columns 173–186, on the release of British detainees held at Guantanamo Bay, I said that there were no other British citizens detained in Guantanamo Bay. I also stated that I knew of no other citizens detained in similar circumstances elsewhere. That statement in the House was clear and remains accurate.

I would however like to bring to the attention of the House the cases of two British nationals being held as security internees by the coalition forces in Iraq; one is a British national being held by US forces at Camp Bucca, the other is a dual British/Iraqi national and is being held at Shaibah by UK forces.

Both men are being held as security internees in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546 (2004). The International Committee of the Red Cross has access to both detention facilities and family visits are also permitted. Both internees' cases are reviewed regularly by the appropriate authorities.

HEALTH

Doctors and Dentists (Remuneration)

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): I am responding on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the 34th report of the review body on doctors' and dentists' remuneration (DDRB) which is published today. Copies of the report are available in the Vote Office and the Library. I am grateful to the chairman and members of the review body for their hard work.

This year's report deals primarily with general dental practitioners, doctors and dentists in training, non-consultant career grade doctors, and medical and dental consultants who have chosen not to take up new contracts. For consultants taking up new contracts, general medical practitioners and the salaried primary dental care services, 2005–06 will be the third year of three-year pay deals agreed as part of NHS pay reforms.

The review body has recommended with effect from April 2005 general increases in remuneration of 3 per cent. for doctors and dentists in training and consultants who remain on the old contract, 3.225 per cent. for non-consultant career grade doctors and an increase of 3.4 per cent. in gross fees for general dental practitioners.

These recommendations are being accepted in full and without staging.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Spring Supplementary Estimates

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): Plans to change the Charity Commission's departmental expenditure limit (DEL) for 2004–05.

Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Charity Commission DEL will be increased by £440,000 from £30,608,000 to £31,048,000. The Administration Cost Limit will remain unchanged at £29,509,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	0	29,509,000	0	29,509,000
Capital	440,000	2,179,000	0	2,179,000
Depreciation*	0	-640,000	0	-640,000
Total	440,000	31,048,000	0	31,048,000

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from a known peak in E-Business expenditure, and will be funded by take up of part of the Commission's capital end-year flexibility entitlement.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Parades

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Ian Pearson): I have been considering Sir George Quigley's Review of Parades, the subsequent consultation on his report, the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (NIAC) report of January this year and the events of last summer. Each of these offers different perspectives on how to go forward and I have come to a balanced decision about how to respond.

I have decided that a case has not been made to make fundamental changes to parading arrangements in Northern Ireland. Parades have been increasingly peaceful over the last few years. The number of contentious parades has fallen. Out of approximately 2,000 parades notified last year, only 200 were regarded as 'contentious' and two resulted in serious public order incidents. I think this shows the success of the arrangements we have here in reducing tension. I want to echo the words of NIAC, which concluded that the Parades Commission remains the best hope for developing the peaceful resolution of disputes. I will therefore not be pressing forward with the changes recommended by Sir George Quigley at this time. I am, however, indebted to Sir George for his insightful and intelligent contribution to the debate around parades in Northern Ireland. Although I am not adopting his recommendations, my thinking has been greatly influenced by his work and I am, indebted to him for his insightful and intelligent contribution to the debate around parades in Northern Ireland.

I shall be laying an Order in Council to amend the law on parades. The Order makes clear that the Parades Commission can make determinations that include supporters and followers. Some doubts have been raised about the Commission's remit. The police and NIAC have asked me to put the matter beyond doubt before the summer.

At the same time, I intend to take on board Quigley and NIAC's recommendation that parades and related protests should be considered by the same body. The Order will bring protestors within the remit of the Parades Commission. I have been persuaded that the time is right for the Parades Commission to take on this function.

I am also launching a wide-ranging consultation exercise on mediation. I think there is a great deal of potential for mediation to help defuse the tensions surrounding parades and I firmly believe that agreed outcomes are the best way to resolve disputes. However, there has not been agreement about how best to deliver mediation. I have today published a consultation paper on these issues. The consultation will close on 23 May 2005.

NIAC's report contained other recommendations about how the Parades Commission could make the way it carries out its work more effective. I am aware that the Commission are examining these and I look forward to hearing their response.

PRIME MINISTER

Honours System

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The Government's decisions on changes to the honours system are contained in the Command Paper "Reform of the Honours System" (Cm 6479) which has been published today. Copies are being placed in the Libraries of the House.

TRANSPORT

Motorcycling

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson): I have today published the Government's national motorcycling strategy. It is the first Government motorcycling strategy and it covers the whole range of issues which apply to motorcycling—suitable infrastructure, traffic management measures, motorcycle design, safety issues including improved training arrangements, and taxation.

The strategy sets out a framework of actions to be pursued over the next few years, principally by central Government, local government, the motorcycle industry and motorcycle user groups, to ensure that motorcycling becomes fully recognised and catered for as a mode of transport on our roads.

Copies of the strategy have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Open Method of Co-ordination

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): A consultation exercise has been launched today on the evaluation of the EU process called the "open method of co-ordination". This provides a structure for co-operation between EU member states to enable the exchange of best practice and joint evaluation of policies. The European Commission has invited all EU member states to comment on the effectiveness of this open method in the fields of social inclusion and pensions. The questionnaire has been placed in the Library and is also available online at www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2005/omc/index.asp.

The Government are inviting comments from non-governmental organisations involved with social inclusion or pensions, TUC and CBI and local and regional government to contribute to the UK response. The consultation closes on 30 April to enable a UK response to be drawn up in time for the Commission deadline of 30 June.

Financial Assistance Scheme

The Minister for Pensions (Malcolm Wicks): In December 2004 we said that our priority was getting help to those facing the most urgent difficulties being closest to, or already at, retirement age and therefore less able to make provision to replace their lost pensions.

At that time we had asked independent trustees to provide data on the pension schemes that they thought might be eligible for the financial assistance scheme. We had a very good response and from the information provided it appears that there are at least 380 schemes in which members might be potentially eligible for financial assistance. The precise scale of the financial shortfalls in these schemes cannot be known until the winding-up processes are close to completion.

A list of these potentially eligible schemes has been placed in the Library. It is a provisional list which broadly confirms earlier estimates of the scale of the problem, and the number of individuals affected. The detailed eligibility criteria for both schemes and members will be set out in regulations that we expect to publish for wider consultation in the spring. Once finalised these will need parliamentary approval, which we hope to obtain by the end of July.

As solvent employers have a duty to support their schemes and provide the benefits members were expecting, it is right that the FAS focuses on insolvent employers. We expect employers to stand by their pension promise to their employees, and will take a dim view of the solvent employer who seeks to avoid their responsibilities to their employees or the employees of a company for which they have been a parent company. We have consulted widely on how we should define 'employer insolvency' and concluded that for FAS purposes we should have a sufficiently general definition of insolvency to capture schemes where the sponsoring employer no longer exists and also where insolvency may have occurred some time after scheme wind-up had

started. This definition will be similar to that used by the PPF but with the additional inclusion of some companies which have undergone members' voluntary liquidations—where a declaration of solvency was made at the time of wind-up but where the company is now no longer solvent and so no employer exists to support the scheme.

We are minded to judge the insolvency position for multi-employer schemes on the principal employer of the scheme.

The list contains those pension schemes on which we received information in the latest data collection exercise and which from the information provided by trustees, appear potentially eligible under the criteria set out above. The list provides an early indication of scheme eligibility for members of the schemes we have been told about. But I need to make clear a number of caveats. First, it will take time to establish the final position, but as wind-up progresses we will become clearer on the size of the gap between assets and liabilities of these schemes. Second, presence on this list does not guarantee individuals will receive support from the FAS. Third, it does not mean trustees should stop their duties of securing the best possible outcome for their scheme members.

After the FAS regulations have come into force, there will be a six-month period during which we shall accept formal notification from the independent trustees of other under-funded pension schemes, which may in due course be added to the list, so absence from this list does not preclude eligibility.

Whilst we have sought industry contributions, it is very disappointing that no financial contribution has been forthcoming. As a result the available funding stands at £400 million over 20 years, which the Government have committed on behalf of the taxpayer.

As we have explained before, in many cases the trustees are not yet able to provide detailed information on the scale of individual losses and in practice this may not be available until they are close to completing the winding-up of each pension scheme.

But those scheme members who have already retired or expect to retire within the next few years need to know where they stand now.

I can therefore announce today that the financial assistance scheme will provide help to those within three years of their scheme pension age on 14 May 2004. The assistance will top up individuals to a level broadly equivalent to 80 per cent. of the core pension rights accrued in their scheme. That means that those within three years of their pension scheme age on 14 May 2004 should expect to get 80 per cent. of their core promised pension. As we previously announced, payments will be subject to a de minimis level and a cap on assistance provided. Further information on these will be provided when the draft regulations are published.

The assistance will be paid as a monthly pension.

FAS payments will be treated by the tax and benefit system in broadly the same way as payments from an occupational pension scheme.

We have already committed ourselves to review the financial assistance scheme after three years.

Government funding is already fixed for the current spending review period up to and including 2007–08. But as with all our spending plans, we will review the funding for the FAS in the next spending review alongside other spending priorities.

A dedicated team of DWP officials, based in York, will administer the scheme and aim to get payments to recipients as soon as possible once the regulations are in place.

PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

Supplementary Estimates

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Privy Council Office DEL will be increased by £466,000 from £4,195,000 to £4,661,000 and the gross administration costs limit will be increased by £466,000 from £4,158,000 to £4,624,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital is as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	466,000	4,624,000	0	4,624,000
Capital	0	69	0	69
Depreciation*	0	-32	0	-32
Total	466,000	4,661,000	0	4,661,000

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from take up of Privy Council Office's end year flexibility.

The Privy Council Office is also looking to increase spending by £70,000 to offset increases in administrative expenditure. This increase is offset by appropriations in aid.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Supplementary Estimates

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Constitutional Affairs and Northern Ireland Court Service departmental expenditure limit (DEL) will be *increased* by £74,547,000 from £3,536,540,000 to £3,611,087,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £38,001,000 from £1,003,181,000 to £1,041,182,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource:				
Admin	38,001	1,041,182	0	1,041,182
Programme	-12,661	259,897	2,162,110	2,422,007
Capital	49,207	219,380	8,800	228,180
Depreciation*	0	-78,609	-1,673	-80,282
Total	74,547	1,441,850	2,169,237	3,611,087

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the Department for Constitutional Affairs DEL arises from:

Resource Change: Admin (total increase of £37,001,000)

Voted: total increase of £65,403,000

RfR1

Transfers from Central HM Treasury funds:

(i) £58,000,000 resources in relation to the Libra reserve claim.

Transfers from other Government Departments:

(ii) £446,000 resources from the Cabinet Office in relation to the re-funding for the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

Transfers to other Government Departments:

(iii) £554,000 resources to the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to costs for CPS case progression officers and secondees.

(iv) £122,000 resources to the Department for Work and Pensions being the increase indeduction of benefits for fines.

(v) Reversal of a transfer of £2,745,000 admin resources to DCA HQ and £590,000 admin resources to Court Service from the Home Office in relation to the Single Asylum Fund (SAF).

Transfers between sections within the RfR:

(vi) £7,450,000 admin resources to Capital in relation to the reclassification of Birmingham Priory Courts proceeds for Manchester Civil Justice Centre.

(vii) £10,000,000 admin resources to Capital from DCA HQ to the Court Service in relation to PFI liabilities.

Transfer between voted & non-voted resources:

(viii) £28,402,000 increase to voted admin resources in relation to the take up of departmental unallocated provision.

RfR3

Transfers from other Government Departments:

(ix) £16,000 resources from the Cabinet Office in relation to the re-funding for Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

Resource Change: Programme (total decrease of £12,191,000)

Voted: total decrease of £12,191,000

RfR1

Transfers from other Government Departments:

(i) £8,800,000 resources from Home Office in relation to downstream costs for criminal justice initiatives.

(ii) £1,400,000 resources from Home Office in relation to funding for Liverpoolcommunity justice centre.

(iii) £800,000 resources from Home Office—Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) in relation to funding the development of Libra interface to Exchange Integration Service Stream Release.

(iv) £206,000 resources from Home Office in relation to Criminal Justice Information Technology for Crown Courts.

(v) £52,000 resources from Home Office—Criminal Justice Information, Technology in relation to Virtual Plea and Direction Hearings.

(vi) £35,000 resources from Home Office: Criminal justice information technology in order to fund the application of the Criminal Justice System Exchange project.

(vii) £750,000 resources from Home Office: Criminal Justice Information Technology in relation to the Effective Trial Management Programme.

Transfers to other Government Departments:

(viii) £29,000 resources to the Home Office in relation to costs for Contribution to Group of States against Corruption.

(ix) Reversal of a transfer of £23,918,000 programme resources to DCA HQ from the Home Office in relation to the Single Asylum Fund (SAF).

Transfers between sections within the Estimate:

(x) £287,000 resources from Magistrates Courts Revenue Grant to Magistrates Courts Capital Grant in relation to building and Information Technology costs.

The change in the resource element of the Northern Ireland Court Service DEL arises from:

Resource Change: Admin (total increase of £1,000,000)

Voted: total net increase of £1,000,000.

(i) To take up resource end year flexibility of £1,000,000 in respect of administration expenditure on the development costs associated with the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS). This is partially offset by the profit arising form the sale of a surplus court building (£470,000) classified as programme.

Resource Change: Programme (total decrease of £470,000)

Voted: total decrease of £470,000

(i) Decrease of £470,000 being the netting of the profit element of the sale of a surplus court building against current programme provision. The change in the capital element of the Department for Constitutional Affairs DEL arises from:

Capital Change (total increase of £48,737,000)

Voted: total increase of £50,937,000

RfR1

Transfers from Central HM Treasury funds:

(i) £31,000,000 capital to the Court Service in relation to a non-cash reserve claim for PFI liabilities.

Transfers between sections within the Estimate:

(i) £287,000 resources from Magistrates Courts Grants to Magistrates Courts Capital Grants in relation Magistrates Courts Capital building and Information Technology costs.

(ii) £7,450,000 admin resources to Capital in relation to the reclassification of Birmingham Priory Courts proceeds for Manchester Civil Justice Centre.

(iii) £10,000,000 admin resources to Capital from DCA HQ to the Court Service in relation to PFI liabilities.

Transfer between voted and non-voted capital:

(iv) £2,200,000 increase to voted capital from supplementary credit approvals in relation to Libra funding.

The change in the capital element of the Northern Ireland Court Service DEL arises from:

Capital Change (total increase of £470,000)

Voted: total increase of £470,000

(i) To take up non-operating appropriations in aid of £1,000,000 arising from the sale of surplus court buildings. These non-operating appropriations in aid will offset additional capital expenditure on major refurbishment and IT projects. In budget terms, the increase in gross expenditure is offset by the net book value of the properties of £530,000.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport DEL will be increased by £12,478,000 from £1,615,781,000 to £1,628,259,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £163,000 from £51,254,000 to £51,417,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	-2,999,000	200,142,000	1,331,460,000	1,531,602,000
Capital	5,477,000	62,997,000	122,974,000	185,971,000
Depreciation*	10,000,000	-4,867,000	-84,447,000	-89,314,000
Total	12,478,000	258,272,000	1,369,987,000	1,628,259,000

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from a transfer in respect of the PES Pool European Regional Development Fund to the Department for Work and Pensions that has been offset with transfers from non-voted spending in respect of accrued superannuation liability contributions (ASLCs) for the public lending right of £52,000; for the British Library of £2,230,000; for the Football Licensing Authority of £104,000 and for English Heritage of £1,327,000. A reserve claim of £400,000 to cover the costs of the sale of the TOTE.

The increase in the Department's administration costs limit arises from transfers from other Government Departments of £35,000 from ODPM in respect of salary costs for joint working on local public service agreements and £128,000 from Cabinet Office in respect of funding for the Parliamentary Counsel Office.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from increased expenditure offset by increased non operating appropriations in aid of £110,000 in respect of sale of properties at Windsor; £268,000 from the Northern Ireland Office Broadcasting contract; and £10,000 in respect of rents received by the Royal Parks Agency.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Supplementary Estimates

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's departmental expenditure limits for 2004–05 will change as follows:

(1) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's main programmes DEL will be increased by £2,348,455,000 from £7,129,829,000 to £9,478,284,000 and the administration costs limit will be reduced by £8,822,000 from £354,805,000 to £345,983,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	1,623,409	4,590,912	1,879,401	6,470,313
Capital	725,046	1,152,677	1,855,294	3,007,971
Depreciation*	-8,494	-19,455	-4,200	-23,655
Total	2,339,961	5,724,134	3,730,495	9,454,629

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL, since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of end-year flexibility of £110,412,000 comprising:

Programme Expenditure

(a) £800,000 for Ordnance Survey Trading Fund;

(b) £1,350,000 for Sustainable Communities;

(c) £306,000 from the Invest to Save Budget for Fire Services;

(d) £11,439,000 for Fire Services programme expenditure;

(e) £21,506,000 for Civil Resilience programmes;

(f) £5,000,000 for Regional Policy programme (Regional Chambers);

(g) £14,632,000 for non-voted Housing Corporation;

(h) £5,000,000 for non-voted English Partnerships/ Urban Regeneration Agency;

(i) £25,000,000 for non-voted Commission for New Towns.

Administration Costs

(j) £25,379,000 to cover the work of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

(ii) draw down from the Reserve of £98,752,000 comprising:

Programme Expenditure

(a) £77,000 for Housing programme expenditure;

(b) £420,000 for Building Regulations;

(c) £3,978,000 for Other Growth Areas;

(d) £2,387,000 for Fire Services programme expenditure;

(e) £8,495,000 for Civil Resilience programmes:

(f) £72,851,000 for the Communities Plan;

(g) £8,544,000 for European Regional Development Fund;

(h) £2,000,000 for Regional Policy programme (Regional Assemblies).

(iii) draw down of £19,083,000 in advance from the European Regional Development Fund PES Pool for the European Regional Development Fund;

(iv) draw down of £1,500,000 from the Treasury Efficiency Savings Challenge Fund for Procurement Efficiency and Social Housing;

(v) a net transfer of £2,525,000 to other government departments, comprising:

From other Government Departments:

Programme Expenditure

(a) £50,000 from the Home Office for Building regulations programme;

(b) £100,000 for non-voted Housing Corporation from Department for Transport.

Administration Costs (Central ODPM)

(c) £557,000 from the Cabinet Office to cover the work of Parliamentary Counsel;

(d) £370,000 from Cabinet Office for the transfer of Internal Audit work.

Administration Costs (Government Offices)

(e) £1,798,000 from the Department for Education and Skills. (£1,598,000 for Local Public Service Agreements and £200,000 to cover other work done by Government Offices);

(f) £44,000 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to cover work on the Voluntary Community Sector;

(g) £700,000 from Department of Trade and Industry for work on UK Trade & Industry.

To other Government Departments:

Programme Expenditure

(h) £700,000 to the Home Office from the New Ventures Fundprogramme;

(i) £1,477,000 to Department for Work and Pensions from the New Deal for Communities programme;

(j) £3,208,000 to Welsh Assembly for Machinery of Government changes (£1,827,000 from Fire Services and £1,381,000 from Civil Resilience);

Administration Costs (Central ODPM)

(k) £221,000 to Department for Education and Skills for Local Public Service Agreements;

(l) £174,000 to Department of Health for Local Public Service Agreements;

(m) £65,000 to the Home Office for Local Public Service Agreements;

(n) £65,000 to the Department for Work and Pensions for Local Public Service Agreements;

(o) £60,000 to the Department for Transport for Local Public Service Agreements;

(p) £60,000 to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs for Local Public Service Agreements;

(q) £35,000 to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for Local Public Service Agreements;

(r) £79,000 to the Department for Transport for the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

(vi) an increase in receipts of £120,709,000 offsetting increases in provision of £24,000,000 for Housing, £200,000 for Ordnance Survey, £4,000 for Planning, £3,015,000 for the Planning Inspectorate Executive Agency; £1,890,000 for Fire Services, £580,000 for Civil Resilience, £64,139,000 for European Regional Development Fund; £16,881,000 for administration costs, and £10,000,000 for non voted English Partnerships;

(vii) an increase in receipts of £10,000,000 for non-voted English Partnerships;

(viii) a transfer of £1,573,000,000 from Annually Managed Expenditure to Departmental Expenditure Limits for the Supporting People programme;

(ix) a transfer of £253,000 from resource consumption to capital for Research;

(x) a transfer of £396,678,000 from resource investment to capital comprising £134,947,000 for the Communities Plan; £62,958,000 towards the capital costs of acquiring surplus NHS land, £1,960,000 for Civil Resilience; £3,452,000 for Planning; £750,000 for non voted Housing Corporation; £368,000 within non-voted Other Growth Areas; £186,386,000 within the Sustainable Communities programme; £5,525,000 for voted Other Housing and Homelessness from non-voted Housing Corporation (of which £3,668,000 for Regional Housing Pots and £1,857,000 increase in provision) and £332,000 to voted Growth Areas from non-voted Other Growth Areas;

(xi) a transfer of £230,118,000 from capital to resource investment comprising £5,200,000 to fund New Dimension Search & Rescue training rigs, £15,499,000 within non-voted section for Housing Corporation, £182,000,000 for Large Scale Voluntary Transfers from non-voted Arms Length Management Organisations to voted Housing and Homelessness and £27,419,000 for European Regional Development Fund;

(xii) a net transfer of £11,684,000 from voted to non-voted provision comprising:

(a) a transfer of £16,785,000, to voted Housing programmes from non-voted comprising £14,000,000 for Housing Action Trusts, £1,030,000 for Black & Ethnic Minority Registered Social Landlords, £755,000 for Homelessness and £1,000,000 for Starter Homes Initiatives;

(b) a transfer of £12,863,000 to other voted sections from non-voted Housing Corporation;

(c) a transfer of £2,835,000 to voted Sustainable Communities from non-voted Housing Corporation;

(d) a transfer of £2,500,000 to voted Growth Areas from non-voted Other Growth Areas;

(e) a transfer of £144,000 to voted Sustainable Communities from non-voted South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA);

(f) a transfer of £9,893,000 from non-voted resource investment to voted resource investment comprising £9,093,000 for European Regional Development Fund and £800,000 for Supporting People;

(g) a transfer of £800,000 from voted Housing to non-voted for Housing Corporation;

(h) a transfer of £8,023,000 from other voted sections to non-voted Housing Corporation;

(i) a transfer of £30,000,000 from Planning to non-voted English Partnerships;

(j) a transfer of £745,000 from voted Growth Areas to non-voted Other Growth Areas;

(k) a transfer of £5,800,000 from voted Sustainable Communities to non-voted South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA);

(l) a transfer of £500,000 from voted Sustainable Communities to non-voted Thames Gateway (Thurrock);

(m) a transfer of £10,000,000 from voted Thames Gateway to non-voted Thames Gateway Housing Corporation;

(n) a transfer of £800,000 from voted Black and Ethnic Minority Registered Social Landlords to non-voted Housing Corporation.

(xiii) As a result of the changes to Request for Resources 1, The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's administration provision will be reduced by £8,531,000 from £357,932,000 to £349,401,000 after taking account of the transfer of £36,912,000 from administration DEL to programme DEL in respect of the reclassification of the Planning Inspectorate's expenditure.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

(xiv) take up of end-year flexibility of £42,066,000 comprising:

Programme Expenditure

(a) £6,045,000 draw down of Capital Modernisation Fund (£2,325,000 for Pilot Lettings, £3,720,000 for New Dimension;

(b) £5,000,000 for the Coalfields Enterprise Fund;

(c) £2,274,000 for the New Ventures Fund;

(d) £1,400,000 for Smoke Alarms;

(e) £15,305,000 for European Regional Development Fund;

(f) £12,042,000 for non-voted English Partnerships in respect of the costs of acquiring surplus National Health Service land.

(xv) draw down of £17,126,000 in advance from the European Regional Development Fund PES Pool for the European Regional Development Fund;

(xvi) an increase in receipts of £19,054,000. offsetting increases in provision of £3,600,000 for Housing programme, £5,012,000 for European Development Fund and £10,442,000 for non-voted housing Corporation;

(xvii) a transfer of £3,259,000 to other government departments, comprising £1,045,000 to Department for Transport to cover ODPM's share of the costs of joint

capital projects; £5,214,000 to Welsh Assembly in respect of Machinery of Government Changes (of which £1,513,000 is from voted Civil Resilience and £3,701,000 from non-voted section) and £3,000,000 from the Home Office for non-voted Housing Corporation;

(xviii) a transfer of £253,000 from resource consumption to capital for Research;

(xix) a transfer of £396,678,000 from Resource Investment to Capital comprising of £134,947,000 for the Communities Plan; £62,958,000 towards the capital costs of acquiring surplus NHS land, £1,960,000 for Civil Resilience; £3,452,000 for Planning; £750,000 for non-voted Housing Corporation; £368,000 for non-voted Other Growth Areas; £186,386,000 within the Sustainable Communities programme; £5,525,000 for voted Other Housing and Homelessness from non-voted Housing Corporation (of which £3,668,000 for Regional Housing Pots and £1,857,000 increase in provision) and £332,000 to voted Growth Areas from non-voted Other Growth Areas;

(xx) a transfer of £230,118,000 from capital to resource investment comprising £5,200,000 to fund New Dimension Search & Rescue training rigs, £15,499,000 within non-voted section for Housing Corporation, £182,000,000 for Large Scale Voluntary Transfers from non-voted Arms Length Management Organisations to voted Housing and Homelessness and £27,419,000 for European Regional Development Fund;

(xxi) an increase in provision of £223,500,000 for the non-voted Supported Capital Expenditure Programme;

(xxii) an increase in provision of £278,800,000 as a result of classification changes for non-voted English Partnerships;

(xxiii) Within the capital element of the DEL there is a net transfer of £52,823,000 from voted to non-voted provision comprising:

(a) £13,442,000 from non-voted Housing Corporation to voted Planning;

(b) £3,796,000 from non-voted English Partnerships to voted Sustainable Communities programme;

(c) £45,061,000 from voted Sustainable Communities programme to non-voted South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA) (£41,061,000) and non-voted East of England Development Agency (EEDA) (£4,000,000);

(d) £25,000,000 from voted Thames Gateway to non-voted English Partnerships.

(2) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Local Government DEL will be increased by £21,480,000 from £43,767,155,000 to £43,788,635,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	21,480	43,311,588	104,613	43,416,201
Capital		363,484	8,950	372,434
Depreciation	-119	-913	1,580	667
Total	21,361	43,674,159	115,143	43,789,302

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of end-year flexibility of £21,300,000 for Private Finance Initiatives;

(ii) a transfer of £180,000 from Department of Health to support a local government franchising pilot;

(iii) a transfer of £98,000,000 from voted Capacity Building programme to non-voted Standards Board.

DEFENCE

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Geoffrey Hoon): Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the ministry of Defence departmental expenditure limits will be increased by £1,099,372,000 from £30,344,938,000 to £31,444,310,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	875,721	32,269,483	561,434	32,830,917
Capital	223,651	6,661,431	1,220	6,662,651
Depreciation*	0	-7,879,258	-170,000	-8,049,258
Total	1,099,372	31,051,656	392,654	31,444,310

** Depreciation, which forms part of Resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

transfers totalling £383,000 from the Northern Ireland Office (£101,000) and from the Northern Ireland Departments (£282,000) as their share of the National Meteorological Programme and Weather Warning Service costs under a pan Government agreement;

a transfer in from the Cabinet Office of £102,000 in respect of future funding arrangements with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel;

a transfer out from the MOD to the Department for Constitutional Affairs of £62,000 in respect of legal services provided to the MOD;

an increase in Resource Appropriations in Aid of £185,000 from receipt of a special dividend from the Hydrographic Office;

an increase in Resource Appropriations in Aid of £4,600,000 relating to revenue associated with government training provided under the Indian Air Force BAE Hawk contract;

an increase in Resource Appropriations in Aid of £1,445,000 relating to revenue received from the Learning Skills Council;

an increase in RfR 2 Resource of £805,426,000 to reflect the costs of peace-keeping in Iraq and Afghanistan;

a transfer in of £88,978,000 Resource from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the MOD in respect of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool for Balkans programme costs;

a transfer in of £2,200,000 Resource from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the MOD in respect of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool for Rest of the World programme costs;

a transfer in of £2,920,000 Resource from the Department for International Development to the MOD in respect of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool for Sub Saharan Africa programme costs;

an increase in Resource (Non-Budget) Grants in Aid of £241,000 to the National Army Museum for refurbishment costs.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

the take up of remaining end year flexibility from 2003–04 of £6,000,000 Capital to cover capital spending;

a transfer out from the MOD to the Home Office of £5,500,000 as reimbursement for an advance made by the Home Office for the former RAF Newton in 2003–04, the site no longer being required by the Home Office;

an increase in Capital Appropriations in Aid of £54,301,000 arising from the early redemption of preference shares held by the MOD in QinetiQ;

an increase in RfR 2 Capital DEL of £222,129,000 to reflect the costs of peace-keeping in Iraq and Afghanistan;

a transfer in of £1,022,000 Capital DEL from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the MOD in respect of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool for Balkans programme costs.

The changes to CDEL and RDEL will lead to an increased net cash requirement of £1,109,613,000.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Teachers' Review Body

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): The fourteenth report of the School Teachers' Review Body is being published today. It covers a range of matters referred to the review body in July 2004. Copies are available in the Vote Office and in the Library of the House of Lords and at www.teachernet.gov.uk

In making its recommendations, the review body was required to have regard to the matters set out in the remit letter of 22 July 2004. The fourteenth STRB report deals with some very important and technical issues affecting teachers' pay and I am most grateful to it for the careful and detailed attention it has given to these complex matters. The STRB recommendations are set out below (in italics) followed in each case by my response.

I am seeking consultation comments on the report and my response by 18 March 2005.

Payments for additional responsibilities for teaching and learning

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend that the following criterion and factors for awarding teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) payments be adopted:

The criterion is as follows:

A teaching and learning responsibility payment may only be made to a teacher who is accountable for a significant, specified responsibility focused on teaching and learning, that is not required of all classroom teachers, clearly defined in the job description of the teaching and learning responsibility payment holder, and requiring teachers' professional skills and judgement. The TLR payment should be for a sustained responsibility in the context of the school's staffing structure needed to ensure continued delivery of high-quality teaching and learning.

The factors are as follows:

Impact on educational progress beyond the teacher's assigned pupils;

Leading, developing and enhancing the teaching practice of others;

Having accountability for leading, managing and developing a subject or curriculum area or pupil development across the curriculum; and (for the upper value TLR)

Having line management responsibility for a significant number of people.

We recommend that there should be guidance on the review of staffing structures and implementation and that it should include advice to assist schools/LEAs in deciding: how to address their head of year and "pastoral" responsibilities in the new system; what type of TLR should be payable for specific line management posts; and the application of TLRs to unattached teachers.

We recommend that:

From 1 September 2005, the value of TLR2 be a minimum of £2,250 with a maximum of £5,500, and the value of TLR1 be a minimum of £6,500 with a maximum of £11,000;

Teachers be paid a spot rate on the appropriate TLR range for specific posts as decided and published by the school in its pay policy;

Differentials between payments within each range within specific schools should be significant—a minimum of £1,500; and

The guidance on the review of staffing structures and implementation contains advice to support schools in deciding what level of spot rate payment to award TLR posts.

We recommend that the circumstances in which the payment of TLRs should cease, should be as follows:

Payments should not be portable from one school to another;

Payments should be withdrawn where a teacher declined to perform the responsibilities attached to the payment; or lost the responsibilities as a result of poor performance (as a result of capability procedures); and

Payments could also be withdrawn when responsibilities were restructured, subject to transitional/safeguarding arrangements applied nationally.

We recommend that all the main parties be included, without pre-conditions, in formulating guidance for schools on the review of staffing structures and implementation.

Subject to the timely provision of guidance and budget information to schools, we recommend specifically that:

schools be required to review their staffing structure in consultation with staff and their representatives, and to publish their revised structure, with a timetable for implementation (as an annex to the pay policy of the school), by 31 December 2005;

TLR payments be available to be awarded from 1 September 2005 and new awards of management allowances cease from 31 December 2005;

The transition period for each school starts from the date of publication of its staffing structure, lasts for three years and ends by 31 December 2008; and

Teachers who would otherwise incur a reduction in salary as a result of the implementation of changes in responsibilities in the revised staffing structure of the school, have their salary cash safeguarded for the duration of the three year period of transition, the safeguarding to cease in the following circumstances.

The teacher accepts a new level of payment;

The teacher moves post;

The teacher's salary (through annual increment, movement to a higher salary scale or receipt of a higher level of TLR payment) excluding the management allowance, is higher than the total of his/her current salary including the management allowance; or

The teacher unreasonably refuses to undertake responsibilities required of a new post offered to him/her.

Our recommendations should be applied to Wales in accordance with constitutional responsibilities.

I welcome these recommendations. I believe that they represent a genuinely constructive opportunity for schools to organise their teaching and learning responsibilities in a new way, focusing on the professionalism of teachers and enabling reward to be given for significant tasks which have an impact on the educational progress of pupils and the professional practice of other teachers. I am particularly glad to recognise the flexibilities, within an overall framework, recommended within the new teaching and learning responsibility payments system, and the emphasis on openness through the pay policy, which would give schools the freedom to establish the arrangements which suit their own needs, while openly justifying their decisions.

However, I am anxious that all schools should have sufficient time to prepare and consider what staffing structure is most appropriate for them before implementation of these pay changes. To promote clarity and consistency I propose that all schools' transition periods should begin on 1 January 2006, at which point TLR payments should be available and management allowances would cease to be awarded.

I also welcome the focus on restructuring, which will be key to enabling the transition from the existing management allowance system to be managed. Action on school restructuring in Wales will, of course, be for the Welsh Assembly to determine.

I agree that guidance to schools on restructuring, transition and the new TLR payments system will be very important. However, I believe that the guidance should not be restrictive or suggest different levels of TLR payment for different tasks or responsibilities. I believe that the detailed criteria and factors for the payment of TLRs should be the focus for schools' (and in the case of unattached teachers, LEAs') decisions, and that this should be sufficient to enable them to take appropriate decisions within the context of their own individual published structures. All parties will, as usual, be consulted on the development of statutory guidance.

I agree that the arrangements for the award of TLRs also require provisions for their future cessation and the recommendations of the STRB are sensible and helpful.

I welcome the proposed arrangements for transition from management allowances to TLRs, and the proposed provisions giving protections for teachers who would otherwise incur a reduction in salary, which are fair and reasonable.

Safeguarding arrangements for pay

We recommend that:

The framework for the operation of safeguarding that we describe below be adopted to apply to both current and future safeguarding arrangements:

Framework for the operation of safeguarding

A. Overarching principles

a. Teachers at all levels are protected from sudden drops in total salary which would otherwise occur through no fault of their own.

b. Safeguarding principles will be applied on a mandatory basis.

c. Safeguarding will operate on a fixed-period basis and the period will be three years (subject to the provisions in C below).

d. Safeguarding will be on a cash basis; and

e. The teacher must know at the start of the safeguarding period what safeguarding arrangements are applicable to any particular salary element and this must be set out in the teacher's salary statement at the start of the period.

B. Cases where safeguarding will operate

Subject to the basic principles in A above and the provisions in C below, safeguarding will apply in circumstances where:

a. The item concerned has been removed from the pay system;

b. The item concerned has been replaced, directly or indirectly, by another form or forms of payment which the teacher concerned is not receiving;

c. An individual school range has been reduced;

d. An LEA reorganisation, school closure, or redefinition of boundaries, means that a teacher continuing to work in the school or LEA as applicable would otherwise receive a reduced rate of pay; or

e. Internal school reorganisations take place.

C. Cases where safeguarding will not apply, or will cease to apply

Safeguarding will not apply, or will cease to apply, where any of the following circumstances occur:

a. The teacher moves school voluntarily;

b. The teacher chooses to apply, and applies successfully for another post within the school and accepts the terms and conditions of that post;

c. The teacher unreasonably refuses to carry out duties commensurate with the salary being received;

d. The teacher's total salary overtakes his safeguarded salary during the safeguarded period (excluding the effect of annual pay uplifts); or

e. The set period of time has elapsed (three years).

We also recommend:

That the framework be the vehicle within which the Secretary of State should deal with the safeguarding consequentials of future changes to the pay system; and

That the three-year time-limiting for safeguarding of current arrangements be applied to operate concurrently with the three-year period for the transitional arrangements to introduce revised school structures.

The issue of safeguarding has been flagged up by the STRB on successive occasions in the past, and it has previously requested evidence on it. I very much welcome the careful and detailed consideration which the STRB has now been able to give to this matter, in the light of evidence received. The proposed safeguarding provisions set out are reasonable and balanced and I support them.

I recognise the difficulties and sensitivities which exist in the context of bringing change to this area of the teachers' pay system, and the framework proposed will enable existing and future safeguarding to be handled on a fair, uniform and predictable basis. Moreover, the framework as proposed will ensure that teachers are protected from sudden drops in total salary which would otherwise occur through no fault of their own, for a suitable period. I also welcome the recommendation of the STRB that these detailed matters are handled in future using my subsidiary powers, within the context of the framework established, which seems to be entirely appropriate.

Pay arrangements for secondary mathematics and science advanced skills teachers

We recommend that:

In line with its policy of expanding the AST grade, the department looks at ways of getting more mathematics and science teachers with AST accreditation, but not in an AST post, into such posts, including, where appropriate, the creation of additional AST posts in these subjects;

This message be reinforced in the guidance to schools, primary and secondary, on the review of their structures which will take place as part of the transition to the new TLR system; and

Schools be encouraged to make greater use of the flexibilities they already have to set AST pay for these two subjects;

Paragraph 27.3 of the STPCD be amended so that the factors to which the relevant body has to have regard in setting the range for an AST's pay expressly include his or her being a teacher of a shortage subject or a subject where there is a particular need to raise the quality of teaching and learning.

The remit to the STRB invited it to consider the salary levels of secondary mathematics and science advanced skills teachers. The evidence backed this up by proposing that the cap on the pay of these teachers be removed, and to set a minimum level of salary of £40,000. This was proposed as part of the Government's approach to overcoming the national under-achievements in these two subjects and their impact on the economy, as identified in the reports of Professor Adrian Smith and Sir Gareth Roberts.

The STRB has reflected carefully on this but has concluded that at present it will not make recommendations along the lines proposed. It has indicated that this could be considered further in a future remit, in the wider context of teachers' remuneration as a whole. I continue to see benefits in making changes to the pay arrangements for these teachers in these important subject areas. I therefore am content to return to this matter in my next remit.

It has also made some specific pay-related proposals which I propose to accept. I will reflect further on the STRB's proposals relating to getting more mathematics and science teachers with an AST accreditation, but not currently in an AST post, into such posts.

Excellent Teacher Scheme

We recommend that the scheme should be introduced from September 2006, distinct from the main and upper pay scales. The scheme should be post-based and should be for exemplary classroom teachers with an established record of sustained high-quality teaching and of supporting colleagues within the school. Like ASTs they should be unable to hold TLRs, but unlike ASTs they should have no outreach function. They should

Continue to maintain high standards;

Demonstrate a commitment to develop themselves professionally;

Provide an exemplary role model for staff through their professional expertise; and

Have a distinctive role in achieving improvements in teaching across the school.

In addition to their normal classroom duties the specific expectations of an Excellent Teacher should be:

Induction of newly qualified teachers;

Professional mentoring of other teachers;

Sharing good practice through demonstration lessons;

Helping teachers to develop their expertise in planning, preparation and assessment;

Helping other teachers to evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils;

Undertaking classroom observations to assist and support the performance management process; and

Helping teachers improve their teaching practice including those on capability procedures.

However, we also recommend the following:

The expectations of the role set out above should reflect more strongly an emphasis on general pedagogic experience and on coaching and mentoring, and reduce the apparent overlap with the AST grade and with TLR payments;

That teachers should be able to seek accreditation regardless of whether or not an ETS post is envisaged for their school and that the title of Excellent Teacher (though not the associated salary) should be granted once accreditation has been achieved; and

Serious consideration should be given to a separate name for the post associated with the scheme, and to our suggestion of "Principal Teacher".

We recommend that the criteria for accessing the scheme should be as follows:

The scheme should be based on written application. To qualify, the teacher should have to have been paid on U3 for at least two years, be willing to meet the expectations of an Excellent Teacher, and have their application endorsed by their head teacher. They would also need to provide evidence of work during their period on the upper pay scale that had addressed the identified needs of a particular group or groups of pupils; and successfully pass a procedure of external assessment against national standards;

A separate national (England and Wales) standard should be developed for the scheme, building on a common core of excellence with the AST standard, to take account of the distinctive profile and features of the scheme; subject to discussion with the Welsh Assembly Government, this standard might be based on the three themes of new professionalism in teaching[1] and the requirements of an Excellent Teacher should reflect more closely the three themes of new professionalism in teaching, again subject to discussion with the welsh assembly government;

The admission criteria for the scheme should include demonstration of a sustained record of continuing professional development throughout the teacher's career;

The arrangements should be clarified for movement between the scheme, ASTs and the leadership group; and

The scheme be open to any teacher who meets the criteria and has their head teacher's support, not just those in schools which have or envisage a post under the scheme.

The salary for the scheme should be a spot salary. We recommend the following baseline rates for the scheme, as at 1 September 2005: £35,000 in England and Wales, £35,988 in the fringe, £37,832 in outer London, and £41,745 in inner London. We do not think it appropriate at this stage to set a salary for September 2006.

We recommend that the basic structure of this reformed career system remain in its present form for the medium term.

We recommend a targeted communications exercise to ensure teachers are aware of the reformed career structure and the implications for them.

We recommend that the department monitors actively the bedding down of the ETS and how the ETS and AST schemes are used so the review body can revisit it in three years after the scheme's introduction.

I welcome the proposed creation of the post-based Excellent Teacher scheme, and believe that the arrangements set out give a firm basis for progress in its introduction. There are, however, some specific matters which require further consideration and on which I would invite particular comment.

I note the recommendation that the expectations of the role should be revised and I am happy to consider this further in the light of consultation responses and further discussions. The same applies to the proposal to develop a separate ETS standard taking account of new professionalism. It is certainly our intention to see the ETS—as well as standards for other teachers—in this light.

I believe that the proposal to enable widespread assessment for ETS, regardless of whether a post is available, should be a matter for further consideration and discussion, taking account of the necessity for effective implementation of the scheme. I do, however, have greater concerns about the STRB's concept of naming a teacher as an Excellent Teacher if they have passed assessment, if they are not in a post, while giving a new and separate name to those in post, and suspect that this may cause undue confusion. I would welcome views on this.

I note the initial salary outlines recommended, which provide a very helpful steer for the future. I shall refer this matter to the STRB in my next remit, in the context of a request for general consideration of salaries from September 2006.

Local approaches to pay and other matters

On localised approaches to pay we see no difficulty in postponing further consideration of this issue.

I accept this and, as indicated in evidence, will return to the matter in the context of my next remit.

We recommend that the National Employers' Organisation publishes the result of the LEA survey on unattached teachers and any additional steps to be taken to deal with the concerns about unattached teachers by the end of March 2005 so that we can consider progress and make any further recommendations we consider appropriate.

This is a helpful steer, which I shall ask NEOST to consider. I shall also seek to ensure that the framework and guidance on the implementation of the pay changes recommended here take as full account as possible of the position of unattached teachers.

We recommend that all the main parties be included in the process (on linking teaching and learning reviews to continuing professional development and career progression) as outlined in the remit letter of 22 July 2004.

I remain committed to the process with partners referred to in the 22 July remit. All parties will have the opportunity to respond to statutory consultation.

Next steps

I am now initiating consultation on these recommendations and my proposed response with the employers' organisation, the teacher unions and other interested parties.

Concurrently with this, I am consulting, as required under Section 126 of the Education Act 2002, on a pay order for introduction on 1 April 2005, the main purpose of which is to reform the safeguarded position of the small number of teachers on former points 4 and 5 of the upper pay scale, in line with the safeguarding principles set out above.

[1] *"New Professionalism" as set out in the department's five year strategy, sets out the proposal that career progression and financial rewards should be for those who are:*

making the biggest contributions to improving pupil attainment;

continually developing their own expertise; and

helping to develop expertise in other teachers.

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Education and Skills departmental expenditure limit (DEL), (including the Office for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (Ofsted) which has a separate estimate) will be increased by £458,501,000 from £28,162,769,000 to £28,621,270,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £16,424,000 from £272,362,000 to £288,786,000 to fund the departmental restructuring programme.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital is as set out in the following table:

	Resources				*Capital*			
	Change	*New DEL*	*Of which:*		*Change*	*New DEL*	*Of which:*	
			Voted	*Non-voted*			*Voted*	*Non-voted*
DfES	*£'000*	*£'000*	*£'000*	*£'000*	*£'000*	*£'000*	*£'000*	*£'000*
RfR 1	208,530	23,396,589	7,391,692	16,004,897	11,615	3,704,409	2,465,187	1,239,222
RfR 2	171,074	928,652	928,652	0	23,185	137,390	137,390	0
RfR 3	44,097	239,587	239,587	0	0	33	33	0
Ofsted	0	213,301	213,301	0	0	1,309	1,309	0
Sub Total	423,701	24,778,129	8,773,232	16,004,897	34,800	3,843,141	2,603,919	1,239,222
Depreciation*	0	-48,089	-12,343	-35,746	0	0	0	0
Total	423,701	24,730,040	8,760,889	15,969,151	34,800	3,843,141	2,603,919	1,239,222

* Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL, in the table above, since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

Within the administration cost limits changes, the impact is set out in the following table:

DfES	*Original £'000*	*Change £'000*	*Revised £'000*
DfES (RfR 1)	242,362	16,424	258,786
OFSTED	30,000		30,000
Total	272,362	16,424	288,786

Resource DEL

The change in the resource element of the DEL of £423,701,000 arises from a £101,530,000 increase in the voted element of the resource DEL and an increase of £322,171,000 in the non-voted element of the resource DEL mainly to the department's non-departmental public bodies.

Voted Resource DEL

The £101,530,000 increase in the voted element of the resource DEL arises from a £171,074,000 increase in RfR2 from the take up of £168,208,000 end year flexibility; transfer from RfR1 £6,122,000 for Sure Start local authority programmes and the correction of a National College of Schools Leadership winter supplementary transfer; the transfer to RfR1 £3,256,000 for the School Standards Foundation Plan, children's services and childcare for disabled children.

A £44,097,000 increase in RfR3 from the take-up of £48,235,000 end-year flexibility and the transfer to RfR1 £4,138,000 for children's services.

A £113,641,000 decrease in RfR1; the increase in administration costs £16,424,000; from the movement of £295,356,000 to non-voted resource DEL; the take up of £145,519,000 end year flexibility; the draw down £5,942,000 from non-voted departmental unallocated provision; the net transfer from the Department of Health of £1,033,000 for care standards tribunals, a contribution to the National Service Framework Conference, a contribution to the Bichard Implementation Project and for Children's Trusts; the transfer to the Department for Work and Pensions of £600,000 for administering young peoples bridging allowance; the transfer to the Department of Trade and Industry £75,000 for school teachers' pay and conditions; the transfer from the Home Office £400,000 for the Adult Learning Inspectorate review of prison education; the transfer from the Welsh Assembly £500,000 for student support; the transfer from the Department of Transport £3,300,000 for activities licensing; transfer to RfR2 £6,122,000 for Sure Start local authority programmes and correction of a National College of Schools Leadership winter supplementary transfer; the transfer from RfR2 £3,256,000 for the School Standards Foundation Plan, children's services and childcare for disabled children; transfer from RfR3 £4,138,000 for children's services; reclassification of £8,000,000 support for children and family capital to capital grants within resource.

Administration Cost Limits

The £16,424,000 increase in the administration cost limit arises from the take up of £17,274,000 end year flexibility to fund the departmental restructuring programme; transfer from the Department of Health £418,000 for children's services and protection of vulnerable adults; the transfer from the Cabinet Office £309,000 for the funding of the Parliamentary Council Office; the net transfer out to the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister £1,577,000 for Government Office Accommodation and Regional Co-ordination Unit costs and local public service agreements.

Non-voted Resource DEL

The £322,171,000 increase in non-voted resource DEL arises from the movement of £295,356,000 from voted resource DEL; the take up of £12,467,000 end year flexibility; the movement of £5,942,000 from departmental unallocated provision to voted support for children and families; the transfer from the Department for Work and Pensions £5,750,000 for Adult Learning Inspectorate, inspections of Jobcentre Plus; the transfer to the Department of Health £2,845,000 for teachers' pension costs and clinical scientists; the net reclassification of capital to capital grants within resource of £17,385,000 from school credit approvals to support for scientific research and innovation.

Capital DEL

The change in the capital element of the DEL of £34,800,000 arises from a £276,874,000 increase in the voted element of capital DEL and a decrease of £242,074,000 in the non-voted element of the capital DEL.

Voted Capital DEL

The £276,874,000 increase to the voted element of capital DEL arises from a £253,689,000 increase in RfR1; from the movement of £247,689,000 from non-voted capital DEL; the take up of £10,000,000 end year flexibility; the reclassification of capital to capital grants within resource of £4,000,000 to support teachers' television from other capital programmes.

A £23,185,000 increase in RfR2 from the take up of end year flexibility.

Non-voted capital DEL

The £242,074,000 decrease to the non-voted element of capital DEL arises from the movement of £247,689,000 from non-voted to voted capital DEL; the take up of £27,000,000 end year flexibility; the net reclassification of £17,385,000 from schools credit approvals to support for scientific research and innovation; £4,000,000 from schools credit approvals to support teachers' television capital to voted capital DEL.

HEALTH

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): Subject to the necessary supplementary estimate, the Department of Health's element of the departmental expenditure limit (DEL) will be increased by £14,855,000 from £72,298,859,000 to £72,313,714,000 and the administration cost limit will be increased by £23,218,000 from £257,970,000 to £281,188,000. The Food Standards Agency DEL remains unchanged at £152,478,000. The overall DEL including the Food Standards Agency will increase by £14,855,000 from £72,451,337,000 to £72,466,192,000. The impact on resource and capital are set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change £ million	Voted £ million	New DEL Non-voted £ million	Total £ million
Department of Health				
Resource DEL	14.855	69,558.825	-375.409	69,183.416
Capital DEL	0	855.800	2,274.498	3,130.298
Total Department of Health DEL	14.855	70,414.625	1,899.089	72,313.714
Depreciation*	0.019	-510.362	-44.477	-554.839
Total Department of Health spending (after adjustment)	14.874	69,904.263	1,854.612	71,758.875
Food Standards Agency				
Resources	0	151.831	0	151.831
Capital	0	0.647	0	0.647
Total Food Standards Agency DEL	0	152.478	0	152.478
Depreciation*	0	-2.004	0	-2.004
Total Food Standards Agency spending (after adjustment)	0	150.474	0	150.474

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since the capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the DEL arises from net transfers from the Department for Education and Skills of £1,394,000 (£-418,000 administration costs) for pension costs, clinical scientists, conferences and the care standards tribunal, offset by funding for children's trusts, children's service teams, costs of the vulnerable adults scheme and a contribution towards the funding of the recommendations of the Bichard Inquiry. A transfer from the Home Office of £14,691,000 for the pooled drug treatment budget and funding for prison healthcare. A transfer from DHSS Northern Ireland of £523,000 (£10,000 administration costs) for out of area treatments and a contribution to the national screening committee. A transfer to the National Assembly for Wales of £2,229,000 mainly for cross border flows and high security psychiatric services. A transfer from the Cabinet Office of £546,000 (administration costs) for funding services provided by the Parliamentary Counsel. A net transfer to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of £6,000 (£80,000 increase in administration costs) for a contribution towards long term social services support through partnership arrangements, offset by funding local public service agreements. A transfer to the Department of Trade and Industry of £64,000 for review body pay awards.

The administration cost limit has increased by £23,218,000 from £257,970,000 to £281,188,000 mainly for change management costs and transfers detailed above. There are no changes to the Food Standards Agency's departmental expenditure limit and administration cost limit.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for International Development departmental expenditure limit (DEL) will be increased by £163,106,000 from £3,758,690,000 to £3,921,796,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £10,024,000 from £222,000,000 to £232,024,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	136,078	3,293,768	607,500	3,901,268
Capital	22,528	40,528		40,528
Depreciation*	4,500	-20,000		-20,000
Total	163,106	3,314,296	607,500	3,921,796

** Depreciation, which forms part of the resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL, since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

Voted

A partial draw down of £10,000,000 of administration costs end year flexibility, as set out in the Public Expenditure 2003–04 Provisional Outturn White Paper (Cm 6293), for the administration of development programmes, humanitarian assistance, systems to improve efficiency, and the administration costs of the new Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit.

A full draw down of £153,092,000 of other resource end year flexibility, as set out in the Public Expenditure 2003–04 Provisional Outturn White Paper (Cm 6293), for development programmes in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia and for programmes contributing to multiple objectives, and for the programme costs of the new Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit.

A claim on the reserve of £25,000,000 in respect of humanitarian assistance following the earthquake and tsunami in south-east Asia.

A transfer of £500,000 from the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs for development projects in Russia and the Ukraine.

A transfer of £24,000 of administration costs from the Cabinet Office relating to DfID's use of the Parliamentary Counsel's Office.

A transfer of £6,500,000 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for planned programme activity on global conflict prevention.

A reduction of £1,038,000 in respect of a transfer to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for planned programme activity on conflict prevention in Africa.

A reduction of £16,000,000 relating to a transfer to the capital DEL of subscription costs for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

A reduction of £35,000,000 relating to the reclassification of the costs of DfID's investment in CDC Group plc from the DEL to annually managed expenditure.

Non-voted

A reduction of £7,000,000 relating to transfers of Africa conflict prevention unallocated provision to the Ministry of Defence (£2,920,000) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (£4,080,000).

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

Voted

A draw down of £6,528,000 of capital end-year flexibility, including £6,064,000 vired from other resource, as set out in the Public Expenditure 2003–04 Provisional Outturn White Paper (Cm 6293) for investment in improvements to management information and financial systems, acquisition of equity in Actis Capital llp, and the initial capital costs of the new Post-Conflict Reconstruction Unit.

An increase of £16,000,000 relating to a transfer from the resource DEL of subscription costs for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The change in the adjustment for depreciation arises from forecasts being lower, by £4,500,000, than the total included in the Main Estimate.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy): Subject to parliamentary approval the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) will be taking a 2004–05 spring Supplementary Estimate. The effect this will have is to increase the NIO's DEL by £47,954,000 from £1,236,190,000 to £1,284,144,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resource and capital is as set out in the following table:

Resource (£'000s)				*Capital (£'000s)*			
Change	*New DEL*	*Of which: voted*	*Non-voted*	*Change*	*New DEL*	*Of which: voted*	*Non-voted*
48,054	1,201,508	344,087	857,421	(100)	82,636	35,561	47,075

The change in the resource element of the DEL by £48,054,000 arises from the draw down of £50,281,000 end-year flexibility and the surrender of PES transfers to other departments of £2,227,000.

The extra resource is primarily required to fund a non-budget pressure relating to the PSNI FTR severance provision.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from the surrender of PES transfers to other departments of £100,000.

PRIME MINISTER

Senior Salaries

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The 27th report of the Review Body on Senior Salaries, which makes recommendations about the pay of the Senior Civil Service, senior military personnel and the judiciary, is being published today. Copies are available in the Vote Office and the Libraries of the House. The Government are grateful to the chairman and members of the review body for their work.

The main recommendations of the review body for the Senior Civil Service are:

An uplift from 1 April 2005 of 2.5 per cent to the pay range minima and target rates for each of the Senior Civil Service pay bands below Permanent Secretary and a 3 per cent uplift to the pay range ceilings;

Individual base pay awards to range from 0 to 9 per cent depending on contribution with an average award of 4.2 per cent;

The bonus pot to increase by 1 per cent to 5 per cent of pay bill and that the minimum non-consolidated bonus payment to remain at £2,500;

The Permanent Secretaries' new range is to be £130,350 to £264,250;

Further information should be collected on the reasons why senior civil servants leave the service.

The main recommendation of the review body for the senior military is:

An increase from 1 April 2005 of 2.5 per cent in the incremental pay scales for senior military officers.

The main recommendation of the review body for the judiciary is:

An increase from 1 April 2005 of 3 per cent in judicial salaries.

The Government accept these recommendations. Their cost will be met within existing departmental expenditure limits.

Pay increases for Members of Parliament and Ministers are linked automatically to the movement of the mid point of the pay bands for the Senior Civil Service. Their salaries will therefore increase by 2.8 per cent from 1 April 2005.

Supplementary Estimates

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Security and Intelligence Agencies' departmental expenditure limit (DEL) will be increased by £72,799,000 from £1,333,590,000 to £1,406,389,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £23,713,000 from £603,517,000 to £627,230,000. This includes available Departmental Unallocated Provision, which was not included in the written statement for the Winter Supplementary Estimate. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	63,982,000	1,198,482,000	3,000,000	1,201,482,00
Capital	8,817,000	200,512,000	4,152,000	204,664,00
Depreciation*	-6,058,000	-147,025,000	-	-147,025,00
Total	66,741,000	1,251,969,000	7,152,000	1,259,121,00

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

the take up of end of year flexibility of £51,393,000;

a transfer of £4,199,000 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for conflict prevention;

a transfer of £45,000 from the Cabinet Office for funding the resource element of a Capital Modernisation project;

a transfer of £3,000 from the Northern Ireland Office to contribute towards administrative funding;

a transfer of £185,000 to the Home Office for collaborative research programmes;

a switch from capital to resource of £8,527,000.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

the take up of end of year flexibility of £15,344,000;

a transfer of £2,000,000 from the Cabinet Office for the funding of a Capital Modernisation project;

a switch from capital to resource of £8,527,000.

SCOTLAND

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Alistair Darling): Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates, the Scotland Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) will be increased by £417,028,000 from £22,004,521,000 to £22,421,549,000.

The DEL increase takes account of the following:

a classification change in respect of the transfer of Supporting People from Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) to DEL of £418,000,000; and

the DEL increase also includes the following transfers between the Scottish Executive and other Government departments, amounting to a net decrease of £972,000. These are:

net transfers of £766,000 to the Home Office (Security Enhancements, a scoping study for the Security Industry and Queen's Golden Jubilee Awards);

net transfers of £383,000 to the Department for Work and Pensions (Fair for All initiative & Family Resources Survey);

a transfer of £14,000 to the National Assembly for Wales (out of Area Treatments); and

a transfer of £191,000 from the Northern Ireland Assembly (out of Area Treatments).

The DEL increases will be offset by interdepartmental transfers as detailed above or charged to the DEL Reserve and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

SOLICITOR GENERAL

Prosecution of British Soldiers

The Solicitor-General (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. Friend the Attorney-General has made the following Ministerial Statement:

"Further to my Statement of 4 February 2005 (*Official Report*, col. *WS 21–22*), two additional individuals have now been told of the charges they face. They are Private Monet Vosloo of the 3rd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, and former member of the same regiment, Scott Jackson, who is now a civilian. The charges relate to an incident which allegedly took place on 11 May 2003 in Al U'Zayra in southern Iraq."

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Supplementary Estimates

Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Hewitt):

Expenditure Limits

Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department of Trade and Industry's DEL will be increased by £204,689,000 from £5,493,803,000 to £5,698,492,000 and the administration costs limit will be reduced by £39,392,000 from £436,805,000 to £397,413,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital is as set out in the following table:

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource (£000)	120,589	1,214,013	4,201,986	5,415,999
Capital (£000)	84,100	-11,564	294,057	282,493
Depreciation* (£000)	-11,172	-9,277	-98,420	-107,697
Total (£000)	193,517	1,193,172	4,397,623	5,590,795

* *Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

RfR1

(i) utilisation of £19,354,000 from the unused balance of the department's end-year flexibility entitlement in respect of impairment of venture capital funds;

(ii) utilisation of £3,000,000 from the unused balance of the department's end-year flexibility entitlement in respect of nuclear support to the former Soviet Union;

(iii) a transfer of £45,000 from the Department of Health in respect of the Doctors and Dentists Pay Review Body;

(iv) a transfer of £19,000 from the Department of Health in respect of the Nurses and Other Health Professions Pay Review Body;

(v) a transfer of £75,000 from the Department for Education and Skills in respect of the School Teachers Pay Review Body;

(vi) a transfer of £50,000 from the Department for Transport in respect of the FP6 Sustainable Surface Transport programme;

(vii) a transfer of £524,000 to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in respect of the Red Meat Industry Forum;

(viii) an increase to reflect reclassification of £3,500,000 from the Performance and Innovation Fund in respect of renewable energy;

(ix) reclassification of £2,925,000 to RfR2 in respect of SETNET (Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics Network);

(x) reclassification of £30,000,000 from the non-voted non-fossil fuel obligation in respect of renewable energy;

(xi) reclassification of £271,000 from non-voted expenditure to voted expenditure, to reflect the funding of Smart and Enterprise grant teams and business link regional teams co-location costs, via regional development agencies;

Other Non-voted

There is also take-up of end-year flexibility by regional development agencies of £6,500,000 to provide for bad debts related to broadband aggregation bodies and £10,000,000 for write-downs of stock related to regeneration properties, an increase of £42,000 to reflect a transfer from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for the Sustainable Consumption Round Table, and surrender of £30,000,000 relating to the non-fossil fuel obligation which is no longer required.

RfR2

(i) a transfer of £32,000 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in respect of the Year of Science in China;

(ii) reclassification of £2,925,000 from RfR1 in respect of SETNET (Science, Engineering Technology and Mathematics Network);

Also within the change to resource DEL, the changes to the administration costs limit are (RfR1):

(i) a transfer of £105,000 from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in respect of the Farm Business Advice Service;

(ii) utilisation of £18,000,000 from the unused balance of the department's end-year flexibility entitlement in relation to provisions for the voluntary early retirement scheme;

(iii) a transfer of £1,155,000 from the Cabinet Office in respect of the Parliamentary Counsel Office;

(iv) a transfer of £700,000 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in relation to Government Office administration;

(v) a reduction of £11,172,000 in respect of the reduction in Radiocommunications Agency non-cash expenditure and associated programme receipts following the transfer of its functions to Ofcom;

(vi) a reduction of £46,780,000 in respect of the reclassification of the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Main Estimate

(i) utilisation of £90,000,000 of the department's 2005–06 departmental expenditure limit for European Regional Development Fund expenditure borne of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's estimate under the procedures for anticipating future years' expenditure that apply to this budget.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

RfR1

(i) utilisation of £70,000,000 from the unused balance of the department's end-year flexibility entitlement for launch investment;

(ii) utilisation of £17,600,000 from the unused balance of the department's end-year flexibility entitlement for Enterprise Fund venture capital;

(iii) utilisation of £12,509,000 from the unused balance of the department's end-year flexibilityentitlement in respect of a shortfall of receipts in relation to commercial best practice;

(iv) a reduction of £12,509,000 in respect of the transfer of the functions of Radiocommunications Agency to Ofcom;

(v) a reduction to reflect reclassification of £3,500,000 from the Performance and Innovation Fund in respect of renewable energy.

RfR2

(i) reclassification of £1,000,000 from voted expenditure to non-voted expenditure, to reflectco-funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, UK Trade & Investment's Resource DEL will be increased by £2,000,000 from £99,087,000 to £101,087,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	2,000	101,087	0	101,087
Capital	0	248	0	248
Depreciation*	0	-187	0	-187
Total	2,000	101,148	0	101,148

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

i. utilisation of £2,000,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement to meet the increased requirement for resources particularly in the regions and on inward investment.

TRANSPORT

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Transport DEL for 2004–05 will be increased by £204,113,000 from £10,943,862,000 to £11,147,975,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £5,486,000 from £215,484,000 to £220,970,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	Voted	New DEL Non-voted	Total
Resource	589,904	4,509,002	3,845,178	8,354,180
Capital	-127,646	1,954,071	1,443,992	3,398,063
Depreciation*	-258,145	-592,941	-11,327	-604,268
Total	204,113	5,870,132	5,277,843	11,147,975

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The £263,319,000 increase in the voted resource element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of £274,096,000 reserve claim for the Highways Agency, in respect of reclassification of expenditure from capital to resource (£40,000,000) and in respect of depreciation of the road network, writedown of fixed assets, net increase in provisions, loss on disposal of assets and provision for bad debts (£234,096,000 non cash);

(ii) take up of £47,200,000 end year flexibility, comprising:

(a) £42,200,000 for the Highways Agency in respect of depreciation of the road network; and
(b) £5,000,000 (administration costs) for central administration;

(iii) a net transfer of £3,189,000 to other government departments, comprising:

(a) £3,300,000 to the Department for Education and Skills for school travel adviser funding;

(b) £297,000 to the Department for Work and Pensions for the Disability Rights Commission and Code of Practice on Transport;

(c) £50,000 to the Department of Trade and Industry for sustainable surface transport;

(d) £28,000 to the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs for coast protection and harbour works; partially offset by

(e) £322,000 (administration costs) from the Cabinet Office (Parliamentary Counsel Office) to reflect charges for Parliamentary Counsel;

(f) £25,000 (administration costs) from the Department for Work and Pensions (Health and Safety Executive) for the dangerous goods branch; and

(g) £139,000 (administration costs) from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for local Public Service Agreements (£60,000) and the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (£79,000);

(iv) a net transfer to non-voted resource provision of £55,379,000 comprising:

(a) a transfer of £61,699,000 to cover Highways Agency utilisation of provisions;

(b) a transfer of £7,350,000 to cover vehicle excise duty collection costs by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (£5,600,000) and a shortfall in dividends from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency and Driving Standards Agency trading funds (£1,750,000); partially offset by

(c) a transfer from DVLA non voted provision of £13,000,000 in respect of a reduction in Vehicle Excise Duty enforcement receipts;

(d) a transfer from non voted provision of £570,000 in respect of Channel Tunnel Rail Link project costs;

(e) a transfer from non voted provision of £100,000 in respect of enforcement activities by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency; and

(v) a drawdown of £591,000 in advance from the European Regional Development Fund PES pool for the European Regional Development Fund.

Within the non-voted resource element of the DEL, there has been an increase of £326,585,000 comprising:

(i) a take up of £235,352,000 reserve claim comprising:

(a) £154,352,000 (non cash) for the Highways Agency for an adjustment in respect of release of provisions; and

(b) £81,000,000 for the Strategic Rail Authority towards funding requirements following the Interim Regulatory Review.

(ii) a transfer of £100,000 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, to enable the participation of British Transport Police in the key worker scheme;

(iii) a net transfer of £55,379,000 from the voted resource element of the DEL;

(iv) a transfer of £38,631,000 from the voted capital element of the DEL towards Strategic Rail Authority funding requirements following the Interim Regulatory Review;

(v) a net transfer of £2,251,000 to the non voted capital element of the DEL comprising:

(a) a transfer of £4,751,000 in respect of capital expenditure by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency offset by increased non voted resource receipts; partially offset by

(b) a transfer from non voted capital provision of £2,500,000 towards Strategic Rail Authority funding requirements following the Interim Regulatory Review;

(vi) a decrease to reflect reclassification of £426,000 receipts in respect of Humber Bridge interest repayments from non-budget provision to DEL.

As a result of the above changes to the resource element of the DEL there has been an increase of £5,486,000 in the gross administration costs limit, from £215,484,000 to £220,970,000.

The decrease of £114,525,000 in the voted capital element of the DEL arises from:

(i) a reduction of £118,000,000 to address an imbalance of Highways Agency budgets arising from reclassification of expenditure between capital and resource;

(ii) a take up of £6,100,000 end year flexibility for the Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group One Stop Service programme;

(iii) a transfer of £1,045,000 from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for central administration:

(iv) a transfer of £38,631,000 to the non voted resource element of the DEL;

(v) a net transfer of £34,432,000 from the non voted capital element of the DEL, comprising:

(a) a transfer of £9,950,000 to increase voted capital provision for Ports and Shipping services, in respect of the reclassification of trust ports as public corporations;

(b) a transfer of £31,609,000 to increase voted capital provision for Greater London Authority Transport Grant, in respect of the East London Line extension and Crossrail; partially offset by

(c) a transfer from voted capital provision of £3,200,000 for the British Transport Police Authority capital programme;

(d) a transfer from Highways Agency voted capital provision of £2,057,000 in respect of de-trunking;

(e) a transfer of £1,870,000 from voted capital provision of the Driver Vehicle and Operator Group to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency trading fund in relation to the One Stop Service programme; and

(vi) a drawdown of £529,000 in advance from the European Regional Development Fund PES pool for the European Regional Development Fund.

The net decrease of £13,121,000 in the non-voted capital element of the DEL arises from:

(i) a reduction of £3,000,000 in departmental unallocated provision;

(ii) a take up of £26,130,000 end year flexibility, comprising:

(a) £26,000,000 for de-trunking;

(b) £130,000 for the Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group One Stop Service programme;

(iii) a net transfer of £2,251,000 from the non-voted resource element of the DEL;

(iv) a net transfer of £34,432,000 to the voted capital element of the DEL; and

(v)a decrease to reflect reclassification of £4,070,000 receipts from non-budget provision to DEL, in respect of principal repayments for Humber Bridge (£1,443,000); Tyne Tunnel (£1,342,000); and the second Mersey Tunnel (£1,285,000).

WALES OFFICE

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Hain): As a result of the 2004–05 winter supplementary estimate, the Wales departmental expenditure limit (DEL) increased by £109,058,000 from £11,789,595,000 to £11,898,653,000.

The increase was a result of:

Take up of EYF entitlement	£130,000,000
Additional provision for Child Poverty	£78,000

Transfers to and from the National Assembly for Wales:

Transfers In	
From DWP for Work Based Learning for Adults	£28,000
From DFES for Hardship Loans	£591,000
From DWP for Sure Start	£184,000
From DoH for Out of Areas Treatments	£11,128,000
From DoH for publications	£32,000
From Home Office for Operation Tarian	£315,000
From Home Office for CRU running costs	£602,000
From Home Office for a Business Crime Advisor	£52,000
From Home Office for Social Cohesion	£64,000
Total	£12,996,000
Transfers Out	
To the Scottish Executive for the 15th Conference of the Commonwealth Education Ministers	(£100,000)
To the Department for Constitutional Affairs (transfer of services to the Wales Office)	(£490,000)
To the Met Office for NMP and NSWWS	(£611,000)
To DWP for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Subsidy	(£23,615,000)
To DWP for Administration Subsidy 2004–05	(£9,200,000)
Total	(£34,016,000)
Net transfers out	(£21,020,000)
Net change to Wales DEL	£109,058,000

As a result of the above transfers provision within the Wales Office increased by £490,000. This expenditure is contained within the single DCA DEL and Administration Costs Limit.

Spring Supplementary Estimate 2004–05

Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Wales Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) Wales Administration costs will be increased by £287,528,000 from £11,413,862,000 to £11,701,390,000.

The changes are a result of:

The take-up of Departmental Expenditure Limit end year flexibility of for the National Assembly for Wales;	£156,000,000
Net transfers from other Government Departments to the National Assembly for Wales of	£2,106,000
The movement of the Supporting People programme from AME to DEL	£121,000,000
A machinery of Government change with the responsibility for the Fire Service devolved to the National Assembly for Wales. This has led to an increase to the DEL.	£8,422,000
Net change to Wales DEL	£287,528,000

Transfers are as follows:

Transfer In	
From the DWP for Adult Learning Inspectorate;	£200,000
From the Home Office for Prison Health—Pay Uplift;	£51,000
From the Home Office for Prison Health - (Estate Planning and Development Group)	£71,000
From the DoH for Dental Sift;	£13,000
From the DoH for High Security Psychiatric Services;	£192,000
From the DoH for Cross Border Flows	£2,024,000
From the Scotland Office for Out of Areas Treatments	£14,000
From the Northern Ireland Office for Out of Areas Treatments	£7,000
From the Home Office for Golden Jubilee Awards	£34,000
Total	£2,606,000
Transfers Out	
To DfES for part time student support;	(£500,000)
Total	(£500,000)
Net Transfer Total	£2,106,000

The increase in DEL will be charged to the reserve or offset by transfers from other Departments and will not therefore add to the planned total of public expenditure.

Wales DEL provision for Wales Office increased by £16,000 as a result of a transfer from Parliamentary Counsel Office. Wales Office spending is contained within single Department of Constitutional Affairs Departmental Expenditure Limit and Administration Costs Limit.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud (Redbridge)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on the London Borough of Redbridge was published on 17 February 2005 and copies of the report are available in the Library.

In 2003–04, the London Borough of Redbridge administered some £82.1 million in housing benefits, about 13.5 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure. BFI reviewed the counter-fraud arrangements in place to protect these significant sums, at the invitation of the Borough.

BFI found that Redbridge gives a high priority to combating benefit fraud and that the Investigation Team is experienced and sharply focused on deterring fraud. The Team raises a considerable number of sanctions against fraudsters and is well supported by council Members and managers.

However, BFI have serious concerns about:

- inappropriate use of authorised individual's powers when obtaining information from third parties;
- a poor relationship with the department's Counter Fraud Investigation Service;
- non-compliance with the provisions of the code of practice on covert surveillance;

failure to follow the Department's guidance on the administration of formal cautions;

breaches of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in half of the interviews under caution examined by BFI;

the nature of referrals from the Metropolitan Police to the Investigation Team.

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to BFI's findings and recommendations.

BFI will continue to undertake inspections focused on counter-fraud arrangements in other local authorities.

BFI is an independent unit within the Department for Work and Pensions that inspects and reports directly to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the standard of Benefits administration and counter-fraud activity in local authorities and the Department itself.

Supplementary Estimates

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson): Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for Work and Pensions DEL will be increased by £151,841,000 from £8,497,041,000 to £8,648,882,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £124,621,000 from £5,995,966,000 to £6,120,587,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	147,571	7,283,080	1,188,829	8,471,909
Capital	4,000	293,445	1,202	294,647
Depreciation*	270	-116,960	-714	-117,674
Total	151,841	7,459,565	1,189,317	8,648,882

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

RfR2

i. an increase in provision of £24,000,000 (grants) in Section Z due to increased spending by the European Social Fund with an equivalent increase in appropriations in aid in Section AC (take up of end of year flexibility);

ii. an increase in provision of £297,000 (administration costs) due to a transfer from the Department for Transport for work on a code of practice for transport;

iii. an increase in provision of £122,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer from the Department for Constitutional Affairs for implementation of the Fines Project;

iv. an increase in provision of £1,377,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of Neighbourhood Renewal;

v. an increase in provision of £131,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer from the Scottish Executive in respect of work undertaken by the Disability Rights Commission;

vi. an increase in provision of £65,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the administration costs of local Public Service Agreements;

vii. an increase in provision of £600,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer from the Department for Education and Skills in respect of Young Persons' Bridging Allowance;

viii. a reduction in provision of £5,750,000 (other current) in Section B due to a transfer to the Department for Education and Skills for costs incurred by the Adult Learning Inspectorate;

ix. a reduction in provision of £200,000 (other current) in Section B due to a transfer to the Welsh Assembly for costs incurred by the Adult Learning Inspectorate;

x. a reduction in provision of £25,000 (administration costs) in Section C due to a transfer to the Department for Transport in relation to the Carriage of Dangerous Goods;

RfR3

xi. an increase in provision of £100,000 (administration costs) due to a transfer from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of Neighbourhood Renewal;

xii. a reduction in provision of £63,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer to Northern Ireland SSA in respect of work on Winter Fuel payments;

RfR5

xiii. an increase in provision of £115,000,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to additional spending on Departmental Modernisation (end of year flexibility);

xiv. a reduction in provision of £420,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer to the Inland Revenue in respect of the Payment Modernisation Project;

xv. a reduction in provision of £1,241,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer to the Inland Revenue for the costs of the Cheque Payment Service;

RfR6

xvi. an increase in provision of £13,000,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to additional spending by Corporate Services (end of year flexibility);

xvii. an increase in provision of £326,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer from the Cabinet Office for funding of the Parliamentary Counsel Office;

xviii. an increase in provision of £252,000 (administration costs) in Section A due to a transfer from the Scottish Executive for work carried out on the Family Resources Survey;

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

RfR5

xix. an increase in provision of £4,000,000 in Section A due to increased spending on Departmental Modernisation (take up of End Year Flexibility);

Administration Costs

The movement in the Administration Cost limit arises from those items noted above as affecting administration costs plus the following item which is neutral in terms of overall resource DEL but which impacts the Administration Cost limit:

xx. a transfer of £4,900,000 from administration to other current in respect of the Employment Development and Modernisation Fund;

Movements from Non-voted expenditure

Additionally there are the following draw downs that are neutral in overall DEL terms:

Departmental Unallocated Provision

xxi. £5,000,000 into RfR1 for additional costs incurred by the Child Support Agency;

xxii. £2,000,000 into RfR2 for additional costs incurred by the Health and Safety Executive in connection with the Cullen report;

xxiii. £1,950,000 into RfR3 for additional costs incurred by the Pension Service;

xxiv. £76,507,000 into RfR6 for additional costs incurred by Corporate Services;

Welfare Modernisation Fund

xxv. £74,122,000 (resource) and £22,800,000 (capital) into RfR5 for expenditure on the modernisation of the Department;

Employment Development Fund

xxvi. £83,000,000 into RfR2 for employment related expenditure;

Employment Development and Modernisation Fund

xxvii. £74,700,000 into RfR2 for employment related expenditure.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 23 February 2005

TREASURY

Budget Statement

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): I propose to deliver my Budget Statement to the House on Wednesday 16 March.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Community Legal Service (Asylum and Immigration) Regulations

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): Earlier today my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, Baroness Ashton of Upholland, made a statement in the other place reporting that she had laid before Parliament, in accordance with section 103D of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as inserted by section 26 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004, the Community Legal Service (Asylum and Immigration) Regulations 2005. These regulations prescribe the procedure to be followed by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and the High Court, when retrospectively awarding legal aid for challenges to decisions of the Tribunal.

These regulations will come into force on 4 April. The new legal aid arrangements are being introduced to support the new Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and the new system of access to the higher courts, by discouraging weak applications. This will contribute to increasing speed and efficiency within the appeals process and ensuring that public money is focused on applicants with genuine claims.

Under the new arrangements legal aid will be awarded retrospectively at the end of the process, usually by the Tribunal judge following reconsideration and in a limited number of cases, following the determination of the review application.

HOME OFFICE

Animals (Scientific Procedure Licences)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Caroline Flint): In its report published on 16 July 2002 (HL Paper 150-I) the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures made a number of recommendations that were broadly accepted by the Government in their published response in January 2003 (Command 5729).

The Government have since acted upon most of the Select Committee's main recommendations. This statement concerns two remaining key recommendations, that the application form for a project licence under the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 should be simplified and shortened, and that anonymised details of granted project licences should be published.

The chief inspector of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate has at my request, and in line with proposals from a joint Home Office/Stakeholder Working Group, been considering these recommendations as part of a review of the project licence application process. The review has been taken forward in close consultation with project licence holders, other stakeholders and members of relevant representative bodies, who have been involved at all stages in the related development work and field trials.

A revised project licence application form has now been placed with other licensing forms on the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/animals/licensing.html.

The revised form commands the broad acceptance of all directly concerned with its use. It is generally seen as more user-friendly and as a significant improvement on the form it is replacing. It will allow applications to be submitted either in electronic format or as hard copy, and is expected in due course to be adapted for use in a new IT case-working system as a prelude to eventual on-line processing.

The revised form is gradually being phased into use, and we expect it to be used for all applications started afresh after 31 March 2005. There is provision on it for an applicant to produce an abstract of his/her proposed programme of work for publication on the Home Office website once a licence has been granted. This will help to implement a key recommendation of the House of Lords Select Committee, and will also meet the requirements of the Home Office Publication Scheme approved under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We expect that a licence abstract in each case will cover points of general interest to the lay reader. These might include the expected benefits of the project, the reason for using animals and the choice of species, the procedures to be undertaken and their likely effects on the animals, and the steps taken to minimise the number of animals used and their suffering. Examples of abstracts provided by existing licence holders are already on the website and can be accessed at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/animals/index.html.

The publication of licence abstracts is a major step towards greater openness and more informed public debate about animal experimentation. I wish to record the Government's appreciation of the willingness of many of the scientists concerned to co-operate in such a ground-breaking development. I also wish to make clear that we will continue to take the greatest care, in collaboration with the scientists, to ensure that no details are published which could jeopardise their safety or their work.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Spring Supplementary Estimate

The Solicitor-General (Ms Harriet Harman): Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Attorney-General's DEL will be increased by £24,517,000 from £621,109,000 to £645,626,000 and the Administration Costs Limits will be increased by £32,598,000 from £468,709,000 to £501,307,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

£'000s

	Change	*Voted*	*New DEL Non-voted*	*Total*
Resource	28,570	632,787	-	632,787
Capital	-572	22,443	-	22,443
Depreciation*	-3,481	-9,604	-	-9,604
Total	24,517	645,626	-	645,626

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The Crown Prosecution Service's (CPS) element of the Attorney-General's DEL will be increased by £24,152,000 from £561,429,000 to £585,581,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £27,352,000 from £434,977,000 to £462,329,000.

The change in the CPS's DEL arises from:

Administration costs changes in respect of a transfer of £554,000 from the Department for Constitutional Affairs to fund the Effective Trial Management Programme.

Administration costs changes in respect of a transfer of £4,000,000 from the non-voted Departmental Unallocated Provision (DUP) and the take up of £22,000,000 end year flexibility administration costs to fund the increased requirements for charging.

Administration costs changes in respect of a transfer of £448,000 from the Crown Prosecution Service to the Home Office to support the "No Witness No Justice" partnership programme to improve services to prosecution witnesses in criminal cases.

Administration costs changes in respect of a transfer of £354,000 from the Crown Prosecution Service to the Treasury Solicitor's Department to support the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers (LSLO).

Programme expenditure changes in respect of a transfer of £1,772,000 other current expenditure from the Home Office to provide additional resources from Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) to fund Exchange Integration Services Stream Release 1 (ExISS r1), an initiative to improve the integration of Criminal Justice IT Systems.

Programme expenditure changes in respect of a transfer of £1,200,000 other current expenditure from the Home Office to provide additional resources from Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) to begin development of the "No Witness No Justice" (NWNJ) IT Support Tool.

Programme expenditure changes in respect of a transfer of £3,000,000 transfer from non-voted Departmental Unallocated Provision (DUP) required for increased costs related to the prosecution of criminal cases.

The change in the capital element of the CPS's DEL arises from £572,000 capital transferred from the Crown Prosecution Service to the Home Office to support the "No Witness No Justice" partnership programme to improve services to prosecution witnesses in criminal cases.

Other changes which have no net effect on the CPS's DEL are:

Programme costs changes in respect of the transfer of £1,600,000 from the Crown Prosecution Service other current expenditure to administration costs to support the increased deployment of internal resources in the Crown Court.

£2,600,000 Administration costs End Year Flexibility transferred to the Treasury Solicitors' Department for the PRACAMS project.

The Serious Fraud Office's (SFO) element of the Attorney-General's DEL will be increased by £365,000 from £40,640,000 to £41,005,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £865,000 from £23,740,000 to £24,605,000.

The change in the resource element of the SFO's DEL arises from:

Administration costs changes in respect of the draw down of £892,000 End Year Flexibility for additional costs related to accommodation, projects and efficiency review responses.

Administration costs changes in respect of the transfer of £27,000 to the Treasury Solicitor's Department to support the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers (LSLO).

Programme costs changes in respect of the transfer of £500,000 other current expenditure to the Treasury Solicitor's Department for increased costs related to the PRACAMS project.

The Treasury Solicitor's Department (TSD) element of the Attorney-General's DEL will not change from £19,040,000. However, the Administration Costs Limit will be increased by £4,381,000 from £9,992,000 to £14,373,000.

The change in the resource element of TSD's DEL of arises from:

Take up of End Year Flexibility of £2,600,000 to be drawn from the Crown Prosecution Service's element of the Law Officers' End Year Flexibility for increased costs related to the PRACAMS project.

Administration costs changes in respect of a transfer of £500,000 from the Serious Fraud Office to the Treasury Solicitor's Department for increased costs related to the PRACAMS project.

Administration costs changes in respect of a transfer of £354,000 from the Crown Prosecution Service, and a transfer of £27,000 from the Serious Fraud Office to the Treasury Solicitor's Department to support the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers (LSLO).

Other changes which have no net effect on TSD's DEL are:

Programme costs changes in respect of the transfer of £900,000 from Treasury Solicitor's Department other current expenditure to Administration costs for increased costs related to the PRACAMS project.

Administration costs changes in respect of the transfer of £16,000 from the Customs & Excise Prosecution Office to the Treasury Solicitor's Department to support the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers (LSLO).

Administration costs changes in respect of the transfer of £55,000 from the Treasury Solicitor's Department Agency to support the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers (LSLO).

Administration costs changes in respect of a £7,000,000 increase in Treasury Solicitor's Department Administration costs offset by a corresponding increase in Administration income to meet an additional demand for legal services provided to other Government Departments.

Administration costs changes in respect of a £75,000 increase in Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate Administration costs offset by a corresponding increase in Administration income, to fund costs arising from work done for HMC&E.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 24 February 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Prince of Wales (Marriage)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): In the light of recent interest in the law surrounding royal marriages, I am making this statement to set out in more detail the view that has been taken by the Government on the lawfulness of the proposed marriage between the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Parker Bowles.

The Government are satisfied that it is lawful for the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Parker Bowles, like anyone else, to marry by a civil ceremony in accordance with part III of the Marriage Act 1949.

Civil marriages were introduced in England by the Marriage Act 1836. Section 45 said that the Act:

"\... shall not extend to the marriage of any of the royal family".

But the provisions on civil marriage in the 1836 Act were repealed by the Marriage Act 1949. All remaining parts of the 1836 Act, including section 45, were repealed by the Registration Service Act 1953. No part of the 1836 Act therefore remains on the statute book.

The Marriage Act 1949 re-enacted and re-stated the law on marriage in England and Wales. The Act covered both marriage by Church of England rite, and civil marriage. It did not repeat the language of section 45 of the 1836 Act. Instead, section 79(5) of the 1949 Act says that:

"Nothing in this Act shall affect any law or custom relating to the marriage of members of the royal family".

The change of wording is important, and the significance is not undermined by the fact that the 1949 Act is described as a consolidation Act. The interpretation of any Act of Parliament, even when it consolidates previous legislation, must be based on the words used in the Act itself, not different words used in the previous legislation.

In our view, section 79(5) of the 1949 Act preserves ancient procedures applying to royal marriages, for example the availability of customary forms of marriage and registration. It also preserves the effect of the Royal Marriages Act 1772, which requires the Sovereign's consent for certain marriages. But it does not have the effect of excluding royal marriages from the scope of part III, which provides for civil ceremonies. As the heading to section 79 indicates ("repeals and savings") it is a saving, not an exclusion.

We are aware that different views have been taken in the past; but we consider that these were over-cautious, and we are clear that the interpretation I have set out in this statement is correct. We also note that the Human Rights Act has since 2000 required legislation to be interpreted wherever possible in a way that is compatible with the right to marry (article 12) and with the right to enjoy that right without discrimination (article 14). This, in our view, puts the modern meaning of the 1949 Act beyond doubt.

DEFENCE

Baton Rounds (Northern Ireland)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I have today placed in the Library of the House a Defence Scientific Advisory Council (DSAC) statement on medical issues arising from the first two years of operational use of the L21 A1 Baton Round (June 2001–May 2003).

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Commercial Property Leases

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): We are publishing today on our website the final report by the University of Reading on the impact of the 2002 code of practice for commercial leases. We will also be publishing it in hard copy in due course and copies will be available in the Libraries of both Houses.

The report considered the impact of the code since its introduction in April 2002, against the market and institutional background. We have undertaken to consider, in the light of this report, whether it is sufficient to continue relying on voluntary measures to promote greater flexibility and choice in the property market, or whether instead to introduce legislation. Last year, following Reading University's interim report, we carried out a consultation on options to deter or outlaw the use of upward only rent review clauses, making it clear that we would make a final decision on whether or not to legislate only when we had received the final report.

We are now studying the report alongside the consultation responses. We will announce our conclusions in due course.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

UN Reform

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs will today lay before Parliament a Command Paper on the recent report by the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (CM 6449). Copies will be placed in the Library of the House and will be available from the Vote Office. A copy will also be available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website www.fco.gov.uk.

The UK has welcomed the report. The panel has done an excellent job in laying the foundations for a new consensus on collective security to take the United Nations into the 21st century. The report has a simple but fundamental premise: that we all share

responsibility for each other's security. It argues that the threats we face today are interlinked: poverty, disease and environmental degradation, including climate change, as well as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It also argues that the challenges of security and sustainable development are interlinked: neither is possible without the other.

The report includes an important recommendation for a new peacebuilding commission, to mobilise and co-ordinate international support for countries suffering from conflict; important proposals on the key threats of proliferation and terrorism; and endorses a collective international responsibility to protect, that is, to act against genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. The report also addresses the question of Security Council membership: a Security Council that better reflects today's world will be better able to deal with today's threats.

Britain will play a leading role in taking forward work on the panel's recommendations. On 10 February the Foreign Secretary launched a public debate on the issue, and the Government, in association with the United Nations Association, will hold a series of events around the country to ensure that people can contribute their views on how the UN should be dealing with threats to international peace and security. We hope as many stakeholders as possible will give us their views, either at the regional events or by e-mailing us directly via the FCO website.

Special Envoy (Afghanistan)

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): On 16 February, during my one day visit to Kabul, I announced the appointment of Lieutenant-General John McColl CBE DSO as the Prime Minister's special envoy to Afghanistan.

The appointment of Lieutenant-General McColl is a signal of the importance the UK attaches to our ongoing commitment to the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. Lietenant-General McColl will make a valuable contribution to our high-level dialogue with President Karzai and his Government on the full range of our common strategic priorities, including reconstruction, security sector reform, the democratic process and counter-narcotics work. He will be working in a way fully complementary to that of the British ambassador to Afghanistan, Rosalind Marsden and her staff.

Lieutenant-General John McColl CBE DSO is currently commander regional forces and inspector general of the Territorial Army (CF/IGTA) at headquarters, land command. He served as the first commander of the international security assistance force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in the first half of 2002 and is highly regarded by President Karzai and key Afghan contacts for the manner in which he discharged his responsibilities. In that capacity, Lieutenant-General McColl developed a wide understanding of the challenges facing Afghanistan as it re-builds after over 20 years of conflict, and a keen sense of the most effective support that the international community can offer. Lieutenant-General McColl attended President Karzai's inauguration on 7 December at the invitation of the President.

In his role as Prime Minister's special envoy, Lieutenant-General McColl will visit Afghanistan 2–3 times a year, engaging with President Karzai and the Afghan authorities across a range of issues vital to the bilateral relationship. He will also continue to fulfil his Army duties as CRF/IGTA. General McColl's role will be subject to review after a year.

NORTHERN IRELAND

National Security Intelligence Work

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy): The Government have been considering for a lengthy period how best to take forward one aspect of the modernisation agenda of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The announcement being made today reflects the enormous progress that has already been made in implementing the recommendations of the Patten commission.

Patten acknowledged that whatever changes were necessary in the policing arrangements for Northern Ireland it would remain the case that national security was a matter for central Government, as is the case in the rest of the United Kingdom. The Government have itself consistently subscribed to that view. The very serious threat from international terrorism which has developed over recent years has reinforced that conclusion.

Against that background it seems to the Government appropriate to announce their intention that the security service will assume for Northern Ireland the lead responsibility it has had for national security intelligence work since 1992 in Great Britain.

Such change will in no way diminish the role of the PSNI in intelligence gathering in areas other than national security, nor of course in mounting executive policing operations, making arrests and taking forward prosecutions.

Looking to the future, such a change will facilitate the devolution of justice and policing when a robust and workable basis for that is agreed, taking account of the fact that national security is an excepted matter for which the Secretary of State must remain responsible. In the meantime there are important benefits in bringing the arrangements for national security into line with the rest of the UK so as to provide for a consistent and coordinated response to international terrorism. Sharing of intelligence on a cross-border and international basis will be particularly important in combating money-laundering and other aspects of organised crime.

The PSNI and the security service will continue to work together in partnership, making best use of their complementary skills and expertise. The PSNI will, as now, provide the operational police response in countering terrorism, and in protecting the whole community in Northern Ireland.

The powers and responsibilities of the Policing Board, the Police Ombudsman and the Oversight Commissioner to oversee policing are not affected by this change.

We intend that the new arrangements, together with associated safeguards, will be fully operational during 2007. This timetable reflects the need for detailed planning and implementation.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pensions

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson): I have today published a paper "Principles for Reform: The National Pensions Debate" which sets out our guiding principles for reform of the pensions system. A copy has been placed in the Library and copies are available for hon. Members from the Vote Office.

Our policies are delivering for today's pensioners and the Government have already started to address issues for future generations of pensioners. However, our analysis and that of the Pensions Commission shows that we cannot necessarily rely on the existing structures to provide the same positive outcomes as we move further into the 21st Century.

The challenges facing the future of UK pensions are high in the public consciousness and there has been a wide variety of suggestions for change. We agree with the Pensions Commission cautioning against rushing to immediate conclusions, and believe that a well-informed debate will move us towards building a national consensus on the next stage of reform. As a first step towards building this consensus, this paper sets out six key principles that have been inherent in our action so far and which we believe should guide our approach in the future.

These principles are:

the pensions system must tackle poverty effectively;

the opportunity to build an adequate retirement income should be open to all;

affordability and economic stability must be maintained;

the pensions system should produce fair outcomes for women and carers;

reform should seek to establish a system people understand;

reform should be based around as broad a consensus as possible.

The Government will engage with the public and other key stakeholders over the principles outlined in this document, with the aim of achieving a shared framework of criteria against which options for reform can be assessed.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 25 February 2005

DEFENCE

Offshore Patrol Vessel Contract

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I am pleased to announce that the Ministry of Defence has approved the award of a contract with VT Maritime Affairs Ltd for the charter and logistic support of a new 1,854 tonne patrol vessel for use in the Falkland Islands.

The new ship will be a modification of the highly successful river class ships, also chartered from VT, currently employed for fishery protection. Like them, the new patrol vessel will also follow an innovative public-private partnership arrangement for the provision of maritime capability. While manned by the Royal Navy, the Department will pay a set monthly fee for the provision of the ship and a guaranteed level of availability, with an incentivised payment structure to ensure that any shortfalls are dealt with promptly and effectively.

The vessel will thus provide a significant increase in availability as compared with the old, and increasingly difficult to maintain, castle class ships that have provided the Falkland Islands patrol capability for the past two decades.

It is planned that the ship will enter service in 2007 and be chartered for an initial period up to 2012. Over this period, she will generate in excess of £2 million savings compared with continuing to run the old ships, while providing at least as good an overall capability at a much lower level of risk.

HOME DEPARTMENT

National Offender Management Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I am today announcing the National Offender Management Service's targets for England and Wales for 2005–06. These targets reflect the Government's commitment to protecting the public, reducing re-offending, and ensuring that sentences are enforced firmly and fairly.

PUBLIC PROTECTION TARGETS

Target/Measure	*2005–06 National Target*
Prison escapes	To ensure that no Category A prisoner escapes.
Escapes from Prison and Escort	To ensure that the rate of escapes from establishments and from escorts, expressed as a percentage of the average prison population, is lower than 0.05 per cent.
	To ensure that the number of escapes from contracted out escorts is no more than one per 20,000 prisoners handled.
Offenders who pose a high risk of harm	90 per cent. of risk assessments, risk management plans and OASys sentence plans on high risk offenders are completed within five working days of the commencement of the order or release into the community.
Prolific and other priority offenders	90 per cent. of risk of harm assesments and OASys sentence plans are completed on Prolific and other Priority Offenders within five working days of commencement of the order or release into the community.

REDUCING RE-OFFENDING TARGETS

Target/Measure	*2005–06 National Target*
Basic skills (Offenders in the community)	(a) 40,000 Basic Skills starts (b) 8,033 Basic Skills awards *(contributing, alongside the LSC-led partnership target of 1,967 awards, to a total of 10,000 awards for offenders in the community)* [1]
Basic Skills (Offenders in Custody)	46,430 Basic skills awards *(contributing alongside the LSC-led partnership target of 9,740 awards, to a total of 56,080 awards for offenders in the community)* [1] of which: 42,520 basic skills awards are achieved by prisoners in public prisons (including 13,250 at Entry Level, 18,020 at Level 1 and 11,250 at Level 2) 3,820 basic skills awards are achieved by prisoners in contracted prisons (including 1,575 at Entry Level, 1,195 at Level 1 and 1,050 at Level 2)
Prison Education	94,400 Work Skills awards *(contributing, alongside the LSC-led partnership target of 25,600 awards to a total of 120,000 awards)* of which: 90,000 Work Skills awards achieved by prisoners in public prisons. 4,400 Work Skills awards achieved by prisoners in contracted prisons.
Drug Treatment and Testing Orders/Drug Rehabilitation Requirements	4,000 DTTO/DRR completions.
Intensive Change and Control Programmes	350 ICCP completions.
Enhanced Community Punishment/Unpaid Work	50,000 successful completions of ECP/ unpaid work.
Accredited Programmes (Probation Service)	15,000 programme completions

[1] With the transfer to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) of lead responsibility for delivering offender learning skills, and introduction of the fully integrated service in three regions (North East, North West and South West) from August 2005, basic skills awards

achieved by offenders in those regions will count towards operational targets for the LSC led partnerships and the NOMS targets have been adjusted accordingly.

REDUCING RE-OFFENDING TARGETS cont'd

Target/Measure	*2005–06 National Target*
Accredited Programmes (Prisons)	7,000 offender behaviour programmes completed by prisoners, comprising:
	5,430 programmes in public prisons (including 1,160 sex offender treatment programmes).
	330 programmes in contracted prisons (including 80 sex offender treatment programmes).
Prison Drug Treatment Programmes	5,850 drug treatment programmes completed, comprising:
	5,250 achieved by public prisons and
	600 achieved by contracted prisons.
Resettlement Outcomes	38,000 prisoners have a job, training or education outcome on release
	of which:
	34,890 in public prisons and
	3,110 in contracted prisons.
Prison accommodation on release	64,765 prisoners with have accommodation to go to on release
	of which:
	59,467 in public prisons and
	5,298 in contracted prisons.

TARGETS CONTRIBUTING TO WIDER CRIMINAL JUSTICE OBJECTIVES

Target/Measure	*2005–06 National Target*
Timely Delivery to Court	At least 85 per cent. of prisoners from prisons and police cells are delivered to court before the agreed time.
Reports to court	90 per cent. of reports to be provided within the time scale required by the court.
Enforcement	Initiate breach proceedings in accordance with National Standards within 10 days in 90 per cent. of cases.
Compliance	To increase to 85 per cent. the proportion of orders and licenses in which the offender complies.
Victim contact	85 per cent. of victims to be contacted with3n eight weeks of an offender rece3ving 12 or more months for a serio3s sexual or violent offence.

DECENCY TARGETS

Target/Measure	*2005–06 National Target*
Serious assaults	To reduce the number of serious assaults as a percentage of the population compared to 2004–05 outturn. [2]
Positive Mandatory Drug Tests	To reduce the number of those testing positive as a percentage of the population compared to 2004–05 outturn. [2]
Self-inflicted deaths	To ensure that the rate of self-inflicted deaths does not exceed 112.8 per 100,000 of the population in public and contracted prisons.

DECENCY TARGETS

Target/Measure	*2005–06 National Target*
Overcrowding	The percentage of prisoners held in accommodation units intended for fewer prisoners does not exceed 24 per cent. of the average population in public prisons and 34.5 per cent. of the average population in contracted prisons.

ORGANISATIONAL TARGETS

Target/Measure	*2005–06 National Target*
Staff sickness (Probation Service)	Staff sickness in the Probation service not to exceed an average of nine days/ annum.
Staff sickness (public prisons only)	Staff sickness in public prisons to be lower than 11.5 working days/person.
Race Equality (Probation Service)	The Probation Service to meet regionally set employment targets for minority ethnic staff.
	95 per cent. of Race and Ethnic Monitoring data on staff and offenders is returned on time and using the correct (Census 2001) classification.
Ethnic minority staff (public prisons only)	Ethnic minority staff in public prisons to represent at least 6 per cent. of the workforce by April 2006.

[2] The performance for 2004–05 will be published in a written ministerial statement following the end of the financial year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Equalities Review

The Deputy Minister for Women and Equality (Jacqui Smith): The Minister for the Cabinet Office, my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Mr. Miliband), and I are today announcing a review of the persistent social, economic and cultural factors that combine to deny individuals the opportunity to make the best of their abilities and contribute to society fully.

The equalities review, which will report to the Prime Minister by the summer of 2006, will look at barriers to opportunity and will make practical recommendations on key policy priorities for: the Government and public sector; employers and trades unions; civic society and the voluntary sector. Its findings will inform the modernisation of equality legislation and the development of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).

In the Queen's Speech, the Government announced that they intend to bring forward a Bill to establish the CEHR as soon as parliamentary time allows. The CEHR will bring together existing expertise from the current equality commissions on gender, disability and race and make provision for the new equality strands on sexual orientation, religion and belief and age, as well as promoting human rights. The Bill will also introduce provisions to outlaw discrimination on grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services and public functions; and a general framework

to introduce a duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and; prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions.

The creation of the CEHR underlines the Government's commitment to equality and human rights as the foundations of a fair and prosperous society. A just society is one in which life chances are not determined at birth and everyone has the chance to achieve their full potential. A dynamic economy relies on using the talents of all.

It was to address inequality and prejudice that the first Race Relations Act was introduced in 1965. Since then, Governments have legislated to protect people from discrimination on the basis of gender, race and disability and most recently sexual orientation, age, and religion. Since 1997 new legislation has also created the duty to promote race equality, following the Lawrence Inquiry; the Human Rights Act and most recently the civil partnership scheme for lesbian and gay couples.

But despite this progress there is still evidence of deep-seated patterns of disadvantage. For example, disabled people are at far greater risk of poverty than non-disabled people. The unemployment rate of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis is 2.5 times greater than that of the white population. Educational attainment for black Afro-Caribbean boys consistently falls below that of their female and white peers. The pay gap between men's and women's earnings remains. And hate crimes threaten the security of many different minority groups.

Much work has already been done, and is ongoing, within and outside government, to understand specific barriers faced by particular groups, but much of this excellent work focuses on particular groups or sectors. The equalities review will build on this existing work, such as the Government's recently published Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's report on the life chances of disabled people and the current Women and Work Commission to develop a better understanding of the long term and underlying barriers to opportunity that can be addressed by public policy. This will allow us to better to assess the relative impact of legislation and other action in transforming people's life chances, based on evidence of what works at home and abroad.

It is widely recognised that in many cases the root causes of disadvantage go beyond discrimination and cannot therefore be rectified by anti-discrimination legislation alone. Earlier consultation on the CEHR also demonstrated considerable support for modernising equality legislation and creating a simpler, fairer, legal framework.

In response to this and in conjunction with the Equalities Review, the Government will also now begin a review of discrimination legislation, led by the Department of Trade and Industry, which will benefit from the background and analysis that will be provided by the Equalities Review. This will assess how the equality legislative framework can be modernised to fit the needs of Britain in the 21st Century. Specifically, proposals will aim to minimise the burdens on business and on public services while leading to demonstrably better outcomes for minority groups. This work will be the foundation for the development of a clearer and more streamlined legislative framework.

The Prime Minister has asked Trevor Phillips to Chair the Equalities Review in a personal capacity. He will be joined by a small panel of leaders from the fields of business, the public sector and the social policy arena. The review panel will draw advice from a Reference Group co-Chaired by Bert Massie (Chair, Disability Rights Commission) and Julie Mellor (Chair, Equal Opportunities Commission) whose members will include key equality, human rights, business and trade union stakeholders and other experts. The Equalities Review will be supported by a Secretariat based in the Cabinet Office and will be overseen jointly by DTI and Cabinet Office Ministers.

Nanoscience and Nanotechnologies Report

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): The Government's response to the Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering report: "Nanoscience and nanotechnologies: opportunities and uncertainties", has been published today.

The report was commissioned by Lord Sainsbury in June 2003 to: summarise current scientific knowledge on nanotechnology; identify applications of nanotechnology, both current and potential, with indications of when they might be developed; identify what environmental, health and safety, ethical and societal implications or uncertainties may arise from the use of the technology, both now and in the future; and identify areas where additional regulation should be considered. The report was published in July 2004 and has 21 recommendations to the Government.

Our response sets out the Government's agenda on nanotechnologies to ensure that the Government have clear policies and regulation, informed by good research, in place to ensure the responsible development of nanotechnologies in the UK.

The response includes:

a review of current safety regulations to make sure that safeguards for workers' health and the environment are robust;

a new cross-Government group to co-ordinate all aspects of research into nanoscience to underpin safety assessments;

a consultation with industry and the EU on how companies could disclose their safety testing methods and label consumer products; and

the Government will facilitate a dialogue with the science community and the public to explore both aspirations and concerns around the development of nanotechnologies.

Our programme will be reviewed by the Council for Science and Technology after two and five years (i.e. 2007, 2010).

The Prime Minister, the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology and the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology will be sent copies of this report, and I have placed copies in the Libraries of both Houses. An electronic version of the report has been placed on the Office of Science and Technology website: http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/issues/index.htm

Low Pay Commission

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): Last summer the Government asked the Low Pay Commission to produce their next report on the national minimum wage by the end of February 2005. We asked the commission to monitor and evaluate the impact of the minimum wage and make recommendations on the need for any change.

The Government are today publishing the commission's 2005 report and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chair of the commission, Adair Turner, and its other members for their work on this very important issue.

The main recommendations put forward by the commission concern the rates of the minimum wage.

The commission has first recommended increasing the adult rate of the minimum wage from the present £4.85 to £5.05 in October 2005, and to £5.35 in October 2006, subject to confirmation by the commission in February 2006, to check that the macroeconomic conditions continue to make it appropriate, and in light of the implementation of forthcoming age discrimination legislation.

The commission has recommended increasing the development rate from the present £4.10 to £4.25 in October 2005 and £4.45 in October 2006. And it has also recommended that the Government should invite the commission to review the operation of the 16–17 year old rate and to report in 2006, with recommendations for any subsequent increases.

The commission's evidence confirms that the minimum wage has been a success. The economy has continued to generate new jobs, including in the main low-paying sectors. Around 1 million workers have benefited from the minimum wage each year since its introduction, with around two-thirds of the beneficiaries being women.

The Government agree with the broad approach that the commission continues to adopt; namely that the minimum wage should be increased in order to help the low paid, while taking care not to damage their employment prospects. We are therefore pleased to accept the recommended rate increases for 2005 and provisionally to accept the increase in the adult rate for 2006 subject, as the commission proposes, to their further advice in early 2006. We also accept the commission's recommendation that they should review the operation of the 16–17 year old rate and report on this in February 2006.

The commission has also recommended that we should move 21 year old workers onto the adult rate. The economic evidence on this point remains mixed. While the employment prospects for 21 year olds has improved in recent years, it remains behind that of 22 year olds and not much better than that of 20 year olds. We therefore intend to make no change in 2005 but to look carefully at this issue in the future.

The final key commission recommendation is that we should introduce interest charges on arrears of underpayment of the minimum wage and impose financial penalties for seriously non-compliant employers. The great majority of employers are either compliant or pay minimum wage arrears without the need for any formal enforcement action. However the Government understand the underlying point that the commission are making, about the need to tackle seriously non-compliant employers more effectively. We are already considering a number of options for improving enforcement and intend to make a statement on this in early summer. We will consider the point about interest charges in this context.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce that the Government have decided not to pursue employers where workers are paid below the minimum wage in some pay periods, but above the minimum wage overall. Such action will enable us to concentrate our resources on employers deliberately seeking to pay workers below the minimum wage.

I have placed copies of this statement, the report from the Low Pay Commission, the Government's individual response to the commission's recommendations and our draft regulatory impact assessment in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 28 February 2005

DEFENCE

Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): I am pleased to report to the House the latest developments in our plans to provide the Royal Air Force with a modern replacement air refuelling capability. Last year I reported our decision to take forward single bidder negotiations with AirTanker Ltd. for the provision of the future strategic tanker aircraft programme which is planned to replace the RAF's fleet of VC10 and TriStar aircraft. Today I can report that significant progress has been made in those negotiations and that AirTanker has been selected as the preferred bidder.

We continue to believe that the provision of the capability through a service-based contract with industry under the private finance initiative (PFI) offers the best prospect of a value for money solution that fully meets the needs of our armed forces. Through a PFI contract, industry would own and maintain the aircraft and provide training services, infrastructure and some personnel, whilst the RAF would undertake military operations.

The negotiations over the last 12 months have resulted in agreement on key commercial terms such as pricing structure, measurement of service performance, commercial use of the aircraft and the compensation that would be paid in the very unlikely event that the contract is terminated.

This programme will present UK industry with important opportunities. I expect that several hundreds of jobs will be created to support this programme throughout the United Kingdom. Several thousand skilled UK individuals will undertake work in support of the service.

We will now continue to take forward negotiations with AirTanker Ltd., aimed at agreeing the detail of the complete PFI contract as soon as possible. I should stress that this remains a complex and challenging PFI programme and that issues remain to be resolved before a value for money arrangement can be concluded. At £13 billion, it is the largest to be considered by the MOD to date. A final decision on whether or not to proceed with a PFI contract will not be taken until all negotiations, including an assessment of the finance ability of the deal, have been satisfactorily concluded. I will of course ensure that the House is kept fully in touch with significant developments.

HEALTH

Sudan 1

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson): I have been advised by the Food Standards Agency that on 18 February the agency issued advice to consumers not to eat foods that had inadvertently been contaminated with an illegal dye Sudan 1. This advice follows previous action by the Food Standards Agency to ensure the withdrawal of a range of products containing contaminated chilli powder since July 2003.

Sudan 1 could contribute to an increased risk of cancer and it is sensible to avoid eating any more. However, at the levels present the risk is likely to be very small and there is no risk of immediate ill-health.

The Food Standards Agency, at the earliest practicable date, obtained an initial list of affected products, on the evening of 17 February and published it together with its advice to consumers on 18 February. Further updates were published on 21 and 24 February bringing the list of affected products to 474. The agency has taken the view that waiting for a single total list would provide less protection for consumers. The agency acted with all possible speed to inform consumers which products were affected so retailers and consumers could act on this advice.

The agency has contacted the major catering suppliers and they have withdrawn affected products and these are included in the lists on the website. More than 150 smaller companies who received contaminated products have also withdrawn products from their customers and these products will be listed on the agency website as soon as information becomes available.

Most of the products have now been withdrawn. Local authorities are pursuing this to ensure any remaining products are removed from sale as a matter of urgency. The agency is considering with local authorities what enforcement action may be necessary.

Since July 2003 all dried and crushed or ground hot chilli and hot chilli products entering the EU must have been tested for Sudan 1. The risk has been widely publicised in the UK food industry and affected products were withdrawn from sale. The Food Standards Agency and local authorities routinely test over 1000 products a year for Sudan 1.

Food companies have a legal obligation to remove from sale products that do not meet food safety requirements and to inform the Food Standards Agency and local authorities, and advise consumers about the withdrawal.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Work and Families

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): I am today publishing a consultation document, "Work and Families: Choice and Flexibility". Through the consultation, we are seeking views on the details of commitments set out by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 2004 pre-Budget report. These commitments will

help us to deliver the Government's vision for families: to ensure that all children have the best start in life, respond to changing patterns of employment and give parents more choice about how to balance their work and family responsibilities.

The Government have already introduced a number of measures to support working families, including longer maternity leave, increases in both statutory maternity pay and maternity allowance plus extending the payment period, new paid paternity and adoption leave and the right to request flexible working for parents of young or disabled children. However, we recognise that families still face challenges in balancing their work and home responsibilities. There is a continuing evolution in family life and working patterns. In most families, it is no longer the case that the father works and the mother stays at home to look after the children; instead both parents work.

At the same time, many employers have found that greater flexibility suits their business very well, enabling them to attract and retain good quality staff, match their business needs with the needs of individuals and encourage a more committed and productive working environment.

The measures we are proposing respond to these changes and will help us to deliver our vision for families. Through the consultation, we will be asking for views on a number of commitments. We will extend statutory maternity pay, maternity allowance and statutory adoption pay from six to nine months from April 2007, towards the goal of a year's paid leave by the end of the next Parliament. Through the consultation, we will also be seeking views about how to simplify the maternity leave and pay arrangements.

Improved communication between parents and employers during maternity and adoption leave is important for employers, helping them to plan their business more successfully, and for mothers who often want to keep in touch with what is going on at work. Through consultation, we are asking for views on whether we should place a new requirement on mothers to confirm their return date with their employers in advance and on increasing the period of notice that a mother must give if she wants to return earlier than originally planned. We would also like to hear suggestions about ways to improve communication between employers and employees during maternity leave and support women returning to work after time out because of caring responsibilities.

We want to give more choice to parents about who cares for their child during the first year of their life and so we intend to introduce a new right for mothers to transfer a proportion of their statutory maternity leave and pay or allowance to fathers or between adopters. We are seeking views on options for how much leave and pay may be transferred from the mother to the father and how best to handle the administrative effects on the employers of the mother and the father, including managing the respective absences and ensuring that, adequate notice is given of intended absence and return to work.

Evidence has suggested that the right to request flexible working is operating successfully. Through the consultation, we will look at options for extending this right to carers of adults and to parents of older children. We also want to know if there is more the Government can do to assist employers handling requests for flexible working and help employees make requests.

The consultation will enable us to firm up the details of our commitments to ensure the practical arrangements operate as smoothly as possible for parents, carers and business.

Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and will be available on the DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk/workandfamilies

TRANSPORT

GLA Transport Grant

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty): The GLA transport grant for 2004–05 has today been re-determined by the Secretary of State for Transport at £2,260,148,000, following consultation with the Mayor of London.

This re-determination increases the Government's block grant to Transport for London by £35.148 million, and primarily reflects funding transfers agreed during the year from the Strategic Rail Authority in relation to the east London line extension (£24.3 million) and Crossrail prep costs (£9.578 million). It also includes specific additional funding to TfL for four urban bus challenge projects in London (£0.934 million) and my Department's Oyster smartcard inter-operability pilot (£0.8 million).

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 1 March 2005

TREASURY

Civil Registration Reform

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Stephen Timms): The House will wish to be aware of developments in the Government's plans for modernising civil registration.

On 29 March 2004, my predecessor Ruth Kelly announced that a draft Regulatory Reform Order containing provisions relating to the registration of birth and deaths in England and Wales would be presented to Parliament during that session and that presentation of the proposals relating to marriage would be postponed until the present Session.

The Regulatory Reform (Registration of Births and Deaths) (England Wales) Order 2004 was presented to Parliament on 22 July 2004. The Commons Regulatory Reform Committee and the Lords Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee published their reports towards the end of last year concluding that use of the order-making powers of the 2001 Act is inappropriate for modernisation of the registration service in respect of births and deaths. In the light of those reports, I am no longer planning to bring forward a draft Regulatory Reform Order to reform marriage law.

This Government remain committed to the modernisation of the registration service in England and Wales. This service, with its roots in the nineteenth century, touches everyone during their lives and it is important that it reflects the needs of society, families and individuals. Modernisation will provide more choice for the public in how they deal with the service, improved service delivery and easier public interaction with government on a wider range of services.

I am actively looking for ways of delivering the key elements of civil registration modernisation and will be working with stakeholders over the coming months to agree a way forward. I will seek parliamentary approval at appropriate times. In the meantime, new and more modern technology is planned to be introduced that will make it easier for members of the public to deal with the local registration service.

DEFENCE

Osnabruck Court Martial

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): The conclusion of the recent court martial in Osnabruck, and the lifting of reporting restrictions on an earlier court martial about the same incident enables me to say more about the outcome of both trials, although I must take into account that both cases are still subject to the statutory process of review and potential appeal.

I was profoundly disturbed when I first saw the photographs. I do, however, share the Chief of the General Staff view that the incidents depicted do not reflect typical behaviour and standards of the British Army. We also agree that it is right to apologise on behalf of the Army to the victims and the people of Iraq.

On Friday the Chief of the General Staff issued a statement on this and future cases. He explained that this was the first in a possible five cases which might come to court where the allegation against members of the British Army is that they committed acts of deliberate abuse against Iraqis. These cases involve up to 22 soldiers.

The CGS announced on behalf of the British Army that he has asked a senior officer to assess what lessons we need to learn in light of this and the other cases that might come to court, and to make recommendations for action. We will publish the findings from this work when the Army is no longer constrained by the legal processes. I fully support this statement.

The Army sets high standards and demands that they are met. The recent courts-martial have demonstrated that those who fail to meet those standards are called to account. The vast majority of servicemen and women do, however, perform to the very highest standards. Their service in Iraq has been outstanding and we are right to be proud of this.

UN Operations (Reservists)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I have today signed a new call-out order made under Section 56 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 so that reservists may continue to be called out to support UN operations in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The current order has expired and this new order takes effect from 1 March 2005. There are no plans to call out Reservists compulsorily under this order as it is expected that the small numbers needed will be met through voluntary mobilisation.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Bellwin Scheme (Torbay Council and Teignbridge District Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Phil Hope): Torbay Council and Teignbridge district council experienced exceptional storm and flood damage on 27 October 2004. Given these circumstances, I am satisfied that financial assistance under the Bellwin scheme is justified. Schemes will therefore be established under section 155 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Grant will be paid to the authorities to cover 85 per cent. of the eligible costs above a threshold, which they have incurred in dealing with the storm and flood damage.

Monitoring Spatial Plans

Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): Today we have published a good practice guide to monitoring our new system of local plans or local development frameworks (LDFs) as they are now called. It sets out a step by step approach to monitoring and producing annual monitoring reports.

This new guidance will help local planning authorities check that their plans are delivering sustainable development and sustainable communities, and where not, trigger an appropriate response. Under the new planning system the ability to produce various local development documents, as opposed to one local plan document, allows authorities to respond quickly to new issues and changing priorities for sustainable development in their areas. Monitoring will play a critical part in identifying these.

To complement the recommended local output indicators in the LDF monitoring guide, we are also publishing today revised core indicators for regional planning. These update those in planning policy statement 11 and in an earlier guide to monitoring regional planning guidance. These are closely aligned with the core indicators for LDFs. They will help ensure a consistent and cost-effective approach to monitoring implementation of key national objectives and targets at the regional and local levels.

Copies of both of these documents will be available in the Libraries of both Houses and on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's planning website: http://www.planning.odpm.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine Tuberculosis

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): I have today published the Government's new "Strategic Framework for the Sustainable Control of Bovine Tuberculosis in Great Britain". Through the Framework we aim to bring about a Sustainable improvement in control of bovine tuberculosis over the next ten years. Copies of the framework are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

State of UK Seas

The Minister for the Environment and Agri-environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): I have today published "Charting Progress—An Integrated Assessment of the State of UK Seas".

Charting Progress is the first holistic assessment of the state of UK seas, and a step towards an ecosystem approach to management. The Government set out a vision of clean, safe healthy, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas with the marine stewardship report "Safeguarding our Seas" published in 2002. Charting Progress brings together the national scientific monitoring data assembled by over 60 organisations, to assess how far we are from achieving that vision. It is a summary of the comprehensive sectoral and regional reports, which describe and evaluate what this data say about the current state of many components of the marine ecosystem and the main human impacts upon it. Charting Progress highlights where these states are acceptable, unacceptable and where there is room for improvement. The report also gives recommendations on how to improve our understanding of the marine environment.

This is a joint publication of the UK Government and the devolved Administrations. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. It will be available on the Department's website: www.defra.gov.uk and from the DEFRA publications office.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Today I am delighted to announce that Andrew Bridges' term of appointment as HM chief inspector of probation has been extended until 31 March 2007. Through their expertise and rigour of approach the probation inspectorate have provided a major contribution to the National Probation Service. I am confident that Andrew Bridges will play a key role in shaping the future of inspection policy for the national offender management service.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I am announcing today statistics relating to antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs).

An ASBO is a civil order which protects the community from behaviour that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.

ASBOs were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and have been available since April 1999.

ASBOs can be issued to anyone aged 10 years or over. They impose restrictions on the behaviour of individuals who have behaved in an anti-social way and protect communities from often longstanding and highly intimidating activity.

Breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence and can lead to custody. The maximum penalty for breach of an ASBO is five years imprisonment or a fine of up to £5,000 for an adult offender.

The Home Office is notified by all courts of ASBOs issued.

Data on the number of ASBOs issued is updated quarterly. New figures for the period up to September 2004 are now available. For the period between April 1999 and September 2004 the number of ASBOs issued, as reported to the Home Office, is 3826. Nearly 20 per cent. of these (730) were issued in the most recent quarter (July to September 2004).

Of those ASBOs issued, 50 per cent. were to adults and 45 per cent. to juveniles, 5 per cent. of ASBOs are age unknown.

Some 59 per cent. were orders on application, 41 per cent. are orders on conviction.

Data on breach is updated annually. Information on breach of orders is obtained from the court proceedings database. This data is matched with the data we hold on actual ASBOs issued. Until now data for the period from June 2000 to December 2002 which is based on 855 ASBOs issued during this period was available. However, data up to December 2003 is now available, based on 1892 ASBOs issued up to this period.

This data shows that 42 per cent. of all ASBOs were breached, compared to 36 per cent. for the period up to December 2002.

Of those persons who breached their ASBO on one or more occasions, 55 per cent. received immediate custody on the first or later occasion. The figure for young people is 46 per cent. receiving immediate custody.

The majority of those who receive custody for breach of an ASBO are persistent offenders. Of those entering custody, 31 per cent. were dealt with for breach of ASBO alone. Only 17 per cent. (30) juveniles received a custodial sentence for breach of ASBO alone, the remaining 83 per cent. were also sentenced for other offences.

I intend to make a similar statement to the House every quarter to provide an update on ASBO statistics.

I have placed with the House Libraries a briefing note containing information about ASBOs and the ASBOs statistics issued today.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Services for Victims of the Troubles

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy): The troubles have left their mark on the people of Northern Ireland and all those affected by the conflict. Almost 4,000 lives were lost, each one an individual loved and mourned by family and friends. And the human cost extends beyond these victims, to their families and friends, to all those who survived their ordeals, and to the wider community which struggles still to heal the divisions that were created and became entrenched.

The pain of loss is still keenly felt by those who lost loved ones. The Government cannot hope to change that. But there is a sense in which we in Northern Ireland need to come to terms with what has happened over the past 35 years: to tackle the legacy in a way that respects the suffering and loss that has been experienced; but which also allows the community as a whole to build a future that is not overshadowed by the events of the past.

Last spring, the Prime Minister said that he hoped that the Government could find a way to deal with Northern Ireland's past. Since then I have been reflecting on how we might begin this process. I have visited South Africa, to see first hand how a very different society has sought to address its own particular legacy. I have talked privately to experts and opinion formers to hear their views. And in parallel with that process the Minister for victims, Angela Smith, has been engaged in a detailed consultation with groups representing victims and survivors of the troubles on the future shape of services to meet their needs. I have drawn a number of lessons from these experiences.

My view remains that Northern Ireland needs its own tailored approach to dealing with the past. That is not to say that we cannot learn from the experiences of other societies that have faced a difficult and turbulent period in their recent history. But any process for dealing with Northern Ireland's past will require an approach that acknowledges and respects its unique features as well as its similarities to situations elsewhere.

I also believe that the scope and aims of any process need to be widely understood and agreed, and must be capable of commanding support and credibility right across the community. Government have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that an appropriate mechanism is found for dealing with the past to the satisfaction of all sections of the community. But I recognise too that, for some, the Government's role in past events is itself seen as an issue; and it is hard for some sections of the community to see us as a genuinely neutral party. Neither does the Government have a monopoly on wisdom, and I recognise the major contribution that many practitioners and other bodies are already making in this field.

These considerations have led me to conclude that any process for dealing with the past in Northern Ireland cannot be designed in isolation, or imposed by Government. There will need to be broadly-based consultation that allows individuals and groups across the community to put their views on what form any process might take. And that consultation process itself will need broad cross-community support if the ideas it generates are to be constructively received.

In the light of recent events, I am clear that now is not the right moment to launch such a broadly-based consultation process. And I think that we need to be realistic about what can be achieved in advance of a political settlement. But that is not to say that nothing can be done or that political considerations should forever stand in the way of meaningful progress. There are important steps that the Government can take now to address issues that are at the heart of how we can all deal with Northern Ireland's difficult legacy.

I am therefore announcing today that the Government intend to put in place a new victims and survivors commissioner. I believe that this is necessary both to ensure a real focus on the needs of victims and survivors of the troubles in Northern Ireland and to ensure that their voices continue to be heard and respected. So I am publishing alongside this announcement a consultation paper on the future of victims and survivors services for those victims, which includes the Government's initial proposals for the commissioner's detailed remit. The document sets out proposals for a comprehensive approach to the provision of services, with the commissioner playing a pivotal role in ensuring effective service delivery and in promoting the interests of all those who have suffered as a result of Northern Ireland's troubled past. One of the commissioner's responsibilities will be to take forward the establishment of the victims and survivors forum envisaged in the joint declaration to represent their views in a structured way. That consultation will continue until the end of June this year.

For many victims and survivors, the possibility of coming to terms with what has happened in the past is made more remote because there remain significant

unanswered questions, for example about the fate of their loved ones. For many families, the difficulty of not knowing certain details surrounding their loved one's death continues to be a significant issue many years on. The Government recognise that there is a need to address in a systematic way all of the unresolved deaths in Northern Ireland's recent troubled past. As I announced last September, I have been in discussions with the chief constable about how the groundbreaking work of the serious crime review team (SCRT) within the Police Service of Northern Ireland might be expanded to help meet this need. I hope that both we and the PSNI will soon be in a position to say more about the next steps on this.

We need to consider carefully and collectively how best to deal sensitively with the needs and expectations of all sections of the community in dealing with the legacy of the past. The creation of a victims and survivors commissioner is intended as a major contribution to that work. But it does not mark the end either of the process or the Government's contribution to it.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 2 March 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Civil Legal Aid Reforms

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy): With the agreement of the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, I am pleased to announce a package of measures, some of which come into effect from 1 April 2005, that will encourage early and effective resolution in civil dispute cases, including family cases.

These measures give effect to proposals for reform of civil legal aid set out in the July 2004 Legal Services Commission (LSC) consultation paper "A New Focus for Civil Legal Aid—Encouraging Early Resolution; Discouraging Unnecessary Litigation". The main theme of the paper was to refocus the civil legal aid scheme to encourage early resolution and the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) measures such as negotiation or mediation and away from contested litigation.

We have taken account of detailed and considered representations received during the consultation in finalising the measures announced today to deliver a reform package that acknowledges and addresses the key concerns expressed in consultation. I believe this represents a positive move forward for civil legal aid that we can build on in future years.

Following the consultation, I confirm that we will not be making reductions in financial eligibility except the aligning of levels described below or reducing the scope of services covered, save for minor amendments to the personal injury exclusion.

The upper disposable income limit for legal representation will be reduced from £707 per month to £632 per month, in line with the new legal help limit below. This will produce uniform upper income limits for all levels of service, different services differing only in terms of the different contribution regimes. Only those applicants who would previously have had to pay high levels of contribution under their legal aid certificates will be affected by this change.

In addition, the LSC will be given discretion to waive the upper disposable income limit for legal representation for the benefit of victims of domestic violence seeking protection from the court. This will extend eligibility for such clients by allowing the upper limit to be increased beyond the previous upper limit of £707 per month. However the gross income cap and contribution rules will remain unchanged.

We will increase financial eligibility for legal help, which covers vital front line advice services. The disposable income limit for legal help will rise to £632 per month. The capital limit for legal help will be raised substantially from £3,000 to £8,000 to match the upper capital limit for legal representation.

Further, we will extend the current "passporting" rules under which recipients of certain benefits are deemed financially eligible for services. Such benefit recipients will be passported on both income and capital for all levels of service (previously legal help was only passported on income and capital had to be assessed in every case). This will also simplify the means assessment process for suppliers.

We will modify the existing "subject matter of the dispute" rule under which assets in dispute are automatically excluded from means assessment. In future, if the client's interest in the disputed assets is worth over £100,000, the excess over £100,000 will be taken into account.

In family cases, the package includes measures to redesign the structure of family legal aid to place emphasis on early resolution out of court, in line with the Green Paper on parental separation published in July 2004. A pilot to test the new structure is scheduled to commence in June 2005 and is expected to run in four locations. The final details are currently being agreed.

We will also remove cost protection in family cases to deter unreasonable conduct by publicly funded clients, and introduce stricter controls over multiple and repeat applications in private law family cases. These controls will be enforced through improvements to processing systems that provide a reliable means of identifying previous legal aid applicants.

The consultation paper proposed significant changes to the funding of cases concerning financial provision in divorce (ancillary relief), including a power for the LSC to refuse legal aid for legal representation if private funding, by means of a loan or otherwise, is available and affordable in an individual case.

In principle, we believe that such a power would be appropriate, but we will only introduce it if satisfied that a good range of private funding arrangements is accessible to clients currently within legal aid eligibility limits. We will undertake further work on the availability and conditions of finance, in conjunction with our key stakeholders. I should emphasise that any new funding arrangements along these lines would only apply to those cases that do not reach any resolution during the financial dispute resolution hearing, but continue to full contested court proceedings.

To discourage unnecessary litigation, in clinical negligence cases and actions against the police most applicants will be expected to pursue any available complaints system before they are funded to take proceedings. This will give the potential defendant public body the opportunity to respond to the matters raised and provide an explanation or apology if appropriate before it is decided whether litigation is the appropriate remedy for the client. The LSC will consult further on when such an approach would not be appropriate and on guidance to further encourage the use of mediation in non-family disputes.

As urged by many respondents, we will also be improving the operation of the statutory charge, to encourage early repayment of legal aid costs. Our reforms package includes increasing the interest rates as an incentive to pay off the charge as soon as practicable. We also intend to introduce a discretion for the LSC to be able to decide whether the statutory charge should be postponed, subject to assessing the client's means. This

will also include the power to review postponed charges at regular intervals. The LSC will also adopt a firmer approach when deciding whether a charge can be transferred to a new property. Finally, we propose to remove the exemption for the first £3,000 of money or value from property recovered, from the statutory charge.

We propose to strengthen the cost benefit criterion when assessing applications for funding in claims against the police to ensure that the benefits obtained from a case are proportionate to the costs involved, and to improve general handling of police cases. We will also raise the minimum cost benefit requirements for clinical negligence damages claims to match those for other categories of case.

We will also be restricting the very high cost civil cases budget to ensure that disproportionately expensive cases do not preclude access to justice for smaller cases. In terms of the overall legal aid budget, the need to achieve substantial savings remains. If the community legal service does not remain in budget there is a very real risk that funding will have to be reduced in future, and consequently that the most deserving cases may not receive the assistance they need. With a limited budget, we need to ensure that legal aid funding is targeted on the most needy cases and to the priority areas.

These proposals are fully consistent with the fundamental legal aid review (FLAR) and represent the first phase of a co-ordinated continuing legal aid reform programme to achieve an appropriate long term settlement for legal aid.

We propose to implement the eligibility changes in April and the remaining changes in July. A copy of the consultation response paper and the final regulatory and equalities impact assessment will be available shortly on the DCA website at www.dca.gov.uk

DEFENCE

Defence Information Infrastructure (Future)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I am pleased to announce that the preferred bidder for the defence information infrastructure (future) contract is the Atlas consortium. This group of companies have international experience of delivering first class IT systems and we look forward to working in partnership with them over the coming years. We have conducted a rigorous competition and are confident that provision of an effective, efficient and value for money service, vital to the modernisation of defence, has begun today.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adoption and Children Act 2002

The Minister for Children, Young People and Families (Margaret Hodge): I am pleased to set out the Government's detailed plans for full implementation of the adoption and special guardianship provisions in the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

The Adoption and Children Act 2002 received Royal Assent in November 2002 and modernises the whole existing legal framework for domestic and intercountry adoption. It also introduces a new legal order, special guardianship, which offers legal permanence for children for whom adoption is not suitable.

We have already implemented some key provisions of the Act. These include:

1 June 2003—restrictions on intercountry adoption;

31 October 2003—the first phase of the adoption support services framework for adoptive families;

1 December 2003—giving parental responsibility to unmarried fathers who jointly register the birth of their child with the mother;

1 April 2004—advocacy services for children and young people making a complaint under the Children Act 1989;

30 April 2004—the first phase of the Independent Review Mechanism, which will cover prospective adopters whose adoption agency is minded not to approve them;

27 September 2004—Independent Reviewing Officers;

31 January 2005—Amendment to the definition of "harm" in the Children Act 1989 to make clear that harm includes any impairment of the child's health or development as a result of witnessing the ill treatment of another person.

During 2003 and 2004 we consulted extensively on a range of draft regulations, court rules and guidance and ran over 25 workshops, seminars and focus groups to ensure that we had heard from all those with an interest in this fundamental reform of adoption law. We have reviewed the consultation drafts and the implementation timetable in great detail in the light of the comments received.

We will be laying all the core sets of regulations to implement the adoption and special guardianship provisions in the next few weeks, starting today with the Adoption Agencies Regulations, the Adoptions with a Foreign Element Regulations and two statutory instruments which are subject to the affirmative resolution procedure. These are the Suitability Regulations and the Restriction on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations. The regulations covering access to information, adoption support services and special guardianship will follow this month. The court rules are being considered by the Family Procedure Rule Committee and will be in place and available to support training well in advance of implementation.

We planned for the legislation to come fully into force in September 2005. However, following concerns expressed by those who will be required to put these important changes for children and their families into effect about the need to allow sufficient time for training and preparation once the regulations, court rules and guidance are in place, we now intend to bring the legislation fully into force on 30 December 2005. This will allow a nine month preparation period for the field from the laying of the core regulations and will enable training to take place in the autumn, after the summer holidays and immediately prior to implementation.

We remain committed to providing an extensive communication and training programme to ensure that those working in the adoption field and more widely in children's services are fully up to speed with the new legislation. The DfES is currently developing this programme, and is continuing to involve stakeholders

closely through an Advisory Group representing the interests of those in the adoption field. The Department for Constitutional Affairs is separately organising training for the judiciary and courts service staff which will be closely aligned with the DfES training programme.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

London Meeting to Support the Palestinian Authority

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): The purpose of the London Meeting, on 1 March, was to help the Palestinian leadership strengthen the institutions needed for a future Palestinian State. This work was also aimed at supporting Palestinian efforts to prepare for Israeli disengagement as a step towards achieving the two-state vision envisaged by the Roadmap.

The London Meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister. Delegations from 23 nations and institutions attended including the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, EU Secretary General Solana, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, G8 Foreign Ministers and others from the region and beyond, along with the World Bank and IMF.

President Abbas outlined an ambitious but realistic plan for strengthening the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) institutions in the areas of governance, security and economic development. In the area of governance, President Abbas committed his authority to completing the programme of local elections across the West Bank and Gaza in accordance with democratic values; strengthening the public sector and civil service and building a strong and independent judiciary. On security, President Abbas committed his authority to ensuring effective security implementation consistent with the PA's national security plan, in accordance with Phase I of the Roadmap; streamlining the existing security and intelligence services; and reviving lines of communication with the Israeli security establishment. On economic development, President Abbas, committed his authority to working to ensure the financial management of the PA is of the highest international standard; implementing a Unified Pensions Law; and stimulating private sector investment as the essential precondition for long-term economic growth.

In response to these plans the international community committed itself to providing financial and political support. On governance, the international community committed itself to support the programme of elections and the strengthening of the public administration and judiciary. In order to take these commitments forward, the European Commission agreed to develop and implement a short-term strategy for action on governance, supporting progress by the Palestinian Authority and ensuring engagement of the international community. The World Bank agreed to lead efforts to enhance the international community's assistance for economic preparation for Israeli disengagement. This includes exploring opportunities to promote increased private sector investment in the West Bank and Gaza. The participants asked the Chair of the AHLC, the World Bank and the European Commission to develop plans to streamline the international effort and enable the international community to respond more flexibly to Palestinian needs, and to present these to the Quartet, as soon as possible.

On security, the international community committed itself to providing financial support to re-equip the security services; establishing a fund for early retirement of security personnel; and helping to address the cost of pensions for security officers. The US agreed to form a co-ordinating group to provide significant practical support to the Palestinians in the area of security to fulfil the objective set out by the Quartet in May 2004 to establish a US-led oversight committee on security. US security co-ordinator General Ward would play a leading role. The security group will work closely with the PA to oversee the restructuring and retraining of the Palestinian security services. In doing so, it will help the PA fulfil all of its security-related obligations under Phase I of the Roadmap.

On economic development, the international community committed itself to providing expertise and financial support for the PA's economic programme. It also offered assistance for activities related to Israeli disengagement and economic revival including working with Israel and the PA to develop a reliable link between the West Bank and Gaza and to dismantle the closure regime and increase freedom of movement. The international community agreed to hold a Consultative Group meeting of international donors later in the year to consider an increase in funding to the PA and to establish a mechanism under World Bank leadership to encourage increased international private sector investment into the Palestinian economy.

The participants recognised that the implementation of the commitments made by the Palestinian Authority at the London Meeting would constitute a major step in implementing its Roadmap commitments. At the same time participants urged and expected action by Israel in relation to its own Roadmap commitments.

The participants at the London Meeting also condemned the terrorist bombing in Tel Aviv on 25 February and stressed that such acts must not be allowed to derail the peace process.

I am placing the conclusions of the London Meeting in the Library of the House. A copy is also available through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Aid Conditionality

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of a new UK policy paper, "Partnerships for Poverty Reduction: Rethinking Conditionality".

The policy has been developed jointly by DFID, the Treasury and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It is the result of substantial consultation over the past year with the UK public, NGOs, the World Bank and other donors.

The UK Government believe that an effective aid partnership is based on shared commitment to poverty reduction, human rights and strong financial management. The policy outlines four changes in our approach to conditionality:

Developing country ownership—The UK will use aid to support developing countries' own poverty reduction plans—based on solid evidence and wide consultation, and taking account of the views and concerns of poor people. We will not use conditions to influence the policy choices made by partner countries. We will instead agree benchmarks with partners to assess progress in reducing poverty.

Predictability—Developing countries can use aid most effectively if they can rely on it as part of their long term budget plans—for example to recruit more teachers and health workers, or to put more people on anti-retroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS. The UK will move to long term aid commitments, and will seek to make aid more predictable by being clear in advance about how much aid will be given and the basis on which funds will be reduced or interrupted -for example, if countries move away from agreed poverty reduction programmes, abuse human rights or misuse the funds through corruption.

Accountability—This changed approach to aid, with transparently agreed benchmarks rather than conditions imposed by donors, means that developing countries and donors will be accountable to each other, and to their own citizens, for their contribution to the shared effort on poverty reduction. The UK aims to increase transparency around the conditions and the decision-making process relating to aid. We will publish our conditions on the DFID website.

Harmonisation—The UK will press the World Bank and the IMF to monitor and streamline their combined terms and conditions, and will work with donors to limit the overall burden of conditions.

The "Make Poverty History" campaign is calling on donors to provide "more and better aid" to help developing countries achieve the millennium development goals. I see the principles in this paper as central to both objectives. By supporting policy leadership in developing countries, donors will make their aid more effective. And by ensuring that aid is effectively used for reducing poverty, donors will give their own countries confidence that more aid will be worthwhile.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 3 March 2005

TREASURY

Private Welfare Agencies

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): In parliamentary answers on 4 and 26 March 2003 and in letters to several hon. Members, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury explained changes that have been made to the rules governing the VAT treatment of state-regulated welfare agencies such as domiciliary care and independent fostering agencies. He explained that the changes would take effect from the date that the regulatory system and standards for welfare providers were implemented or, in the case of independent fostering agencies, on 1 April 2003. Following representations from a small number of businesses, Customs have issued a business brief clarifying the circumstances determining the time at which an agency becomes exempt. Copies are available in the House of Commons Library.

DEFENCE

Iraq

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 14 February 2005, my noble Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Lord Bach) signed a statement of intent with the Secretary-General of the Iraqi Ministry of Defence which lays the foundation for co-operation on defence equipment matters in areas such as requirement definition, exchange of information, supplier identification, and the availability of commercial training.

It is HMG's aim to assist the Iraqi Government and armed forces to rebuild their country and to improve security and stability. In support of this, a non-legally binding statement of intent will be mutually beneficial for both Governments.

All such activities in connection with potential defence exports continue to adhere fully to national and international export control obligations.

Copies of the statement of intent will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning Control

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I am announcing today the publication of a consultation paper, entitled "Planning Control of Mezzanine and other Internal Floorspace Additions", on draft provisions to be included in an amendment to the General Development Procedure Order 1995, and on the accompanying partial regulatory impact assessment.

Section 49 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 inserts new sections 55(2A) and 55(2B) into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These new sections bring into the meaning of development operations which have the effect of increasing the internal gross floorspace of a building. This would make such increases in floor space subject to planning control.

The Secretary of State by order can specify different circumstances under which this legislation would apply, and the draft order sets a threshold of 200m^2 and applies it to retail floorspace.

It is not the Government's intention to halt mezzanine development. It is to bring under planning control any increases in internal floorspace above a specified level, so as to ensure the Government's objectives for town centres are not undermined by inappropriate development.

The consultation will run until 26 May 2005. Copies of the consultation document will be made available in the Libraries of both Houses and from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website www.odpm.gov.uk.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Hong Kong

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): The latest report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong (Cm 6484) was laid before the House today and copies have been placed in the Library of the House. A copy of the report is also available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/. The report covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2004 and includes a foreword by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary. I commend the report to the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Oakington Immigration Reception Centre

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Desmond Browne): The BBC documentary "Detention Undercover: the Real Story" screened last night contained allegations of racism and mistreatment of detainees at Oakington immigration reception centre and during removal.

Oakington has a reputation for good staff-detainee relationships, and I regard it as in the interests of all at the centre to establish the truth of the allegations as quickly as possible.

GSL, who manage and operate the centre at Oakington have mounted an internal investigation. I believe it appropriate to have a separate and independent investigation, which I have asked Stephen Shaw, the prisons and probation ombudsman, to undertake.

The remit of the investigation is to:

investigate allegations, made in the BBC programme "Detention undercover: the real story" broadcast on 2 March 2005, of racism and mistreatment by GSL staff of detainees at Oakington immigration reception centre and while under escort;

in particular, to review the internal investigation already mounted by GSL, and the company's response to the allegations;

to assess the implications for the management and oversight of Oakington and the escorting of detainees; and

to make any necessary recommendations to the Government and GSL management.

I am grateful to Stephen Shaw for agreeing to undertake this investigation. I hope the BBC will support this investigation by granting him full access to all the material gathered by the reporters.

I have always made it clear that there is absolutely no place for racism anywhere in our society, and particularly within the immigration system. Detention and removal is an essential part of effective immigration controls, but it is vital that it is done with humanity and dignity, and I am committed to ensuring this is the case.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sex Offenders

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy): The Government have received the first report from the chief inspector of criminal justice in Northern Ireland, Kit Chivers. The report is on "The Management of Sex Offenders in Northern Ireland" and has today been published.

The Government warmly welcome this report which recognises the excellent work in this field being done by those agencies involved in public protection and identifies a number of areas for possible future development. I shall be considering very carefully the inspection's key recommendations. I have no doubt that the report will be of value in informing and reassuring the public about the steps already being taken to manage the risks posed by sex offenders in the community, and in helping managers and staff who are involved in this challenging area of work.

Copies of the chief inspector's report have been placed in the Library.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 4 March 2005

TREASURY

Finance Bill

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Schemes are currently being promoted by professional advisors that enable companies to avoid tax. Legislation will be included in the next Finance Bill to tackle tax avoidance through exploitation of both the transfer pricing and loan relationship rules.

Transfer Pricing

Transfer pricing rules will be extended to transactions involving the financing of a business by persons (companies, partnerships or individuals) if they act together in relation to the financing and collectively they could control the business. These new rules will apply from today for financing under new or changed contracts, and from 1 April 2007 for debt finance provided under pre-existing contracts.

Transfer pricing rules will also be extended to apply to financing arrangements of a business in the six-month period before a person involved in the arrangements started to control the business. This change will apply from today to both new and existing financing.

Loan Relationships

Loan relationships rules that limit tax relief for late paid interest and discounts payable by close companies will be tightened up so that certain exemptions for these rules will apply only where the interest or discount is payable by a small or medium-sized enterprise and where the lender is not located in certain territories such as tax havens. This change will apply from today for financing under new or changed contracts, and from 1 April 2007 for finance provided under pre-existing contracts.

The scope of these rules will also be extended to include cases where the creditor is a person who controls a participator in the company (or where the creditor is connected to such a person). This change will apply from today to both new and existing financing.

Copies are being deposited in the Libraries of both Houses of today's Inland Revenue news release on these measures and a more detailed explanation is being published on the Inland Revenue website at:

http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/international/transfer-pricing.htm

HEALTH

Coronary Heart Disease

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson): The coronary heart disease national service framework (CHD NSF), published in March 2000, set out a blueprint for provision of fairer, faster, high-quality services for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery disease, based on 12 national standards.

A new CHD NSF chapter, on cardiac arrhythmias and sudden cardiac death, and the 2005 CHD NSF progress report "Leading the Way" were published today. Copies have been placed in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Financial Transparency Directives

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): My Department has today published a consultation document on the implementation of directive 2000/52/EC amending the directive on the transparency of financial relations between member states and public undertakings. The objective of the directive as amended is to increase the transparency of funding given by Government and other public sector bodies to other bodies operating in the marketplace and which may be in receipt of state aid. The directive's provisions will improve the commission's ability to investigate potentially illegal state aid, including allegations of overcompensation for performing a public service obligation or the cross-subsidisation of public funds into other commercial activities.

A key objective of the consultation exercise is to gather information on which organisations are likely to be caught by the directive and whether and to what extent there may already be provisions in place that would meet the requirements of the directive, so that we can best judge how to implement. However, the Department's initial conclusion is that legislation may well be necessary to ensure full implementation of the directive. The consultation document therefore also seeks views on draft regulations.

It is estimated that the directive will affect less than 0.5 per cent. of UK businesses i.e. approximately 8,000 businesses out of a total of about 1.6 million, since it does not apply to entities with an annual turnover below euro 40 million, i.e. approximately £27.5 million (as at 02/03/05). According to statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics approximately 99.5 per cent. of UK businesses have an annual turnover of less than £25 million.

Copies of the consultation documents will be laid in the Libraries of both Houses and made available on the departmental website at: www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/stateaid

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 7 March 2005

TREASURY

Pre-Owned Asset Regulations

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Schedule 15 Finance Act 2004 provides for an income tax charge on the benefit that taxpayers gain, in certain circumstances, from the continuing enjoyment of assets they formerly owned. The primary legislation leaves some matters—the operative date for valuations, and the rates of return which apply for purposes of the schedule—to be specified in secondary legislation. They also allow regulations to provide for assets to be valued less frequently than annually. More generally, they enable regulations to make further exemptions from the charge set out in schedule 15.

The Inland Revenue issued a consultative document on 18 August 2004, "Taxation of Pre-Owned Assets: Further Consultation", seeking views on the matters to be covered by regulations. There was a full and constructive response and I am grateful to all who took part. We propose to make regulations as follows, having regard to the responses received.

Valuation date

As proposed in our consultation document, the valuation date for a tax year will be 6 April in the year or, if later, the beginning of the taxable period for which the asset in question first becomes chargeable.

The prescribed rate

The prescribed rate (to be applied to the values of chattels and intangible assets when quantifying the cash value of the benefit enjoyed) will be equal to the official rate of interest, as defined in section 181 of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003. The rate is currently 5 per cent.

Valuations at extended intervals

Regulations will provide, broadly, that land and chattels will be valued every five years. That is to say, a valuation will be made as prescribed in the primary legislation for the first tax year in which a particular asset becomes chargeable under schedule 15. That valuation will also be used in any of the four succeeding years in which a charge arises.

If a charge arises in the fifth year after the first chargeable year, a fresh valuation will be made which will apply in the next four succeeding years, and so on for years 10, 15 and subsequent five-year anniversaries. If no charge arises for the fifth year, or any later five-year anniversary, no valuation need be made until the next tax year (if any) for which a charge arises, and a fresh series of five-yearly valuations will start from that year.

Valuations will be carried forward in cash terms without adjustment (e.g. for indexation against asset price inflation, as the enabling power would permit).

Equity release

Schedule 15 provides exemption for any case where the former owner continues to enjoy an asset they have sold, so long as they have disposed of their whole interest in it (apart from the right of continuing enjoyment) and have done so either at arm's length or on arm's length terms.

It became clear in consultation that this was not sufficient to accommodate all open-market equity release transactions, under which homeowners often sell only a part share in their property. I made clear last autumn that regulations under schedule 15 would cover the full range of bona fide equity-release schemes with arm's length providers, while continuing to bear down on schemes aimed at avoidance. With that in mind, we do not in general think it is appropriate to provide exemption for sales of a part interest which are made otherwise than at arm's length. If one member of a family needs to raise cash, and another member of the family is willing and able to provide it, there are other and more straightforward ways of structuring this than adopting the form of an equity release transaction.

The point was however made in consultation that some intra-family part disposals can arise from patterns of behaviour adopted for good family or business reasons, for example where a child moves in to care for an aged parent and acquires an equitable interest in their shared home as a corollary of that, or where younger members of a family take over the active role in a family partnership, and in doing so acquire an interest from the partners who preceded them. And we also accept that any cases where asset owners have already sold a part interest within their family are unlikely, given the law as it stood at the time, to have chosen that approach primarily for tax avoidance purposes.

Bringing together these different considerations, the regulations will extend the existing exemption (described above) to all sales done at arm's length where they involve the whole or a part of the vendor's interest in their asset. They will extend this exemption to any part sale, even if not at arm's length, so long as it was made before today and on arm's length terms. And this will also apply to future disposals if they are made for a consideration other than money or readily realisable assets.

Regulations to this effect will be made shortly, in time to take effect from the commencement of the new charge on 6 April. The Inland Revenue will also be publishing their guidance on the interpretation and operation of schedule 15: it will be announced and made available on www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Development Plan Documents and Statements of Community Involvement

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I am announcing today the publication for consultation of guidance on assessing the soundness of development plan documents (DPDs) and statements of community involvement (SCIs), and on the examination process itself. The consultation documents will be of interest to local authorities, agents, landowners, local residents and others likely to be involved in examinations of

development plan documents (DPDs) and statements of community involvement (SCIs) forming part of local development frameworks produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The guidance has been produced by the planning inspectorate.

The consultation documents also include model forms and guidance notes to help focus representations on the soundness tests.

The consultation will run until 30 May 2005. Copies of the consultation documents will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and will be available to download from the planning inspectorate's website at: www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk.

DEFENCE

Hercules Crash

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): The RAF board of inquiry (BOI) has produced its interim report into the crash of the C130 Hercules in Iraq on 30 January 2005 with the tragic loss of all 10 personnel on board.

I should emphasise that the BOI is not yet in a position to establish the cause of the crash. There is a great deal of detailed evidence that has yet to be analysed and a number of lines of inquiry that need further investigation.

Based on the evidence currently available, the BOI has ruled out a number of possibilities. These are bird strike, lightning strike, mid-air collision, controlled flight into the ground, wire/obstacle strike, restriction in the aircraft's flying controls, cargo explosion, engine fire, sabotage (including the use of an improvised explosive device) and aircraft fatigue. These interim findings are supported by the UK air accident investigation branch (AAIB).

There remain a number of other possible causes that require further investigation. The BOI is continuing its work, assisted by the AAIB which is also working independently from the BOI to ensure every possible avenue is explored. We will not be commenting or speculating further on the possible causes of the crash until the BOI has concluded.

The families of those killed in the crash are being informed personally of the BOI interim findings.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Sustainable Development

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I am delighted to announce that the Government's new sustainable development strategy "Securing the Future" is being launched today.

The new UK sustainable development strategy represents a new level of commitment, and joined-up thinking, across Departments. It highlights four priority areas for immediate action—sustainable consumption and production, climate change and energy, natural resources protection and environmental enhancement, and creating sustainable communities. It provides a challenging work programme which has been developed, and which will be delivered, in partnership with business, local government, NGOs and the public.

A supporting strategic framework to 2020, developed jointly by the UK Government, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government, and the Northern Ireland Administration, is also being launched today. This provides a shared purpose and a new set of five principles to underpin actions to deliver sustainable development across the UK.

The strategy documents will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses, and are also available on the UK Government's sustainable development website.

TRANSPORT

GLA Transport Grant

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty): The GLA transport grant for 2005–06 has today been determined by the Secretary of State for Transport at £2,161,015,000, following consultation with the Mayor of London. This grant is a block grant provided by the Government to Transport for London to support improvements to London Underground and other transport services in London. The grant figure represents the first instalment of my Department's five-year settlement for TfL announced in July 2004 following the 2004 spending review.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 8 March 2005

TREASURY

Contingencies Fund: HM Revenue and Customs

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): In response to one of the recommendations of Gus O'Donnell's review of the revenue departments in 2004, the Government have introduced the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Bill. In line with the review's recommendations, the Bill will create a new integrated taxes and customs department to supersede the existing departments of Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. This restructuring will aid the efficient and effective management of taxation, and the provision of a more effective service to the public and businesses.

Subject to parliamentary approval, the new department will be launched in April 2005. It is important to have an integrated internet site in place immediately, to provide a single point of contact for online customer information. An integrated internal intranet site, providing a single point of reference for staff, will be launched at the same time.

Urgent work is required in advance of the legislation receiving Royal Assent to allow those sites to be developed, tested and presented as new unified HM Revenue and Customs sites, both to enable the new sites to be launched on time, and avoid later costly duplication of development and testing work.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources and cash of £11,750 for this new service has been sought in the Inland Revenue's spring supplementary estimate. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure of £11,750 on work to develop and test the new logo on the IT systems will be met by a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund.

Pre-Owned Asset Regulations (Double Charges' Relief)

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): This statement announces regulations under section 104 Finance Act 1986 to provide relief from double inheritance tax (IHT) charges in situations caught by the pre-owned assets provisions at Schedule 15 Finance Act 2004, and is in addition to extended relief from income tax under Schedule 15 which I announced in a written statement on 7 March.

The pre-owned assets legislation in Schedule 15 provides for taxpayers to make an election so that they do not have to pay income tax in respect of a pre-owned asset but instead have the asset treated as part of their estate for IHT purposes. If the taxpayer dies within the next few years after making the election there is a possibility of two IHT charges on the same underlying asset value.

In particular, many taxpayers have used a "double trust" structure: one trust is created to buy the settlor's asset in exchange for an IOU, and this IOU is gifted into a second trust to take it out of the settlor's taxable estate. If the settlor dies within seven years, the estate will be liable to IHT on the IOU; and if they have made an election under Schedule 15 Finance Act 2004, their estate will be also liable on the underlying asset. It is clear from responses in consultation that this prospect is preventing some people from making an election which they would otherwise find attractive.

The regulations will eliminate this double IHT charge so that people who wish to make an election under Schedule 15 can be assured that only one IHT charge will be due whatever the timing of their death.

The regulations will be announced and made available on the Inland Revenue's website at: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

The Legal Deposit Advisory Panel

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): I wish to announce the establishment of a new advisory non-departmental public body: "The Legal Deposit Advisory Panel".

The Legal Deposit Advisory Panel will have a crucial role in the implementation of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003. The key tasks of the advisory panel will be to advise the Secretary of State on the content of regulations for the deposit of particular classes of non-print media, making recommendations for future secondary legislation as appropriate. This will ensure that the substantial archival resources in the legal deposit libraries keep pace with contemporary publishing trends.

Following extensive consultation with publishers, legal deposit libraries and other interested parties we have formulated the terms of reference and membership specifications of the panel. We will now be seeking to appoint members to the panel in accordance with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments regulation.

DEFENCE

Balkans Update

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): NATO has requested the deployment to Kosovo of the United Kingdom spearhead land element (SLE), which currently provides the ready battalion for the NATO Balkan-wide over the horizon operational reserve force. The battalion currently fulfilling the role of SLE is the 1st Battalion the Royal Green Jackets.

The deployment, which was requested by NATO late on the evening of Friday 4 March, was made in order to demonstrate the alliance's resolve and capability in the run-up to a number of important local anniversaries, including that of violent demonstrations last year on 17 March. The Kosovo Prime Minister, Ramush Haradinaj, has also announced today that he is to resign following his indictment by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. We welcome his decision to go voluntarily to The Hague.

Following the request from NATO, troops began to deploy to Kosovo over the weekend. A total of around 500 in all should deploy by early this week. We anticipate recovering the battalion back to the UK within thirty days, as we did with the UK element of the operational reserve force that was deployed last March, unless there are compelling operational reasons to consider leaving this capability in Kosovo for longer.

I shall keep the House updated of any significant developments when they occur.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Direct Airside Transit Visas

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Desmond Browne): The Government are firmly committed to maintaining effective immigration controls while at the same time ensuring that genuine passengers are able to pass through our ports with the least possible inconvenience.

The number of people arriving at UK airports who are found to be inadmissible is unacceptably high. Certain nationals, who are required to hold a valid visa to enter the UK, may transit this country for up to 24 hours without a visa. This provides a relatively easy and inexpensive way for those who are intent on circumventing our immigration controls to do so. Since 2003 we have expanded the direct airside transit visa (DATV) requirement to cover 23 additional nationalities. This has helped contribute to the significant drop in port asylum applications from these nationalities. For the three months following the introduction on 16 October 2003 of DATV regimes for Angola, Bangladesh, Cameroon, India, Lebanon and Pakistan, the number of asylum applications made at ports by those nationalities fell by 58 per cent.

Intelligence would suggest that some individuals travelling to the United Kingdom on documents issued by Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mongolia are destroying these documents either en route or after gaining entry to the UK, and are then applying for asylum as nationals of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia or China. Therefore from 00.01 hours on Wednesday 9 March all nationals Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Mongolia wishing to transit the UK will require a visa to do so.

To avoid undue hardship for those who had already made their travel plans, we have agreed to operate a grace period. Until 23.59 hours on Tuesday 15 March, any transit passenger who bought their ticket on or before 8 March will not be refused entry solely on the basis of not holding a valid transit visa. Also, any person on the return leg of a journey they commenced before 9 March and who passed through the UK on the outward leg of their journey will be allowed to transit the UK without a visa until 23.59 on 5 April.

In parallel with those measures, we are introducing changes to the arrangements that allow certain groups of low risk passenger to be exempt from a transit visa requirement if they are in possession of specific documents. Passengers who hold a valid visa for Australia and New Zealand will now be exempt from the DATV requirement. Visa-free transit of the United Kingdom will now be possible for such passengers irrespective of the routing chosen to reach Australia or Canada.

Further amendments to the exemptions mean that a passenger returning from a trip to the Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the USA will now be able to transit the United Kingdom irrespective of the routing they choose providing they are in possession of an onward air ticket and the visa held by them remains valid or they are not seeking to transit the UK more than six months since they last entered Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the USA respectively, with a valid visa.

I believe these changes will further reduce scope for abuse of the United Kingdom's immigration controls, whilst minimising inconvenience for genuine travellers and the travel industry alike.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 9 March 2005

DEFENCE

Modernising Armed Forces and Veterans Personnel Administration

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I am announcing today that I have asked the deputy chief of defence staff for personnel to explore whether there is scope for further service improvement through the greater integration of services delivered by the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency and the Veterans Agency. This is consistent with our overall policy at the Ministry of Defence to continue to improve the administrative support we provide to the armed forces and veterans.

This study will build on the opportunities offered by the joint personnel administration programme that will go live progressively during 2006. This review will take full account of the Government's intent to maintain a sharp focus on the delivery of services to all veterans. Trade unions, staff and customers, including veterans' groups, will be consulted before any conclusions are reached. I expect to report on the outcome of the study before the summer parliamentary recess.

Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): On 16 December 2004 I announced changes to the future structure of the infantry, including a decision on how we would achieve a reduction by one in the number of battalions in the Prince of Wales's Division. The antecedent components of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment (RGBW) were to merge with, in the case of the Gloucestershire element, the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment (which would also transfer to the Light Infantry) and, in the case of the Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment element, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

However, following my announcement, there was a widespread perception that the plan to split the RGBW along the lines of its antecedent parts amounted to the disbandment of the RGBW and the abandonment of its own heritage.

In view of this, I asked the executive committee of the Army Board (ECAB) to review its original recommendation in relation to the future of the RGBW. In the process of this review, ECAB noted that in formulating its original recommendation on the RGBW it had given insufficient weight to the sense of identity that has evolved during the 10 years since the RGBW was created.

ECAB concluded that although the substance of the original recommendation—that the RGBW will form the basis of the reduction by one battalion of the Prince of Wales's Division—should not change, more could be done to preserve the identity and heritage of the RGBW itself, and not just of its antecedents. ECAB now recommends that this should be achieved instead through an amalgamation of the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment with the RGBW. The resulting new regiment will become 1st Battalion the Light Infantry (reflecting the original decision for the D and D to join the Light Infantry).

I have accepted the need for this adjustment to the original recommendation. The details of how the amalgamation will be taken forward will be a matter for the Army to manage and will be worked out by those concerned over the coming months.

HEALTH

"Choosing Health" Delivery Plan and Action Plans

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson): The Government's public health White Paper "Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier", launched in November 2004, set out commonsense steps to prevent unnecessary deaths and help people to make healthier choices.

The delivery plan for "Choosing Health", published today, explains how the Government will put these plans into practice. It includes 45 "big wins" which the evidence suggests will make the greatest impact on health. It also covers policies and programmes which will be developed and implemented, targets to improve health, partnerships between industry, the voluntary sector and professional groups, and services delivered by local authorities and the NHS.

Delivering "Choosing Health" is backed up by two Action Plans: "Choosing a Better Diet: a food and health action plan" and "Choosing Activity: a physical activity action plan", also published today.

"Choosing a Better Diet: a food and health action plan" brings together, in one place, all the White Paper commitments relating to food and nutrition as well as further activity across Government. This includes action to improve information to enable healthier eating, restrict further the advertising and promotion of foods to children, increase access to healthier food, simplified food labelling, and improved school food.

"Choosing Activity: a physical activity action plan" sets out, for the first time, coordinated cross-Government action on promoting physical activity and sport. It highlights the leadership role of the NHS and the importance of close partnership working across sectors, particularly with local authorities, to bring about positive change in activity levels across the whole population. The plan outlines a national framework to complement and support work at a regional and local level. It details an extensive range of departmental commitments such as action to promote active travel through increased walking and cycling, work to improve the physical environment of communities to encourage more active living, and programmes to increase participation in sport and leisure activities.

Copies have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

New National Refugee Integration Strategy

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Desmond Browne): I am pleased to announce the publication today of "Integration Matters", the new national refugee integration strategy for England. Published in draft form last year, the thrust of the strategy was widely welcomed, but it has been informed and improved as a result of the consultation exercise. It replaces the earlier strategy, "Full and Equal Citizens", which came out in November 2000. The key themes of the new strategy, which is fully consistent with "Controlling Our Borders", the five-year strategy for immigration and asylum which was published last month, are to be found in helping refugees to achieve their full potential, to contribute to the community as fully as possible, and to gain access to the services to which they are entitled. The strategy shows how we intend to make best use of the substantial funding which we make available every year for refugee integration.

Among the most important new departures will be the introduction of the programme of refugee integration loans for which we legislated last year; and the piloting of the Sunrise programme under which specialised case workers will work with new refugees to draw up personal integration plans during the first month after they have received refugee status.

"Integration Matters" is being published at the same time as "Working to Rebuild Lives", the Department of Work and Pensions' new refugee employment strategy, and there are naturally close links between the two documents.

The Government have rightly placed much emphasis on eliminating abuse of the asylum system. "Integration Matters" reaffirms explicitly both the humanitarian importance of our commitment to provide refuge for those who are entitled to it, and the way in which the real benefits they bring to this country can be enhanced by effective programmes of integration.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Electricity Trading and Transmission Arrangements

The Minister for Energy and E-Commerce (Mr. Mike O'Brien): I have announced that the "Go-live" date for the British Electricity Trading and Transmission Arrangements (BETTA) will be 1 April 2005. BETTA will bring together Scotland's transmission networks and the network in England and Wales to create a single GB electricity market.

I have also announced our intention to limit the charges renewable generators on the Scottish islands, and potentially in the far north of the Scottish mainland, will have to pay to the National Grid to transmit electricity to customers across Britain. I am doing this under a power taken in the Energy Act 2004. Exercise of this power will ensure that remote location is no bar to renewable development, which can make an important contribution to the Government's target of having 10 per cent. renewable energy by 2010. We will be consulting on the details of the scheme in the summer.

TRANSPORT

Rail Industry Performance

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): The "Future of Rail" White Paper (Command Paper 6233), published in July 2004, announced the intention to establish Network Rail as the single point of responsibility for rail industry performance.

I am today announcing that Network Rail will take on this role from 4 April 2005. It will help deliver clear accountability for performance and focus the industry's efforts on delivering a more reliable railway for customers.

The management of the overall performance of the rail network is currently undertaken by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA). It tracks and reports the industry's overall progress on improving performance, and collates the detailed public performance measure (PPM) for each train company.

Working with train companies the SRA has developed specific performance improvement plans to reduce train companies delays. The changes I am announcing today will place that responsibility with Network Rail.

Network Rail already leads the delivery of national rail industry initiatives to improve performance, such as, resilient timetabling, the establishment of integrated control centres with train companies and the preparations for seasonal operating conditions. It is responsible for day to day operations and getting services back on track following any incidents and delays.

In future, Network Rail will also regularly track, report and challenge the industry's efforts to improve performance. At a local level, working in partnership with the train companies, the company will develop and put in place joint performance improvement plans, bringing together the currently separate planning arrangements of Network Rail and train companies, and in doing so secure the benefits of closer joint working.

Network Rail will take on the SRA's role of collecting data on the performance of the railway. Information on performance will be published regularly by the Office of Rail Regulation and Network Rail will be accountable for the performance levels achieved.

Network Rail's new role is a non-statutory function. Its accountability for overall performance will be underpinned by an amendment to its licence conditions which will set out its role in terms of whole industry performance. The details of the amendments are currently being consulted upon by the Office of Rail Regulation.

The changes I have announced today are further important steps in the implementation of the "Future of Rail" White Paper. They put in place clear arrangements and responsibilities for the overall performance of the network. They will ensure close joint working between Network Rail and train companies to deliver improved services to the passenger. They will also build on the closer industry co-operation happening now, through the establishment of integrated control centres, that are beginning to deliver impressive results in reducing delays on the network.

I shall keep the House informed of further developments as we continue to implement the proposals set out the in White Paper.

Turning Circles (Buses and Coaches)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson): Since 1998, rigid buses and coaches in the EU have had to comply with minimum turning circle requirements in order that they should easily and safely travel along roads and negotiate junctions. Since 2002, the turning circle requirements have been relaxed, except in Portugal and the UK, who were given a transitional period to ensure that no major issues would be experienced. The transitional period ends today and the requirements become aligned with the rest of the EU.

Local and highway authorities are being advised of the changes, and technical reports demonstrating the assessments made on this matter will be published shortly. Copies of these reports will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and put on the Department's website.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Refugee Employment Strategy

The Minister for Work (Jane Kennedy): I am pleased to announce the publication today of "Working to Rebuild Lives: a refugee employment strategy"—copies of which have been placed in the Library.

We began work to develop the strategy in December 2002 following research examining the barriers that refugees[1] face in employment and training. The research found that only around half of unemployed refugees are familiar with Jobcentre Plus services. In response, we developed studies and pilot activity throughout 2003 to identify ways to improve refugee participation in Jobcentre Plus activity. We consulted with Government and external partners, including the refugee community and voluntary sectors, through a preliminary report published in September 2003. We reported our studies and pilot activity in September last year (DWP Research Report W201).

The aims of the strategy are to move more unemployed refugees into Jobcentre Plus support quickly after they receive refugee status and to ensure that Jobcentre Plus gives them the help they need to find sustainable work.

The strategy introduces measures, some already in place and some still in development, across Government and the voluntary sector. It identifies ways in which Government can work more closely to make it easier for refugees to get the help they need. It is underpinned by a Jobcentre Plus "Operational Framework" that provides guidance for staff in identifying and addressing key issues to support refugees seeking employment and claiming benefits.

The publication of this strategy does not close the debate on refugee employment. DWP has worked closely throughout its production with the Employability Forum who lead the employment sub-group of the Home Office-led National Refugee Integration Forum (NRIF). DWP will continue to work with this group to monitor the success of the strategy and to continue to identify and tackle refugees' barriers to employment. I thank the Employability Forum and NRIF for their involvement.

The refugee employment strategy is being published simultaneously with "Integration Matters", the Home Office's strategy for refugee integration.

Note

[1] The term "refugee" in the refugee employment strategy applies to those granted refugee status or other leave to remain in the UK through the asylum process. In this context, the term "refugee" is not the strict interpretation applied by the Home Office.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Report on Brentwood Borough Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI focused inspection report on Brentwood borough council was published on 8 March and copies of the report are available in the Library.

In 2003–04, Brentwood borough council administered some £11 million in housing benefits, about 19 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

On 29 January 2004 I announced, *Official Report*, column 18WS, that BFI would undertake focused inspections to provide quick improvements in performance in specific areas of benefits administration. This inspection concentrated on processing of claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit.

Brentwood borough council has made fundamental changes to its benefits service over the past three years, including major restructuring new information technology (IT) systems and implementation of the Department's verification framework. The council recognised that service improvement could only be achieved by developing and retaining the experience of their staff and has been successful in doing this.

Customer service was clearly a priority and particular efforts have been made to ensure that all evidence to support a claim is gathered. A local initiative to interview all customers who submitted a new claim, or reported changes of circumstances, was unusual but effective.

The council's close monitoring of the claims process has identified and resolved delays but this scrutiny was undermined by inadequate checks and the limited level of assurance provided by internal audit. Inconsistent working practices, a lack of audit trails and weaknesses in document imaging also detracted from the quality of work.

A number of successful bids to the Performance Standards Fund and Brentwood borough council's own investment have led to significant improvement in the average time taken to process claims. Steady progress has been made in the speed of processing but quality needs to be improved.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Report on Copeland Borough Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI focused inspection report on Copeland borough council was published on 8 March and copies of the report are available in the Library.

In 2003–04, Copeland borough council administered some £20 million in housing benefits, 53 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

On 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 18WS, I announced that the BFI would undertake focused inspections to provide quick improvements in performance in specific areas of benefits administration. This inspection concentrated on processing of claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit.

At the time of the inspection in November the council was processing new claims well outside the standard of 36 days and was in the bottom quartile of performance for all councils. Accuracy was poor and the reported performance was in the bottom quartile for this indicator of performance as well.

Inadequate analysis of the quality of work done, inconsistent management checking and a poor management information system meant that performance could not be monitored effectively and that the council should not identify the reasons for poor performance nor the opportunities to improve.

Coincidental with the BFI's inspection and in acknowledgement of its poor performance the council is now undertaking an ambitious change programme, and has introduced an interim new structure for the benefits service, implemented a document imaging processing system and moved into new premises. A new benefits IT system is planned for 2005.

The council has performance standard funding to employ consultants to assist its change programme. Copeland borough council has recognised that staff development, including management training and mentoring, will be necessary to improve its services.

The council addressed many of the issues identified during the course of the inspection.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Report on Fylde Borough Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Fylde borough council was published on 8 March and copies of the report are available in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2003–04, Fylde borough council administered some £12 million in housing benefits, about 48 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

The BFI inspected the council against the performance standards for housing benefits and finds that the council is not at standard for any of the seven functional areas of the performance standards—strategic management, customer services, processing of claims, working with landlords, internal security, counter-fraud and overpayments. However, it has strengths in all areas and overall Fylde borough council was performing to a fair standard.

To deliver strong and enduring improvement the council needs better strategic management, operational targets and performance monitoring systems. It should also seek to encourage the active involvement of senior officers and elected members in benefits matters.

The council has successfully tackled a backlog of benefit claims and performance has steadily improved since 2003. In August 2004 the council reported that it had achieved the performance standards for processing new claims (36 days) and changes of circumstances (nine days).

The council provides a high quality service to customers in terms of handling personal callers, telephone enquiries, correspondence and complaints. Customer surveys show a high level of customer satisfaction.

The council is responsive to the risks of benefit fraud and has experienced and professionally trained staff applying a full range of sanctions and key processes. Arrangements for recovering overpayments are not fully effective, however this weakness has been identified and extra resources have been allocated to reduce the amount of overpaid benefit.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Benefit Fraud (Torridge)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Torridge district council was published on 8 March and copies of the report are available in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2003–04, Torridge district council administered some £10 million in housing benefits, 31 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

BFI inspected Torridge district council against the performance standards for housing benefits and finds that the council is not at standard for any of the seven functional areas of the performance standards—

strategic management, customer services, processing of claims, working with landlords, internal security, counter-fraud and overpayments. Torridge district council is in the bottom 15 per cent. of all local authorities for claims processing performance and is providing a poor service overall.

The benefits service has been given a low priority within the council for several years and this is reflected in its consistently poor overall performance. There is a lack of effective management at strategic and operational level, and members and senior managers have failed to address weaknesses that have been apparent for at least two years.

Service improvements have been hindered by the lack of a strategic service delivery plan and formal policies and procedures. Managers have been running the service with limited management information and checks.

Coincidental with the inspection a reorganisation of benefits services had taken place and the case for additional resources was being addressed. There is now a commitment to improve the service provided to customers.

While good progress has been made in countering fraud, little is done to recover overpayments.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Race Relations Act)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI Race Relations Act update report was published on 8 March and copies of the report are available in the Library.

All inspectorates are to promote compliance with the Race Relations Act. BFI published its first Race Relations Act report in May 2003 on the extent to which 10 randomly selected local authorities' benefit services complied with the requirements of the Race Relations Act, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Since then BFI has worked with the Commission for Racial Equality and the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that the requirements of the Race Relations Act were incorporated in performance standards for the administration of housing benefits.

This second BFI report in this important area is based on 15 BFI inspection reports published since May 2003. It shows that no local authorities were meeting all the criteria relating to the Race Relations Act as set out in performance standards. At the time of BFI's inspections, four of the 15 local authorities had assessed the impact of proposed policies, or monitored the impact of existing policies, on race equality and two local authorities that failed to meet this requirement had a large ethnic minority population.

The report notes that eight local authorities had not provided training on the requirements of the Race Relations Act. However, areas of good practice were identified in the 15 local authorities and BFI is pleased to report there was widespread compliance with the requirement to produce a race equality scheme.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Good Practice Review of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI good practice review of Rotherham Metropolitan borough council was published on 8 March and copies of the report are available in the Library.

In 2003–04, Rotherham metropolitan borough council administered some £60 million in housing benefits, 15 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

The BFI helps to improve the effectiveness and security of benefits administration by disseminating good practice. Good practice reviews identify practices and procedures that can help other councils. This report identifies and describes the good practices the BFI found in Rotherham metropolitan borough council's administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit.

The BFI found that a partnership between the council and British Telecom (BT) provided the benefits service with a clear strategic purpose and modern IT conducive to a more effective service to customers.

Rotherham is in the top quartile of all councils for the speed of processing new claims and changes of circumstances. This strong performance was maintained during the implementation of the verification framework. Proactive case management, using accurate management information, has enabled managers and team leaders to identify potential processing delays and take appropriate action. On top of this, considerable improvements have been made to prevent, deter and detect fraud by introducing comprehensive counter-fraud policies and using the full range of sanctions. Other councils may well be able to learn from Rotherham's approach.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 10 March 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Her Majesty's Courts Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): My hon. Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor, the right hon. Lord Falconer of Thoroton, has made the following written ministerial statement.

On 1 April 2005, I will launch Her Majesty's Courts Service. The new agency brings together 43 organisations: the Court Service and the 42 Magistrates Courts Committees;

The following table sets out the key performance targets which I have set for Her Majesty's Courts Service for 2005–06:

Relevant PSA	*Headline targets Criminal Courts*	*Performance required by March 2006*
PSA1 (SR 2002 & 2004)	Increasing offences brought to justice:- Reducing the proportion of ineffective criminal trials	Not more than 17% in the Crown Court Not more than 23% in magistrates' courts
PSA1 (SR 2002 & 2004)	Ensuring cases are disposed of promptly	78% of cases start on time in the Crown Court
PSA1 (SR 2002 & 2004)	Average case length for persistent young offenders	Not more than 71 days
PSA1 (SR 2002 & 2004)	Maintain the number of sitting days in the Crown Court	104, 200 sitting days
PSA 2 (SR 2002 & 2004)	Improve enforcement of fines and execution of community penalty breach warrants	A payment rate of 81% or above The different individual area targets for warrant execution are met
PSA 3 (SR 2002) PSA 5 (SR 2004)	Hearings and orders	Increase the proportion of contact and ancillary relief orders made by consent to 73.4% Reduce by 5% the proportion of disputed claims in the courts that are ultimately resolved by a hearing
PSA 4—PSA 5 (SR 2002) PSA 5 (SR 2004)	Claims	Increase by 2 % the number of small claims that are heard within the target time
PSA 4 (SR 2002)	Increase the level of user satisfaction in key areas	User satisfaction with knowledge of court staff at public counter 85% knowledge of staff on telephone service 80% speed of resolution of complaints 60% helpfulness of written communication 80%
PSA 4 (SR 2004)	Public Law children Act Cases (vulnerable children)	To improve performance in the time taken to complete care cases heard in the courts against the 40 week target (ultimately by 10 percentage points by 2010)
PSA 4 (SR 2002)	Adoptions	Complete 70% of cases in County Courts within 20 weeks

Copies of the HM Court Service framework document and the business plan for 2005–06 have been placed in the parliamentary Libraries.

Inquiries Bill

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor has today published the Government's response to the Public Administration Select Committee's first report of Session 2004–05 on "Government by Inquiry" which was published on 3 February 2005. The Government response includes comments on each of the 22 recommendations of the Committee.

The Government welcome the Committee's report on the use and effectiveness of independent inquiries into matters of public concern. The Committee's response is of immediate relevance to the current Parliamentary debate on the Inquiries Bill, which has now entered the House of Commons having completed its passage through the House of Lords.

The Inquiries Bill is designed to provide a comprehensive statutory framework for inquiries set up by Ministers into events that have caused, or have the potential to cause, public concern.

The Government believe that Government amendments brought forward in the House of Lords address many of the issues raised in the Committee's report. However, the Government is keen that the recommendations in the report, and our response published today, should both help to inform the debates on the Inquiries Bill as it continues its passage through Parliament.

I have placed copies of the response in the Libraries of both Houses and it has also been published on the Department for Constitutional Affairs website at: www.dca.gov.uk.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Television Licence Fees

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): On 18 November last year, *Official Report*, column 99WS, the Government announced that, from 1 April 2005, the fee for a colour television licence would rise to £126.50 and the black and white licence fee to £42.00. I am today laying before the House the regulations necessary to bring these new fees into force.

The new regulations also increase the fee for a duplicate licence, to replace one that has been lost or destroyed, from £3.25 to £4.50.

DEFENCE

Regional Prime Contract (South-East)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I am announcing today that PriDE, a joint venture between Interserve (Defence) Ltd and Southern Electric Contracting (SEC) has been awarded the Regional Prime Contract covering the Ministry of Defence's estate in the south-east. This follows the successful conclusion of discussions with the consortium, which was appointed as preferred bidder in August 2004.

The seven-year contract, worth in the region of £400 million, is the third in a series of five such regional arrangements to cover the estate and provide for capital works, property maintenance and facilities management services, throughout the south east of England.

The MOD has undertaken to make significant improvements in the overall condition of its estate by changing its organisational structures and introducing prime contracting methods. Encouraging innovation and efficiency, Regional Prime Contracting is a key initiative that aims to provide a better quality of service and greater value for money through suitably incentivised contracts conforming to the principles of "Smart Acquisition".

Hooding (British Armed Forces)

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): Since May 2004 Ministers have made statements in both Houses of Parliament and in written answers to the effect that the use of hooding in Iraq by the British Armed Forces ceased at the end of September 2003. These answers referred to conventional forces and remain true with respect to them. It has been drawn to Ministers' attention, however, that UK Special Forces from time to time used hooding as a temporary measure for the safe arrest and transit of detained persons until May 2004. For the sake of completeness the Parliamentary record should be corrected to reflect this.

Most of the criticism about the use of hooding has related to the obscuring of vision during interrogation. This practice is contrary to the instructions given by the then Prime Minister in 1972 and was ceased by UK military interrogators thereafter. UK military interrogators are made fully aware of this as part of their training and there have been no reported incidents where UK military interrogators have interrogated individuals while they have been hooded.

Our legal advice remains that the practice of temporarily obscuring the vision of a detained person, for the purposes of initial detention and transit, by the use of a hood is not contrary to the law. In Iraq the initial circumstances on the ground were such that it was judged by certain military commanders that its use was appropriate given the numbers of detainees and in some cases the need to obscure the identities of particular detainees for their own protection.

I can, however, confirm that no UK forces are currently authorised to use hooding in any circumstances.

End-to-End Logistics

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 1 November 2004, I informed the House that there would be a series of announcements relating to the Defence Logistics Transformation Programme. On 25 November 2004, following a period of trades union consultation, I announced the implementation of changes arising from the recommendations of the end-to-end review of the logistics process for military aircraft support. I indicated that, in addition to changes arising from air depth support, the application of end-to-end logistic principles would result in a reduction of around 1,500 RAF uniformed personnel and some reductions in MOD civilian posts at some RAF stations.

As part of this continuing process, I am announcing today how the overall reductions in both RAF uniformed personnel and MOD civilians as a result of the application of the end-to-end logistic principles are expected to affect individual RAF stations. The civilian reductions will be subject to TU consultation. These efficiency reductions, together with the increase to the defence budget, will ensure that the Department can modernise its armed forces to meet tomorrow's challenges.

Further work to identify efficiencies has now estimated that the reduction in the number of RAF uniformed personnel posts will be in the region of 2,000. With regard to MOD civilian posts, I anticipate that a net additional 70 posts will no longer be required. These changes will form part of the service and civilian manpower reductions of 7,500 and 10,000 respectively that were announced on 21 July last year.

The effect on individual stations of these efficiencies are detailed in the table below. I expect the changes to be implemented by April 2008.

RAF Station	*Service Changes relating to aircraft depth support*[1]	*Other Changes*	*Total*
Brize Norton	180	120	300
Cottesmore/ Wittering	0	325	325
Kinloss	35	145	180
Leeming	0	215	215
Leuchars	0	160	160
Lossiemouth	340	360	700
Lyneham	130	100	230
Marham	+340	370	30
St Mawgan	90	85	175
Waddington	0	125	125
Total	435	2,005	2,440

RAF Station	*Civilian Changes relating to aircraft depth support*[1]	*Other Changes*	*Total*
Brize Norton	0	0	0
Cottesmore/ Wittering	0	0	0
Kinloss	0	20	20
Leeming	0	20	20

RAF Station	Civilian Changes relating to aircraft depth support[1]	Other Changes	Total
Leuchars	0	+10	+10
Lossiemouth	50	+15	35
Lyneham	0	0	0
Marham	0	30	30
St Mawgan	40	0	40
Waddington	0	25	25
Total	90	70	160

Note: All figures are reductions unless otherwise indicated. All numbers are rounded.

[1]Announced subject to Trades Union consultation 16 September 2004. Confirmed 25 November 2004.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Counter Narcotics (Afghanistan)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell): Rammell): The United Kingdom, as lead nation, salutes the determination of President Karzai and his Government in implementing the 1384 (2005) Counter Narcotics Implementation Plan. The plan is a framework for action to accelerate all our efforts over the coming year and sets out counter-narcotics (CN) activities ahead under eight pillars:

building institutions

information campaign

alternative livelihoods

interdiction and law enforcement

criminal justice

eradication

demand reduction and treatment of addicts

regional cooperation.

The adoption of this plan follows the successful holding by President Karzai in December 2004 of the first Counter Narcotics National Conference in Afghanistan. At that conference and since then, President Karzai has delivered powerful messages to reinforce his strong determination to act against all aspects of the narcotics trade.

The UK welcomes this renewed commitment and joins with the wider international community in pledging our collective, increased support for the 2005 plan. There are some early signs that this year may see an overall reduction in opium poppy cultivation levels. However, as it is still early in the harvest cycle, we need to wait for the UN assessments later in the year on levels of cultivation and on how much of the crop in the fields has been destroyed.

The UK has increased its spending to US$100 million this year on counter-narcotics activities in Afghanistan. Specifically, we are stepping up activity in support of the 2005 Plan in the following ways:

On creating alternative livelihoods for farmers who currently grow opium poppy, following the visit of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development to Afghanistan in January 2005, the UK has pledged US$125 million of support for alternative livelihoods in 2005–06; our alternative livelihoods commitment has more than doubled annually from 2002–03 to 2005–06. The UK is also leading the way in pressing some of the larger multilateral donors, such as the World Bank, to include counter narcotics objectives in their programmes. Activities include:

substantial support to activities to bring short-term, visible impact in 2005, building on the US$5m already made available for "cash for work";

support to a wide range of agricultural and off-farm income generating activities in poppy growing provinces;

increasing access to credit to rural areas, and developing products to address the specific problem of opium debt;

assessing opportunities to promote alternative products to opium poppy, and more favourable terms of trade for those products;

improving the co-ordination and implementation of development and counter narcotics programmes in Badakhshan, where the UK has already committed more than US$7.5 million.

On law enforcement, the UK has mapped out and is coordinating the development of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), working with other lead nations to establish the counter narcotics capacity of all Afghan law enforcement institutions. As part of the CNPA development plan, the UK is establishing a further nine mobile detection teams (over 100 officers) in the next 18 months, capable of interdicting drug traffickers in Kabul and the provinces. We are also providing mentoring for intelligence and investigation units. We are looking to international donors to contribute to the CNPA development plan. We also welcome the recent results of the Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF), for which the UK has provided advice and funding. The Force has seized over 75 tonnes of opiates, destroyed 80 drugs labs and disrupted two drugs bazaars during the last year;

On developing the criminal justice system, the UK, working with the UN, has set up and completed the first phase of training and mentoring of the Counter Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force of investigators, prosecutors and judges. The Task Force will be 80 strong by mid-2005. We have also funded UNODC (nearly US$2million) to establish a secure court and prison facility for counter narcotics;

On eradication of the opium crop, this will be carried out in 2005 by the US-supported Central Poppy Eradication Force (CPEF) and by Governors and Police Chiefs at local level. The UK is working closely in both these areas and has established a Planning and Monitoring Cell to ensure that eradication by CPEF is targeted in a way which takes account of alternative livelihoods. We are also helping CPEF with salaries and equipment and are the major donor for verification and assessment of the eradication campaign to ensure it is carried out: over US$1 million to establish 30 ground-based verification teams (240 people) and satellite imagery. The first 15 verification teams should produce preliminary results by March.

On building the institutions necessary to support long-term Afghan commitment, the UK is helping to build central and provincial capacity in a number of key government institutions, including the new Counter Narcotics (CN) Ministry under Minister Qaderi, the counter narcotics function within the Ministry of

the Interior, the Rural Reconstruction Ministry, the Office of the National Security Adviser, the Civil Service Commission and the Cabinet Secretariat;

On lobbying, my right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary and the International Development Secretary have now launched a substantial lobbying campaign to encourage international partners, including the G8, the EU, the US, neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and other Berlin Conference participants, to support the Plan and help establish the new Counter Narcotics Trust Fund. The aim of this Fund will be to pull together donor support for the Afghan government's counter narcotics priorities. The April 2005 Afghan Development Forum will be an important opportunity for the Afghan government to seek additional support for alternative livelihoods;

The UK is also working with Afghan and international partners—

To raise public awareness of the risks to Afghanistan of the drugs trade and the dangers to health from addiction associated with growing opium poppy through proactive and comprehensive information campaigns and drug treatment activities;

To increase regional co-operation to tackle the drugs trade across borders through implementation of the April 2004 Berlin Declaration on Counter Narcotics Within the Framework of the Kabul Good Neighbourly Relations Declaration of December 2002.

In 2004–05, the UK provided around US$2.5 million of assistance to increase counter narcotics capacity on Afghanistan's borders with Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan, the three main routes for opiates being smuggled out of Afghanistan. Further such assistance is planned for financial year 2005–06.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Mr. Jack Straw) visited Kabul on 16 February, the day President Karzai launched the 2005 CN Implementation Plan. They agreed on the crucial importance of working together in support of the Plan to mobilise international assistance so that narcotics does not destroy Afghanistan's potential for stability, reconstruction and a thriving licit economy. The 2005 Plan therefore represents an important opportunity. We share the resolve of the Afghan government to achieve the sustainable elimination of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in 2005 and beyond.

I am placing copies of the plan in the Library of the House.

HEALTH

NHS Charges

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): We shall lay before the House regulations to increase National Health Service charges in England from 1 April 2005. There will be a cash increase in the prescription charge of 10p from £6.40 to £6.50 for each quantity of a drug or appliance dispensed.

The cost of prescription prepayment certificates will rise to from £33.40 to £33.90 for a 4-month certificate and from £91.80 to £93.20 for an annual certificate. These offer savings for those needing more than five items in four months or 14 in one year.

Some 86 per cent. of prescription items are dispensed in the community free of charge with another five per cent., of items dispensed to holders of prepayment certificates at no additional charge at the point of dispensing.

Around 50 per cent. of the population are entitled to free prescriptions including:

Men and women aged 60 and over

Children under 16

Young people aged 16, 17 and 18 who are in full time education

Pregnant women and women who have had a child in the previous 12 months and who hold a valid exemption certificate

People who hold a valid exemption certificate for a War Disablement but only in respect of medication for the disablement

People suffering from certain medical conditions and who hold a valid exemption certificate

People or their partners who get:

Income Support

Pension Credit guarantee credit

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

Tax credit where income is £15,050 per year or less and meet qualifying conditions.

People on low incomes who qualify under the NHS Low Income Scheme

Prescription charges are expected to raise some £452 million for the NHS in 2005–06.

Charges for elastic stockings and tights, wigs and fabric supports supplied through the Hospital Service will be increased similarly.

The maximum patient charge for a single course of dental treatment begun on or after 1 April 2005 will increase from £378 to £384. Only around two in every 1000 dental courses of treatment incur the maximum charge.

The prescription charge increase is the same as in the previous six years and is well below the current level of inflation. The other increases are in line with this percentage increase.

In order to continue to provide help with the cost of spectacles or contact lenses to children, people on low income and individuals with complex sight problems, optical voucher values will rise by 2.5 per cent.

NHS Charges and optical voucher values in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a matter for the Devolved Administrations.

Details of the revised prescription, maximum dental charge and optical voucher values have been placed in the Library.

National Service Framework

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): In February 2001, my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Health announced that the Department would be developing a new national service framework (NSF) with a particular focus on the needs of people with neurological conditions. I am pleased to announce that the long-term conditions NSF is today being published. It is an integral part of this Government's overall strategy to improve services for people with long-term conditions.

This NSF covers the full range of issues for people with neurological conditions across health and social care. It has been developed through active consultation with key stakeholders, including people who use services and their carers, and the direct participation of experts and practitioners from the field.

Although the NSF focuses on people with neurological conditions, much of the guidance it offers can apply to anyone living with a non-neurological long-term condition. Commissioners will therefore be encouraged to use the NSF in planning service developments for people with other long-term conditions.

The long-term conditions NSF is an evidence-based, 10-year strategy, which advocates a cultural shift in the provision of care, with services being designed and delivered around the needs of people and their families. It highlights the need for high-quality services that offer choice and are prompt, convenient and responsive and that look at the whole person, rather than at a presenting illness or problem.

The broad remit of the NSF is covered in 11 quality requirements, which are:

A person-centred service

Early recognition, prompt diagnosis and treatment

Emergency and acute management

Early and specialist rehabilitation

Community rehabilitation and support

Vocational rehabilitation

Providing equipment and accommodation

Providing personal care and support

Palliative care

Supporting family and carers

Caring for people with neurological conditions in hospital or other health and social caresettings

The long-term conditions NSF has been developed in line with this Government's wider public sector reforms, to devolve power and responsibility to local agencies. While the NSF sets out the levels of service quality which we expect to be available by 2015, the pace of change is to be left to local national health service and social care discretion to determine, and will be balanced against other priorities. The costs of implementing the NSF will be met from the additional resources announced in the 2004 spending review for the NHS and adult personal social services.

Copies of the NSF for long-term conditions have been placed in the Library.

PRIME MINISTER

Intelligence and Security Committee Report

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am grateful to the Intelligence and Security Committee for their report "The Handling of Detainees by UK Intelligence Personnel in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and Iraq" (CM 6469). I have today laid the Report before the House. The Government will respond formally to it in due course. Copies will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Offshore Petroleum Licensing

The Minister for Energy and E-Commerce (Mr. Mike O'Brien): I am pleased to inform the House that I am today inviting applications for petroleum licenses for unlicensed seaward blocks which will form the 23rd round of offshore petroleum licensing. These blocks are located in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) areas 1–5 (a map of the SEA areas can be found on the website indicated below).

Strategic Environmental Assessment (Sea)—Post Adoption Procedures

The DTFs draft plan to offer licences for offshore oil and gas exploration and production through a 23rd licensing round was the subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) initiated in 2003. The SEA is documented on a dedicated website (www.offshore-sea.org.uk) and includes commissioned reports on various components of the natural environment, cultural features and socio-economic considerations. In addition, as part of the SEA new information was collected for example on selected seabed features through seafloor mapping, sampling and photography, and on the offshore behaviour of seals by means of satellite tagging. The draft plan for the 23rd licensing round included offering blocks within the area to the east of Scotland, and also in those areas that had been subject to earlier DTI SEAs (SEAs 1, 2, 3, and 4) which covered the remaining parts of the UK North Sea Exclusive Economic Zone and the UK EEZ to the north and west of Orkney and Shetland.

The potential implications of the exploration and production activities which could follow if the draft plan was adopted were considered at an expert assessment workshop and a stakeholder workshop. The results of these workshops were assessed further and documented in an environmental report which then formed the basis for consultation with the consultation bodies and the public. The initiation of a three month consultation period on the DTFs draft plan and Environmental report was advertised in a number of local and national newspapers and by email notification to a wide range of individuals and organisations.

All responses received from statutory and other consultees on the draft plan and the environmental report have been considered by the DTI and a post consultation report for SEA 5 prepared and placed on the SEA website. This summarises consultee comments and DTI responses to them. The full texts of consultee comments have also been placed on the SEA website.

In deciding to proceed with a 23rd offshore licensing round the DTI has considered the conclusions and recommendations of the SEA 5 environmental report together with feedback received from consultees. As a result of the SEA process, a number of blocks are being withheld from licensing for the present on environmental grounds. These blocks are:

15/20c, 15/25d, 34/6, 34/7, 34/8, 34/12, 34/13, 34/17, 34/18, 40/15, 41/29, 41/30, 47/11, 47/27, 47/28, 47/29, 47/30, 48/26, 51/3, 51/4, 51/5, 52/1, 52/28.

Licensing of these blocks may be revisited in the future, for example as more information on the features of interest becomes available. In addition, a number of

blocks may be licensed but with conditions attached restricting or prohibiting marine activities. It should be noted that the Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipe-lines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999 and the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regulations, 2001 variously require that all major activities undertaken in connection with UK offshore hydrocarbon exploration and production include environmental assessment as part of consenting.

In addition, 34 blocks will not be offered for licensing in these SEA areas at the request of the Ministry of Defence

The DTI has established an offshore oil and gas environmental monitoring committee which is charged with coordinating the monitoring of significant environmental effects of the industry, including those that could arise from the implementation of the plan to hold a 23rd round of offshore licensing. The results of this monitoring will be made publicly available including through the SEA website.

In addition to the website above, a copy of the SEA report can be reviewed free of charge at:

Department of Trade and Industry
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Arrangements to view the Report can be made by telephoning 0207 215 5032.

European Law and Corporate Governance

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Jacqui Smith): I have today placed in the Libraries of both Houses copies of a consultation document entitled "European Company Law and Corporate Governance—Directive Proposals on Company Reporting, Capital Maintenance and Transfer of the Registered Office of a Company". This document is available on the DTI website at:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/current.htm.

The consultation period ends on 3 June 2005.

The consultation covers three proposals which form part of the European Commission's Action Plan on Company Law and Corporate Governance published in May 2003. The Commission has formally published two of the proposals. These are a Directive amending the Fourth and Seventh Accounting Directives and a Directive amending the Second Company Law Directive on Capital Maintenance. The commission is expected to publish shortly the third proposal, a directive on the cross border transfer of the registered office of a company.

By covering all three proposals in one single consultation we hope to give stakeholders the opportunity not only to consider all proposals at the same time but to understand how they relate to the overall framework of modernising company law and corporate governance in the EU.

Amendments to the Fourth and Seventh Accounting Directives

This proposal seeks to enhance confidence in financial statements and annual accounts published by European companies. It would introduce an annual Corporate Governance statement for publicly traded companies, tighten up accounting disclosure requirements and clarify the collective responsibility of directors towards the company for the annual report and accounts The Government support the broad principles behind the directive and believes that light touch common standards for disclosure should contribute to EU market confidence, encourage cross-border investment and facilitate cross-border access to capital. It is of the view that the requirements of the directive are broadly consistent with existing UK law and practice.

The consultation seeks views on the extent to which the proposed disclosure requirements will place additional burdens on companies and whether they will be of value to users of company accounts. It also asks for views on the nature of the information the Commission is proposing be contained in the Corporate Governance Statement.

Amendments to the Second Company Law Directive (Capital Maintenance)

This proposal seeks to simplify the Second Company Law Directive so that it is easier for public limited liability companies to take measures affecting the size, structure and ownership of their capital. It contains provisions to simplify procedures for valuation of non-cash consideration for allocation of shares, acquisition of own shares, financial assistance and waiving of pre-emption rights. It also aims to enhance standardised creditor protection for reductions of capital and introduces "squeeze-out" and "sell-out" rights of majority and minority shareholders respectively. The Government support the objective of streamlining measures to reduce burdens for business behind this proposal but has reservations about the real deregulatory benefits it will bring in practice.

The consultation seeks views on a number of issues to determine whether the changes in the proposal will have a significant beneficial impact for companies wanting to change their capital structures. It raises a number of areas where the proposals could lead to uncertainty on whether and how certain provisions will apply. It also seeks views on the proposed introduction of "squeeze-out" and "sell-out" rights in situations other than takeovers.

Additionally, later this year the Commission intends to start a study to look at more radical reform of the capital maintenance regime and the Government invite views on the overall merits of reform of this nature.

Proposal for a Directive on the Cross Border Transfer of Registered Office

This proposal will establish a legal framework for companies registered in the EU to transfer their registered office from one Member State to another without having to be wound up. In Great Britain both public and private companies registered under the Companies Act 1985 would be able to utilise the proposed transfer structure. The Government support the measure as one which should extend the opportunities for corporate restructuring across the EU.

This consultation is based on the proposals contained in the Commission's e-consultation carried out in spring 2004. It explores whether the overall proposal will be useful to UK companies and seeks views on the details of the procedures to be followed.

TRANSPORT

National Cycling Strategy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Charlotte Atkins): The Government are committed to encouraging more cycling in England, given the benefits in terms of transport, public health and the environment. Today the Department for Transport is publishing a review of the 1996 National Cycling Strategy, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

The key findings of the review are that:

whilst investment in cycling has increased substantially in recent years, there has been no commensurate increase in cycling levels;

The Government need to get a better return on their collective investment in cycling—for transport, sport, leisure and tourism;

cycling is not sufficient a priority for local authorities that we can rely on them as exclusively as we have to date to deliver an increase in cycling.

I am therefore announcing today that we will form a new, cross-Government group of representatives from interested Departments: Transport; Education and Skills; Health; Culture, Media and Sport (represented by Sport England); Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This group will set broad objectives to get more people cycling, more safely.

We will also create a new expert advisory body, Cycling England, to plan and co-ordinate Government investment in cycling, reporting to the cross-Government group. Cycling England will have a budget of £5 million per annum for the next three years to allocate to cycling programmes. It will comprise experts in transport policy, engineering, public health, the cycle industry, local government, cycle sport, cycle training and education. Cycling England will not be a separate spending body in itself, but there will be a presumption that Government will invest the £5 million budget earmarked in cycling in accordance with its advice. Cycling England will monitor programmes and be accountable to the Government group and Ministers for the value for money and effectiveness of its programmes.

We expect Cycling England to extend our co-operation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in cycling. NGOs in this field bring huge energy, experience and commitment and have been very effective in their own areas of work. We anticipate making better use of those attributes to supplement the work of local authorities.

It will be for Cycling England to determine its priorities, but we expect its programmes to fall into three broad categories:

training of children and adults to the new national standard for cycle training;

cycle routes and secure cycle parking;

marketing programmes to provide, on a targeted basis, better information on opportunities to cycle and to spread good practice in providing for cyclists.

King's Cross Station Development

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty): My predecessor advised the House on 20 January 2004 that he had initiated a review of the final phase of the planned development of the London underground station at King's Cross.

Mott Parsons Gibb (MPG), the Department's technical advisers for the channel tunnel rail link (CTRL) project, subsequently undertook a thorough review of the case for the phase 2 London underground works, in consultation with key stakeholders who might be affected by a change from the original plans for implementing these works. I have placed copies of MPG's final report to Ministers in the House Library. Copies are also available on the Department's website.

The report examined a range of options for the works, and their practical, operational, and financial implications. The main conclusions were as follows:

significant growth in demand is expected at King's Cross interchange, arising not only from general traffic growth, but also from passengers using the CTRL once it is open to traffic, and demand from major redevelopment schemes in the King's Cross area;

without the phase 2 LUL works (the northern ticket hall and associated tunnels to the deep tube lines), passenger demand at the King's Cross interchange would exceed safe operational levels by about 2011, resulting in the need for temporary closures at peak times;

there are close physical and programme inter-relationships between LUL's proposed works, Network Rail's plans for a new western concourse and the King's Cross central development, with significant benefits from delivery of them together in an integrated way;

of the options for the LUL Phase 2 works, the cheapest would be outright cancellation, but this would have severe implications for the future ability of the interchange to cope with demand;

delivery of the Phase 2 works by 2011 would avoid this problem: were a decision taken to proceed, it would be most cost-effective to do so with the minimum delay.

On this basis, the Government have concluded that the phase 2 works, including the northern ticket hall, should proceed without further delay, and that these should be co-ordinated with development of plans for the NR western concourse in order to ensure an integrated overall design and programme which should deliver the combined scheme as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. The Department is now taking this forward with London Underground, Network Rail and other key stakeholders.

Rail Security

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): Following the Madrid rail attacks in March 2004, the Government undertook a comprehensive review to examine rail security measures already in place in the UK and investigate new ideas and ways of improving current measures. It was undertaken in conjunction with the British Transport Police (BTP), industry and other Government Departments.

Rail and underground security in the UK already has strong foundations in place which have been developed over time to deter the Irish terrorist threat. The review built on lessons learnt from this threat but also focused on the different methods used increasingly by international terrorists. It also took account of the obvious constraints and practical difficulties in trying to secure the open, mass-transit system that characterises the rail network today.

What the review did was to identify a package of short, medium and long-term measures to enhance rail counter-terrorist security. A key feature of the review was to ensure that the measures were proportionate, pragmatic, sustainable and did not place an undue burden on industry.

The resulting measures are producing incremental enhancements in the security of the rail network, without requiring a significant shift in the open nature of the rail system. Each of the measures seeks to address the vulnerabilities of the existing security regime and goes some way in deterring potential terrorist activity.

Significant progress has been achieved with the industry so far in translating these recommendations into real changes on the ground. Some examples include:

- More frequent and varied security announcements on trains and at stations to increase passenger awareness
- Mandatory security training to form part of industry's general training regime
- Publication of interim guidance to industry on baggage reconciliation
- Enhanced use of CCTV
- Enhanced national covert explosives test programme
- Work to bring the Glasgow Subway and Docklands Light Railway under formal security regulation is at an advanced stage
- A 'menu of options' agreed with industry and the BTP for interim enhanced security measures in response to specific threats
- Agreement with Network Rail to deploy a range of additional security measures to monitor rail infrastructure security

A vital element in maintaining the security of the railways and deterring potential terrorist activity rests with the BTP, who acts as the first line of defence in combating the threat posed by terrorism on the railways. It has security capabilities unavailable to railway operators which include:

- high-profile policing
- increased use of explosive sniffer dogs
- the monitoring of vehicles entering station car parks
- a comprehensive technical capability

Working in partnership with the Department and the industry, the BTP supplements the operators' protective security procedures. In addition, agreement has been reached with the Association of Chief Police Officers to enhance the BTP's policing presence in the event of a heightened threat level.

In response to the changing security environment, the Government has taken concrete steps to position the rail industry and the travelling public against the new threats faced today from international terrorism.

The outcomes from the review and the enhanced policing operations make a genuine difference to the security measures in place prior to the terrorist attacks in Madrid. Combined, the measures are improving the way security is administered by industry and the BTP, and perceived by the public.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): A consultation exercise has been launched today on the Government's proposals to extend the range of benefit fraud offences that local authorities in Great Britain are able to investigate. At present, legislation allows local authorities to investigate fraud against local benefits, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. However, legal opinion has suggested that it does not allow them to investigate fraud against the national benefits administered by the Department for Work and Pensions even though they have traditionally investigated such fraud in the past. This limits the powers of local authorities: it is harder for them to tackle fraud against a local benefit which also involves fraud against a national benefit even where the offence involves the same or similar facts. We estimate that around 70 per cent. of fraud against a local benefit also involves fraud against a national benefit.

Most cases of benefit fraud will continue to be investigated by the DWP. However the proposed changes will give local authorities clear powers, once more, to investigate and prosecute offences against national benefits. This will be permitted in cases where their abilities to investigate and prosecute offences against local benefits will be hampered if the national benefit offence is not also investigated. While it is proposed that Scottish local authorities be allowed to investigate offences against national benefit the power to prosecute will not apply in Scotland where the Procurator Fiscal is responsible for the prosecution of all criminal offences. The Government proposes to make the changes by a Regulatory Reform Order.

Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Library and are also available online from the DWP website at:

www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2005/hbsd/la_investigative_powers.pdf.

The Government is inviting comments from local authorities, the law enforcement community, customer advocacy groups and the general public. The consultation closes on 10 June.

Written Answers to Questions

The following answers were received between Friday 11 February and Friday 18 February 2005

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213822]

Mr. Caborn: The only cars used by the department are provided by the Government Car and Despatch Service, and it is that organisation that deals with such issues.

Departmental Policies (Essex)

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Maldon and East Chelmsford constituency, the effects on Maldon and East Chelmsford of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215974]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Maldon and East Chelmsford since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. A school sport partnership involving four School Sport Co-ordinators and 23 primary Link teachers is based at great Baddow High School in Maldon and East Chelmsford. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Maldon and East Chelmsford have benefited from 13 Sport England lottery grants totalling £3,018,773, including two awards worth £504,000 in total from the £108 million investment in innovative sports facilities through the Active England programme.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England East grants increased from £4.7 million to £7.7 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in the East of England will be £8.3 million. Maldon and East Chelmsford has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals, including Aldeburgh productions and Essexdance.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Maldon and East Chelmsford will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Maldon and East Chelmsford also benefits from museums initiatives such as Renaissance East of England whereby it's Hub partner Colchester Museums will provide expertise and fund 60 per cent. of a new initiative to improve access and build new local audiences.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity in the Maldon and East Chelmsford area. The UK Film Council has supported a number of film-related enterprises in the Chelmsford area—including £20,000 for a new feature film production set and filmed in Essex; £8,000 funding to the Boreham Millennium Trust to support moving image education and £2,859 to Chelmsford Film Club to enable local audiences to view a wider choice of films.

The feature film 'The Lawless Heart' was set in and filmed in Maldon, directed by two local filmmakers. The film, which received £200,000 from the UK Film Council's Interim Production Fund, was released in 2001 to international acclaim.

Many other productions have been filmed in and around Maldon and East Chelmsford, such as the BBC's 'The Murder Game'; Granada's 'Medieval Monarchs' and the feature film 'Rules of the Game'.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Maldon

and East Chelmsford with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 5,205.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on new year's eve to 11 am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Maldon and East Chelmsford, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Maldon and East Chelmsford has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including the East of England Development Agency. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Maldon and East Chelmsford.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £647,014 to buildings and organisations in Maldon and East Chelmsford since 2 May 1997, including:

Building/organisation	*Amount (£)*
St. Mary's redundant Church, Mundon	45,229
St. Leonard, Southminster	4,113
St. Mary the Virgin, Woodham Ferrers	8,000
St. Nicholas, Tillingham	152,400
Creeksea Place, Burnham-on-Crouch	23,272
St. Nicholas, Little Braxted	53,000
Maldon District Council: Southminster Heritage Regeneration scheme	45,000
Maldon District Council: Maldon Conservation Area Partnership Scheme	316,000

In common with all of those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Maldon and East Chelmsford constituency are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community and informal learning value of public libraries. Essex county council has recognised this value and has undertaken various initiatives such as the ASK CHRIS project to encourage reading and lending across the county's public libraries. The project received a £67,000 award from the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation Public Libraries Challenge Fund in 2000–01.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Maldon and East Chelmsford has benefited from 169 awards totalling over £8.9 million. Of these, 21 awards worth over £1.7 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Departmental Policies (Haltemprice and Howden)

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Haltemprice and Howden constituency, the effects on Haltemprice and Howden of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216018]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Haltemprice and Howden since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. There is currently a school sport partnership involving one School Sport Co-ordinator and one Primary Link teacher in Haltemprice and Howden. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Haltemprice and Howden have benefited from five Sport England lottery grants totalling £351,449.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England Yorkshire and the Humber grants increased from £6.7 million to £21.3 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England Yorkshire and the Humber investment in regularly funded organisations will be £23.4 million. Haltemprice and Howden has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals, including Word Quake, a rural literature development agency that works throughout libraries in East Riding.

Young people in Haltemprice and Howden benefit from the Humber Youth Music Action Zone, known as Music4U. The Action Zone covers the East Riding of

Yorkshire council, Hull city council, North East Lincolnshire council and North Lincolnshire council and is co-ordinated by the National Centre for Early Music. Music4U was set up in September 2001 and has so far been awarded three grants totalling over £760,000. It has already reached over 15,000 children and young people, 85 per cent. of whom were first-time participants.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Haltemprice and Howden will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Haltemprice and Howden with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 5,615.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11pm on new year's eve to 11am on new rear's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Haltemprice and Howden, a greater say in regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Haltemprice and Howden has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including Yorkshire Forward. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Haltemprice and Howden.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £770,564 to seven projects in Haltemprice and Howden since 2 May 1997, including St Michael's Church, Skidby; Sts Peter and Paul Church, Howden; and the Howden Historic Environment Regeneration Scheme.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Haltemprice and Howden constituency are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community and informal learning value of public libraries. East Riding of Yorkshire council has recognised this value and undertaken initiatives such as "Word on the Street" to initiate and develop positive attitudes to reading in young people aged between 11 and 16 and raise their awareness of the value and relevance of the modern library service. DCMS/ Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund 2000–01 awarded £75,982 to this project. Of this money, £25,000 funded a website geared to the needs of young people across East Yorkshire, including Haltemprice and Howden.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Haltemprice and Howden has benefited from over 190 awards totalling over £4.1 million. Of these, 20 awards worth over £1.7 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Departmental Policies (Tatton)

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Tatton constituency, the effects on Tatton of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215975]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence

and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Tatton since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. A school sport partnership involving four School Sport Co-ordinators and 25 Primary Link teachers is based at Wilmslow High School in Tatton. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Tatton have benefited from seven Sport England lottery grants totalling £804,000.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England, North West grants increased from £7.6 million to £19.6 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in the North West will be £28.4 million. Tatton has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals, including Cheshire Rural Touring Network and the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Tatton will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Tatton also benefits from museums initiatives through the Cheshire Museums forum. Tatton Park, a National Trust property and registered Museum, was part of a successful bid from the Cheshire Museums forum to improve learning in Collections care. The forum also received £11,900 from the Museums Development fund to support a series of workshops to develop staff skills.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity within Cheshire. Two companies based in Knutsford have received lottery funding for development work.

Since April 2002 the job of promoting local locations, crews and facilities to visiting production companies has been carried out by North West Vision. In particular Tatton Hall and Park has been used extensively as a location for films and television dramas such as Granada's 'The Forsyth Saga', 'Island at War' and 'Coronation Street'.

Many other productions have been filmed in and around Knutsford such as Blue Blood (BBC3), Spine Chillers (BBC3) and the new feature film of the Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy. Local crew and facility companies are promoted through North West Vision's online production database and published production guide. 50 per cent. of Cheshire's freelancers live in the district of Macclesfield and over 25 per cent. of film facility companies are based in the borough.

Since 2002 Cheshire has facilitated 78 productions generating 501 filming days.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Tatton with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 5,770.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on new year's eve to 11 am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Tatton, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Tatton has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including the North West Development Agency. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Tatton.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £736,208 to five projects in Tatton since 2 May 1997, including the

Anderton Boat Lift, Belmont Hall in Great Budworth, Quarry Bank Mill in Styal, the Lion Salt Works and St. Michael and All Angels in Little Leigh.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Tatton are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community and informal learning value of public libraries. Cheshire council has recognised this value and has undertaken various initiatives such as the Fully Booked project to encourage reading among people across Cheshire, especially those of 65 plus who visit day centres and those with special needs. The project received an award for £30,348 from the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund in 2000–01.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Tatton has benefited from over 150 awards totalling over £6.9 million. Of these, 19 awards worth over £245,000 were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Departmental Policies (Woodspring)

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Woodspring constituency, the effects on Woodspring of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216017]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Woodspring since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. A school sport partnership involving five School Sport Co-ordinators and 35 Primary Link teachers is based at Wyvern in Woodspring. To achieve our challenging targets for increase participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Woodspring have benefited from 10 Sport England Lottery grants totalling £2,218,978.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England, South West grants increased from £4.3 million to £12.2 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in the South West will be £14.1 million. Woodspring has benefited from this increased funding to arts projects, organisations and individuals.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Woodspring will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries through the work of the Regional Screen Agencies have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity outside London. Last year 24 productions were shot in Somerset adding £333,000 to the local economy, including Woodspring.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Woodspring with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 6,085.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11pm on new year's eve to 11am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to

make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Woodspring, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Woodspring has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including South West Regional Development Agency. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Woodspring.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £57,885 to five buildings and organisations in Woodspring since 2 May 1997, including Tickenham Court, Clivedon and the Nailsea Glassworks, Nailsea.

In common with all of those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Woodspring constituency are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million Lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community and informal learning value of public libraries. North Somerset council has recognised this value and as part of a consortium (including North Somerset, Somerset County and the Unitary Authorities of Bath and North-East Somerset and South Gloucestershire) took part in an initiative called Foursite Internet for a new Era the result of which was the installation of 24/7 phone lines, internet access by mobile phone and a web catalogue system, which was shared across the consortium. Libraries in Woodspring benefited from this project which received a total award of £147,750 from the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund in 1998–99.

Information from the National Lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Woodspring has benefited from over 176 awards totalling over £9.3 million. Of these, 21 awards worth over £1.4 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) only a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215193]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* My Department intends to publish all information disclosed in response to requests made since January under the Freedom of Information Act, save where it is impractical to do so. My Department will be enhancing its online Publication Scheme to ensure that members of the public are able to find material which has been released. My Department does not intend routinely to place copies of such information in the Library of the House.

Historic Buildings

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with English Heritage concerning its budget to retain and restore houses and other structures deemed to be of historic value. [215808]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met English Heritage's chairman on 6 December 2004 to discuss its budget. The Minister for Heritage and DCMS officials also have regular meetings with English Heritage to discuss budgetary issues. Its financial settlement for the next three years includes £12 million of capital for investment in Apethorpe Hall and other historic sites in English Heritage's care.

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on official Ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214961]

Mr. Caborn: Ministers do not have discrete headed paper, compliment slips or business cards. Ministerial correspondence uses the same headed paper and cards as those used by officials. The annual cost of print for such items is circa £9,400.

Obesity

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what plans the Government have to fight youth obesity through the further development of school sports; [216262]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to combat obesity through sport. [216278]

Mr. Caborn: Halting the growth in childhood obesity is one of our prime objectives. We have set a national target to halt, by 2010, the year-on-year increase in obesity among children under 11 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole. This objective is shared jointly by my Department, Department of Health and the Department for Education and Skills.

On Tuesday 14 December 2004, the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills announced a further investment of £519 million from 2006–07 to 2007–08 for physical education and school sport.

The public service agreement target shared by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport will ensure

that 75 per cent. of pupils by 2006 and 85 per cent. of pupils by 2008 should receive at least two hours each week of high quality PE and school sport.

By 2010, our ambition is for all children to be offered at least four hours of sport every week. This will comprise at least two hours of high quality PE and sport at school and, in addition, the opportunity for at least a further two to three hours beyond the school day, delivered by a range of school, community and club providers.

My Department is working in close collaboration with key agencies including Sport England, the Big Lottery Fund, local government and others to inspire people to get active. We have allocated £65.8 million of Exchequer funding to Sport England to help drive forward our agenda for increasing physical activity in 2005–06. In addition Sport England plans to invest £315 million, including £40 million of Exchequer funding in the development of 32 sports at all levels over the next four years.

This investment will enable us to help people to start and stay in sport, increasing and widening the base of participation for everyone regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin or disability; to create a dynamic network of clubs, coaches and volunteers thus creating a culture of lifelong participation, contributing to the wider public health agenda of tackling the problem of obesity in our society.

Parliamentary Questions

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 1 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 166W on correspondence, when she will provide a substantive reply. [215033]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Minister for Media and Heritage has written to the hon. Gentleman today with further details on this decision, enclosing a copy of English Heritage's advice. The Department has now received English Heritage's advice. It advised that this telephone box does not meet the listing criteria. After careful consideration of the evidence and of this advice, the Secretary of State concurred with English Heritage and decided on 19 January not to add this building to the list. The listing applicant has been informed of this.

Playing Fields

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the sale of playing fields. [216275]

Mr. Caborn: The Government are committed to improving playing fields and protecting them wherever possible. The legislative changes we have introduced have dramatically reduced the number of sales of both school and community playing fields.

The Government will continue to explore ways in which the legislation can be tightened further so that even more playing fields can be protected.

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps the Government are taking to enhance and protect playing fields in England. [216279]

Mr. Caborn: Since 1995 Sport England has funded the creation of more than 320 new sports pitches, and improvements to more than 520.

At the same time, the Government have dramatically reduced the overall number of sales of both school and community playing fields, by introducing legislative changes and improving checks to the planning system. These measures have successfully halted the indiscriminate disposal of school playing fields.

In the majority of cases where playing fields are redeveloped they are replaced with new improved sport and recreation facilities.

Social Exclusion (Midlothian)

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what contribution the lottery has made to combating social exclusion in Midlothian. [216295]

Estelle Morris: Lottery distributors are required to take into account the need to reduce economic and social deprivation in making awards.

It can be difficult to determine precisely the extent of their contribution to reducing social and financial exclusion but a significant number of lottery-funded projects have helped to regenerate inner cities, create employment and strengthen communities. Since the lottery began 298 awards have been made to Midlothian, totalling £16.5 million.

Sports Clubs

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in promoting the tax relief benefits available to sports clubs. [216276]

Mr. Caborn: Over 2,000 sports clubs have already received an estimated total of £5 million in tax reliefs by registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs with the Inland Revenue. But many more clubs are still missing out because they do not know that this help is available.

My Department has therefore published "Growing Community Sport", a leaflet publicising the CASC scheme. I have sent copies to many of my parliamentary colleagues, and hope that they will make use of this leaflet to tell their constituents about the benefits available to sports clubs. They can obtain extra copies by contacting the DCMS.

Mr. Godsiff: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on tax relief for amateur sports clubs. [216277]

Mr. Caborn: The Community Amateur Sports Club scheme provides such clubs with a relief of 80 per cent. on their non-domestic rates and Gift Aid on donations from individuals, as part of a package of benefits intended to promote community and grass roots sport.

I welcome the fact that more than 2,000 clubs have so far registered with the scheme and received an estimated total of £5 million in tax reliefs as a result of doing so.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to recover documents lost by British citizens as a consequence of the tsunami in South East Asia; and what steps are being taken to prevent identity fraud. [215704]

Mr. Mullin: The nature of the disaster was such that many documents will never be recovered, but arrangements are in place to deal with those documents that are recovered. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's overseas posts are maintaining a high level of vigilance against document fraud in close liaison with the United Kingdom Passport Service.

British High Commission (Swaziland)

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to retain the British High Commission in Swaziland. [215140]

Mr. Mullin: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary explained in his written statement on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS, we have decided to close our High Commission in Swaziland while maintaining an honorary Consul in Mbabane and non-resident accreditation from Pretoria. This reflects the need to align better our resources with our priorities, to maximise efficiency, and to ensure that the UK has a cost-effective and flexible network of overseas representation.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215038]

Mr. Rammell: Due to the devolution of budgets, this information is not held centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The information could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Colombia

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of *(a)* Colombia and *(b)* Venezuela regarding the dispute over the arrest of FARC member Rodrigo Granda. [215752]

Mr. Rammell: We have not had specific discussions with the Colombian or Venezuelan Governments on this issue, although it has been touched on during regular contacts between our embassies and the respective governments.

The two countries recently issued a communiqué stating that the dispute has been resolved. We understand that the Venezuelan ambassador to Colombia has now returned to his post in Bogota. We are pleased that the two countries appear to be committed to a swift diplomatic resolution of the crisis.

Presidents Uribe and Chavez met on 15 February to formalise the resolution to the dispute.

Commemorative Events

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what involvement the European Communities have had in commemorative anniversary events held by the Government since 1997. [216066]

Mr. MacShane: The Government frequently hold commemorative events of various kinds. From time to time representatives of other EU member states or EU institutions take part in such events, depending on their nature. To answer this question in more detail would incur disproportionate costs.

EU Common Foreign and Security Policy

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the objectives of the Government are in relation to a common foreign and security policy in the European Union. [215637]

Mr. MacShane: The Government continue to work to develop a more effective and proactive EU common foreign and security policy capable of tackling key international issues and security threats as well as being able to react rapidly and appropriately to crises. The Government's objectives in relation to the EU's common foreign and security policy in 2005 are set out in paragraphs 64 to 87 in the White Paper titled "Prospects for the EU in 2005" (Cm 6450). Copies are available in the Library of the House. The Government have made a commitment to keep Parliament informed of their priorities/objectives across the range of EU business through the regular publication of these White Papers.

EU MEDIA Training Programme

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* budget, *(b)* aims and *(c)* target group of the Communities MEDIA Training programme; and if he will list projects funded to date involving United Kingdom partners. [215241]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

The MEDIA Training programme is part of the European Union's audio-visual policy. The MEDIA training budget for the six years 2001–06 is €59.4 million. The aims of the programme are to improve the continuous vocational training of professionals in the audio-visual sector; and encourage co-operation and exchange of know-how and best practice. Training activities supported by the MEDIA Training Programme are mainly targeted at professionals in the audio-visual industry and from radio, in particular: new media content providers, professionals from the animation industry, professionals from post-production, notably visual

effects supervisors, managers, producers, directors, sales agents, distributors, marketing executives, script-writers, script-editors, commissioning editors, as well as trainers. The following table sets out the training courses (and their providers) funded to date involving United Kingdom partners. UK professionals have also benefited from courses which are not organised by United Kingdom partners.

	Training provider	*Training course*
2001	Moonstone International	Moonstone Filmmaker's Lab and Moonstone Screenwriter's Lab
2001	Arista	Arista Development Workshops
2002	Draft Zero	EdeN—European Development Network
2003	Moonstone International	Moonstone Filmmaker's Lab and Moonstone Screenwriter's Lab
2003	The Script Factory	Scene Insiders
2003	Draft Zero	EdeN—European Development Network
2004	Arista Development	Arista Development Workshops
2004	Moonstone International	Moonstone Filmmaker's Lab and Moonstone Screenwriter's Lab
2004	The Script Factory	Scene Insiders
2004	University of West England	The Three Month Bristol Animation Course

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 1 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Saif-Ur-Rehman. [212294]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote on 12 January and replied substantively on 10 February.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 30 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Mr. M. Abbas. [215100]

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend the Minister for Europe (Mr. MacShane) replied on 19 January 2005. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary sent a further update on 10 February 2005.

Cuba

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of people in Cuba who are *(a)* serving prison sentences and *(b)* awaiting trial for political reasons. [212265]

Mr. Rammell: The Cuban Government do not acknowledge the existence of political prisoners, nor do they disclose the number of those awaiting trial. Our Embassy in Havana maintains contact with a number of civil society groups that monitor prisoner numbers and conditions within these constraints. One of these, the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation estimates in its January 2005 report that there are currently 294 prisoners who are either serving sentences or awaiting trial for political reasons.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely effects of the decision by the EU to suspend sanctions on Cuba. [215758]

Mr. Rammell: I welcome the adoption of the EU Council Conclusions on Cuba on 31 January which should help enable us to pursue a critical engagement with the Cuban Government and to have enhanced contacts with the peaceful opposition. We believe this approach is the right way to achieve the EU's objectives as set out in the Common Position of 1996, including to promote the peaceful transition to a pluralist democracy in Cuba. Normalised contact with the Cuban Government will enable the UK Government to press the Cuban Government on issues of concern—especially human rights, including our call for the release of all political prisoners—and to further UK/Cuba co-operation in areas of mutual interest such as the fight against crime, child protection and in developing sustainable tourism in Cuba.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how often since 1997 *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have (i) brought and (ii) sought to bring the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo for discussions in the UN Security Council; and if he will make a statement. [215417]

Mr. Mullin: The Security Council recognised the severity of the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in its Presidential Statement (1998/26) of 31 August 1998. Since that date the situation in the DRC has been regularly on the Security Council agenda. The Security Council's most recent statement was published on 7 December 2004.

The UK plays an active role in these discussions. We strongly support the UN Peacekeeping Force and the UN's work in helping implement the peace agreements in the DRC and across the region.

Departmental Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213778]

Mr. Rammell: The cost of cleaning the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Home Estate) in each year since 1997 is:

	Cost £
1997–98	1,127,514
1998–99	1,209,956
1999–2000	1,074,543
2000–01	1,147,345

	Cost £
2001–02	1,871,954
2002–03	1,370,478
2003–04	1,547,359
2004–05	[1]1,195,631

[1] To date.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EC-Albania) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215444]

Mr. MacShane: Albania-EC Joint Committee meetings, organised under the framework of the 1992 EC/Albania Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement, take place annually. The venue alternates between Brussels and Tirana. Recent meetings have been on 12 February 2003 in Tirana under the Greek Presidency of the EU and on 13 February 2004 in Brussels under the Irish Presidency of the EU. The EC is represented at these meetings by the Commission, although member states have the option of attending as observers.

On 31 January 2003, negotiations were opened between Albania and the EU for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The progress of these negotiations and the accompanying reforms are monitored by the EU-Albania Consultative Task Force, which generally meets about four times a year, usually in Tirana. The UK is regularly represented in observer capacity at these working-level meetings.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EEC-Estonia) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215928]

Mr. MacShane: The EU-Estonia Association Committee met once a year until Estonia joined the EU in May 2004. During the period of the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidencies (June 2003 to December 2004) it met once in June 2003, in Talinn. An official from UK Permanent Representation to the EU attended.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EEC-Latvia) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215929]

Mr. MacShane: The EU-Latvia Association Committee met once a year until Latvia joined the EU in May 2004. During the period of the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidencies (June 2003 to December 2004) it met once in June 2003, in Riga. An official from UK Permanent Representation to the EU attended.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EEC-Lithuania) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215930]

Mr. MacShane: The EU-Lithuania Association Committee met once a year until Lithuania joined the EU in May 2004. During the period of the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies (June 2003 to December 2004) it met once in June 2003, in Vilnius. We do not have any record of UK officials attending.

European Constitution

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 935W, on EU Constitutional Treaty, from which budget within his Department the cost of the Commentary on the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe was met. [215966]

Mr. MacShane: The cost of producing the Commentary on the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe was met by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Europe Directorate.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff within his Department are working on publications relating to the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe; and from which units within his Department they are drawn. [215967]

Mr. MacShane: Preparation of publications relating to the EU Constitution is one of the tasks carried out by staff working in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Europe Directorate. No FCO staff work solely on such publications.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1020–21W, on the European Constitution, if he will list the dates of meetings held with European Commission officials pertaining to the provision of information relating to the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe. [215968]

Mr. MacShane: Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials regularly meet with European Commission officials to discuss a wide range of European Union issues. We do not maintain a list of the occasions when information about the EU Constitutional Treaty was discussed at these meetings.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the effect of Article III-305 of the European Constitution, concerning a common UK/EU position with Cyprus and Malta on Commonwealth meetings. [215197]

Mr. MacShane: The EU is not and cannot be a member of the Commonwealth. If the Constitutional Treaty comes into force, the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs could only present the position of the EU at a Commonwealth meeting if the EU had been invited to

attend. In such circumstances he/she would speak for the EU. The UK would continue to represent itself as a Commonwealth member.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the application of Article III-296, subsection 2 and related articles, on the ceding by the United Kingdom of its chair at Commonwealth meetings in areas where the European Union Minister for Foreign Affairs expresses a mandate. [215198]

Mr. MacShane: The United Kingdom cannot cede its chair at Commonwealth meetings to the EU Minister for Foreign Affairs as the EU is not a member of the Commonwealth, nor can it become one. The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of sovereign states. The United Kingdom, like two other EU members (Malta and Cyprus) is a member of the Commonwealth in its own right and as such participates in deliberations and meetings and will continue to do so. This situation will not change under the Constitutional Treaty.

Genocide (International Obligations)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what obligations there are under international agreements to act in confirmed cases of genocide; and if he will make a statement. [215415]

Mr. Rammell: Under Article 1 of the Genocide Convention 1951, the Parties undertake to prevent and punish the crime of genocide whether committed in time of peace or war. Under Article 5, they undertake to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide or genocide-related crimes, and Article 6 provides that persons charged with such acts shall be tried. In addition, in Article 7, the Parties 'pledge themselves . . . to grant extradition' in cases of genocide or genocide-related crimes.

Gibraltar

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Gibraltarians are being held in Spanish prisons; in which prisons they are held; what visits have been made by councillors or Embassy officials to these individuals in the last five years; how and how regularly the British Embassy in Madrid informs the Gibraltarian authorities of developments in these cases; and which trials councillors or Embassy officials have attended in the last five years. [214212]

Mr. Mullin: There are 12 British passport holders with connections to Gibraltar being held in Spanish prisons, two in the Madrid consular district, and 10 in the Malaga consular district. Of these, nine have been visited in accordance with Consular Prison visits Policy. The other three have declined consular assistance.

Consular staff in Spain aim to contact British Nationals within 24 hours of being informed of an arrest, and to make a visit within 48 hours. Unless prisoners have said that they do not wish to be visited, Consular staff at British posts should aim to visit all detainees whilst on remand at reasonable intervals as deemed necessary by the Consulate/Embassy. Thereafter, one visit is made after sentencing. Further visits are normally only made if a real need arises (family, health, social problems, etc).

Consular staff are not trained to give legal advice and do not routinely attend court hearings.

There is no requirement for consular staff to inform the Gibraltarian authorities about the arrest of British Nationals with connections to Gibraltar. However, Consular staff do normally inform the Gibraltarian authorities as a matter of courtesy. If the prisoner wishes, Consular staff will also keep family informed.

Immigration Cases

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the High Commission in Islamabad sent to the Home Office the case papers on Mr. I. H., husband of Mrs. S. B. of Aylesbury, reference number ISB/747450. [215727]

Mr. Mullin: I regret that I cannot provide this information as it is not our practice to disclose details of individual entry clearance cases in a public forum. However, I have written to the hon. Member.

International Criminal Court

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the proceedings brought to the International Criminal Court since its inception; and if he will make a statement. [215416]

Mr. Rammell: The International Criminal Court has launched two formal investigations at the request of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, but as yet there are no proceedings arising out of these investigations.

Iran

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* Iran's current nuclear capability and *(b)* the future progress of its nuclear programme. [214450]

Mr. MacShane: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for East Devon (Mr. Swire) on 25 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 236W.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's policy towards Iran. [215682]

Mr. Rammell: Our policy towards Iran, like that of the European Union, is one of constructive but critical engagement. We maintain a robust dialogue on issues of concern such as Iran's nuclear programme, human rights record, approach to the fight against terrorism and attitude towards the Middle East Peace Process.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures his Department is taking to support the reform movement in Iran. [215683]

Mr. Rammell: Supporting reform across the Middle East region, including Iran, is a priority for the Government. We are promoting reform in Iran through: engagement with Ministries, the Judiciary, and civil

society within Iran, including through the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue; project work on good governance, rule of law and advancement of women; and action at the UN, including most recently co-sponsoring with other EU countries a General Assembly resolution in December 2004 expressing serious concern at the human rights situation in Iran and calling for change.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had concerning Iran's nuclear programme. [215770]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has frequent discussions with his French and German colleagues concerning Iran's nuclear programme. The issue is also always on the agenda for discussions with a wide range of Ministers from other states.

Most recently, the Foreign Secretary held lengthy discussions with the US Secretary of State, Dr. Condoleeza Rice on 4 February. The Foreign Secretary and Dr. Rice made public statements on the discussions at a press conference following their meeting. The transcript of the press conference is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk.

Discussions at senior official level with representatives of the Iranian Government continue on a regular basis.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of people detained by Coalition forces in Iraq but not recorded on Camp Cropper prison rolls and not presented to the International Committee of the Red Cross; and if he will make a statement. [211391]

Mr. Rammell: When US detention facilities were first established in Iraq there were administrative lapses that resulted in errors in the recording of detainees, but remedial action was taken to ensure these were corrected. We are aware of allegations that some detentions were deliberately not recorded. We have raised this with the United States authorities who assured us that there were no unrecorded detainees. All detainees at British facilities are recorded fully.

The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) is able to visit any US and UK detention facility. They also have access to prisoner records. The ICRC produces regular reports based on visits they make to coalition detention facilities. We address promptly any concerns raised by the ICRC. We also encourage the US to do the same, including concerns raised over the recording of detainees held by coalition forces.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information his Department has received concerning the possible involvement of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro with the overseas assets of the Saddam Hussein regime; and if he will make a statement. [212199]

Mr. Rammell: We are not aware of any information received by the Government concerning the involvement of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro with the overseas assets of the Saddam Hussein regime.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish the electoral register in Iraq. [214108]

Mr. Rammell: The electoral register in Iraq was compiled by the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI). Excerpts from the register were displayed prior to the 30 January elections to enable anybody to challenge the accuracy of the information it contained. Whether to publish the consolidated voter register is a matter for the IECI.

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department made of the percentage of the adult population of Iraq that was registered to vote. [214109]

Mr. Rammell: Preliminary estimates indicate that over 85 per cent. of the adult population were registered to vote in the elections on 30 January.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his statement of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 573–91, on Iraq, what the nationality was of the insurgents detained in Iraq for offences in connection with the elections. [214148]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* We do not have detailed information about the nationality of insurgents detained in Iraq for offences in connection with the elections. As with other terrorist attacks in Iraq, insurgents involved in such offences would likely include a proportion of foreigners. By way of illustration, the Iraqi Interim Government has said that all the eight suicide bombers involved in attacks on the day of the elections were foreign—four Sudanese, two Syrians, one Indonesian and one Saudi Arabian.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what part officials from UK Government departments have had in the *(a)* management and *(b)* monitoring of reconstruction funds in Iraq. [215147]

Mr. Rammell: As a Coalition partner in Iraq the UK Government was a member of the Programme Review Board (PRB), established by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to enable emergency or unanticipated extra-budgetary spending requests—including for reconstruction projects—to be brought to a joint Iraqi-CPA body for assessment and authorisation. A senior UK Government official attended PRB meetings on behalf of the UK. Minutes of the PRB are available online at http://www.cpairaq.org/budget/program_review_board.html.

The UK was also instrumental in setting up the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB), to oversee the auditing of Iraq's oil revenues and their management by the Coalition in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483 of 22 May 2003. UK officials had no direct role in the monitoring or auditing of reconstruction funds in Iraq. The auditing function of the CPA was carried out by officials and professionals supplied by other members of the Coalition, who worked alongside the firm of international auditors employed by the IAMB to undertake the audit of CPA management of the Development Fund for Iraq on behalf of the IAMB.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department was first informed of the mismanagement of reconstruction funds in Iraq. [215148]

Mr. Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. MacShane) gave to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mr. Simmonds) on 4 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1202W.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether UK-based private contractors enjoy immunity from prosecution under local Iraqi law. [215476]

Mr. Rammell: Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Order 17 continues to govern the status of certain foreign private security contractors in Iraq. These include private security contractors who are providing security services to Diplomatic Missions, the Multinational Force, International Consultants and other contractors defined in the Order, and their personnel. Such contractors will be immune from Iraqi legal process with respect to acts performed by them pursuant to the terms of a contract. Contractors must, however, respect Iraqi laws. Private security companies must comply with all CPA Orders and Memoranda. CPA Memorandum 17 obliges all such companies operating in Iraq to obtain a Business License from the Iraqi Ministry of Trade and an Operating License from the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior (MOI). The MOI monitors the actions of such companies and can revoke their Operating License. The contracting state has the right to waive the immunity of such companies.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will submit a declaration to the United Nations Security Council, in pursuance of Paragraph 23 of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 (1991) of 8 April 1991, formally to end sanctions against Iraq. [215502]

Mr. Rammell: Comprehensive sanctions against Iraq, as imposed by UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 661 (6 August 1990) and amended by subsequent relevant resolutions, were lifted by UNSCR 1483 (22 May 2003). However, the Security Council has continued to judge the situation in Iraq a threat to international peace and security. UNSCR 1483, passed in 2003, retained an arms embargo, with certain exemptions; imposed a freeze on assets outside Iraq of the former Iraqi regime and certain associates, and an obligation on member states to transfer these funds to the Development Fund for Iraq; and prohibited trade in stolen Iraqi cultural property.

Israel

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning the Absentee Property Law and its effect on Israeli policy in the West Bank. [214280]

Mr. Rammell: On 24 January, our Ambassador in Tel Aviv wrote to Israeli Justice Minister Livni to request further information on the Absentee Property Law. On 26 January, Sir Nigel Sheinwald, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Advisor, raised our concerns about this Law with Dov Weisglass, Prime Minister Sharon's Chief of Staff.

On 1 February, the Israeli Attorney General reversed the Israeli government's decision of July 2004 to apply the Law allowing the expropriation of Palestinian land in Jerusalem.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214886]

Mr. Rammell: The costs of staff mobile phones for the years 1996–97 to 1998–99 are set out in the table. Since April 1999, budgets have been devolved to individual Foreign and Commonwealth Office Departments. Information from this date could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Cost of staff mobile phones years 1996 to 1999

	£
1996–97	169,357
1997–98	190,199
1998–99	290,011

Northern Cyprus

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the EU to help with preparations for the application of the EU acquis to northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [215095]

Mr. MacShane: Following Cyprus' accession to the EU, as a divided island, the application of the acquis was suspended in the north pending a settlement. Help in preparing for the application of the acquis in the north is therefore an important component in facilitating a settlement. The Government's ultimate objective remains a just, viable and lasting settlement for the benefit of all Cypriots.

Since May last year, the European Commission has provided limited assistance to Turkish Cypriots through its Technical Assistance Exchange Office programme, which we welcome. The objective is to bring Turkish Cypriots closer to the European Union. We also support efforts in the EU to obtain agreement on the Commission's package of proposals for financial aid to and direct trade with the north of Cyprus.

The British Government are themselves funding a small number of projects in north Cyprus under the "Re-uniting Europe" programme within the Global Opportunities Fund. (More information on these can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: fco.gov.uk > Programmes > Global Opportunities Fund). These projects are designed to help the Turkish Cypriot community to prepare for reunification and full participation in the EU. Our efforts are in line with EU commitments and will, we believe, help facilitate a future settlement.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Republic of Cyprus over the UK's steps to help Turkish Cypriots prepare for the application of the EU acquis in the north of Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [215096]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no such discussions with the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, although UK policy in this area has been discussed bilaterally at senior official level.

The UK funds a number of projects in the north of Cyprus which deliver technical expertise on administrative reform and the handling of EU-related business, in order to help Turkish Cypriots prepare for the demands of a settlement and full participation in the EU. It is in the interests of the smooth functioning of a united Cyprus that this reform process should begin as soon as possible. These projects therefore form an important part of the Government's policy of promoting a Cyprus settlement.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which EU member state diplomats attended the Turkish National Day celebrations hosted in northern Cyprus by the Turkish Ambassador to the TRNC; what representations the Republic of Cyprus made on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [215097]

Mr. MacShane: I am unable to comment on the attendance of other member states at this event, but my hon. Friend could contact the Turkish Ambassador to the self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" directly about this.

The British High Commissioner attended last year, in line with practice for at least nine years. The Republic of Cyprus made several representations to express their concern. We took every effort to reassure them that attendance in no way constituted recognition of the "TRNC", on which the Government's policy of non-recognition is well-known and absolutely firm. Attendance was part of our efforts to promote a Cyprus settlement through engagement with both sides.

Nuclear Weapons

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the proposals put forward by the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr. El-Baredei, to the World Economic Forum in Davos on 27 January for controls on nuclear weapons and military nuclear materials and technologies from terrorist groups. [214330]

Mr. MacShane: The UK shares Dr. El Baradei's desire for a strengthened non-proliferation regime, and is currently examining his proposals in more detail. The UK has a good record of working with international partners to combat the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction, through initiatives such as the Global Partnership.

Peru

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Peruvian Government concerning its implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, published in August 2003. [215790]

Mr. Rammell: I raised this matter with the Peruvian Prime Minister when I visited Peru in December 2004 and reiterated our ongoing support for implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

We have actively supported the efforts of the TRC. This support has helped develop institutional capacity within this Commission in the regions most affected by the violence. The Peruvian authorities are now in the process of implementing the TRC's recommendations. We are currently supporting the work of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office and the National Co-ordinator for Human Rights in this aim.

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Peruvian Government concerning the pace of the trial reviews for men and women who may have been wrongly accused and convicted of terrorism in the late 1980s and early 1990s. [215791]

Mr. Rammell: Our Embassy in Lima made representations on this issue to the Peruvian authorities in April and September 2004. We will continue to monitor these cases and support the Peruvian Government's efforts to uphold the rights of the citizens to justice.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent on postage by the Department in each year since 1997. [215023]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office expenditure on postage for each financial year is as follows:

	£
April 2001 to March 2002	237,171
April 2002 to March 2003	226,667
April 2003 to March 2004	216,349
Expenditure this financial year:	
April 2004 to December 2004	153,146

Information on the costs of postage for the financial years prior to April 2001 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Project Coast

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information the Government holds on the former South Africa regime's project code-named Project Coast; and if he will make a statement. [215522]

Mr. MacShane: Her Majesty's Government holds information on Project Coast derived from a variety of sources including the findings of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the trial of the former head of the project, Wouter Basson.

Russia

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the attempt by some members of the Russian Duma to ban all religious and ethnic Jewish organisations as extremist. [215641]

Mr. Rammell: It is shocking that 20 Duma deputies should sign such a statement particularly at a time when the world was commemorating the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet troops.

I welcome the Statement from the State Duma that condemned such openly anti- Semitic views.

The Government's position on such issues is well known: we condemn all forms of discrimination and are committed to countering intolerance at home and abroad as an integral part of protecting and promoting human rights.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of levels of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Russia. [215642]

Mr. Rammell: Reports by NGOs and in the media about prejudice and violence against minorities in Russia are concerning. These reports indicate that racially motivated crimes against black, Asian, Caucasian and Jewish people in Russia appear to be increasing. One report from the Sova human rights centre in Moscow suggests that the number of racially motivated deaths in Russia increased from around 15 in 2003 to at least 44 in 2004.

The growth of extremist neo-Nazi and skinhead organisations is another concerning development. A report by the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights estimated that, at the end of 2003, there were 50,000 skinheads across Russia, mainly concentrated in the larger cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg.

While reports of growing anti-Semitism in Russia continue, Jewish groups agree that there is no state-sponsored anti-Semitism in Russia and President Vladimir Putin has demonstrated sympathy for Jewish interests. However, prejudice remains common and reports of sporadic attacks on Jewish buildings and individuals continue.

The Government's position on such issues is well known: we condemn all forms of discrimination and are committed to countering intolerance at home and abroad as an integral part of protecting and promoting human rights.

To help combat racism and xenophobia in Russia the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has funded a one-year project to assist NGOs representing ethnic minorities in the regions. We are also co-funding an ambitious project to bring ethnic minority NGOs and the police together in different regions to develop strategies for tackling racism and discrimination. A further project, started in 2003, provides legal support and takes on strategic litigation to protect the rights of the Roma community.

South Africa

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of South Africa about the promotion of democratic reform in Africa. [215667]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed governance, which included democratic reform, with South African Foreign Minister Dlamini-Zuma, during the UK-South Africa Bilateral Forum on 25–26 August 2004. Good governance is one of the five key areas of the work of the Commission for Africa which my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary of State for International Development have discussed with the South African Government on several occasions in recent months.

Sudan

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army's reaction to the Sudanese army's actions on 8 December 2004 in the Thabit area near El Fasher; and if he will make a statement. [214731]

Mr. Mullin: The report of the UN Secretary General on the Sudan notes that there was renewed fighting between government troops and rebel forces, including the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) around Thabit on 7–8 December, and that the

"SLA withdrew when attacked in many of these cases."

The report goes on to highlight continued breaches of the ceasefire by both sides. We are maintaining sustained pressure on Khartoum and rebels to show restraint in the face of provocation, to comply with UN Resolutions and their own commitments, and to reach a political settlement.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the recommendations of the Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur. [215658]

Mr. Mullin: The report of the International Commission of Inquiry (ICI) was released to the Security Council on 31 January. The report concluded that the Government of Sudan, the Arab militias and the rebels are all guilty of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, which may amount to crimes against humanity and/or war crimes. The report found no evidence that the Government of Sudan have pursued a policy of genocide in Darfur, although a "competent court" will need to decide whether certain individuals have done so. The report stresses that the crimes which have taken place in Darfur

"may be no less serious and heinous than genocide"

and recommends that the crimes should be referred to the International Criminal Court.

The ICI has given the UN Secretary General a list of suspects it believes may have perpetrated these crimes, and recommends that he pass this list to a competent

Prosecutor. The UN Security Council is united in their determination that there can be no impunity for these crimes and will be discussing the next steps over the coming days.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on the referral of the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court in accordance with the findings of the UN Inquiry on Darfur. [215659]

Mr. Rammell: Our preference is for the situation in Darfur to be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC), as recommended by the International Commission of Inquiry. Since Sudan is not a state party to the ICC Statute, and is unlikely to refer the situation to the Court, a decision by the Security Council will be required.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan on the rights of civilians to express their political views, including holding public demonstrations. [215671]

Mr. Mullin: We regularly raise this issue with the Government of Sudan. Most recently, on 6 February 2005, our embassy in Khartoum raised with the Ministry of Information the need to respect people's right to freedom of expression, with particular reference to press freedom, following recent action taken against the media.

Personal liberty, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom of expression and of assembly and association are guaranteed by the Power Sharing Protocol of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army signed on 9 January 2005. We are pressing both sides to fully implement the terms of the agreement.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that security forces in Sudan opened fire upon civilian protesters from the Beja community in Port Sudan on 29 January. [215672]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon., Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1557- 58W, and to the reply I gave today to my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Ms Keeble) on 16 February (UINs 215847 and 215848).

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he plans to take to assist the African Union to deploy the full contingent of troops to Darfur without delay. [215673]

Mr. Mullin: We are providing the African Union (AU) with considerable support to allow the mission to deploy the full contingent of troops. Since May 2004 we have provided more than £14 million in funding, from which we have provided logistical support including 143 vehicles, with a further delivery of 470 vehicles to take place soon. A UK officer also provides planning support to the AU and we have a UK observer on the ground.

The AU currently has just over 1,900 troops on the ground, and more are expected in the coming weeks. We remain in close contact with the AU, and our partners in the international community, about what further assistance we may be able to provide to aid their deployment.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the capability of the African Union mission in Darfur to fulfil its mandate. [215674]

Mr. Mullin: We fully support the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur. There have been some delays in deployment, but the AU now have more than 1,900 personnel on the ground. We and other donors have worked hard to help the AU overcome the logistical problems that they have faced in Darfur, by providing financial assistance, planning support and equipment. Where troops are equipped and on the ground they are playing a strong role, not only in monitoring, but also in defusing tensions; negotiating release of hostages; and offering protection to aid convoys. We note that the latest report by the UN Secretary General highlights the positive difference the AU are making in Darfur, particularly in facilitating the movement of humanitarian relief, preventing the escalation of violence, defusing tensions and providing security. The UN Secretary General goes on to state that

"the presence and pro-active initiatives taken by the AU mission have surpassed expectations."

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the views of the African Union's Chief Ceasefire Monitor, General Festus Okonkwo, concerning the build-up of arms and troops in Darfur. [215744]

Mr. Mullin: We fully support the comments made by General Okonkwo. We share his concerns about the build-up of troops and arms in Darfur. We are discussing ways to address this in the Security Council, including through further measures to control arms flows into and within Darfur. At the same time we are pressing all sides to abide by the commitments they have made and the obligations placed upon them, and then to return to the negotiating table in Abuja. A political dialogue, rather than use of weapons and troops, is the only way in which a lasting solution to the problems in Darfur will be found.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the Government of Sudan's progress in implementing his Five-Point Plan for Peace within the agreed three months. [215745]

Mr. Mullin: On 6 October 2004, the Government of Sudan gave their commitment to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister that they would co-operate with the African Union (AU) mission; provide the location of militia forces and confine these forces to barracks, if the rebels would also do so; conclude the Compressive Peace Agreement by the end of the year; and to implement the Abuja Humanitarian Protocol.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement was concluded on 31 December 2004, and formally signed on 9 January in Nairobi. The Government of Sudan have provided

the location of their forces to the AU and are co-operating with the ongoing expansion of its mission. However neither the Government of Sudan nor the rebels have confined their troops to barracks. We welcome the improvement in humanitarian access from six months ago, as stated by the UN Secretary General in his latest report on Darfur. But it is still very poor, and we continue to be concerned that the security situation means that aid cannot be delivered to all that need it. We have made clear that security must improve and the ceasefire violations must stop. We are strongly pressing both sides to abide by the Abuja protocols.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment he has made of the security situation in the east of Sudan; [215847]

(2) what discussions he has held with the Government of Sudan concerning its actions in relation to the unrest in the east of the country. [215848]

Mr. Mullin: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1557–58W.

Our embassy in Khartoum raised these incidents with Beja Congress leaders on 30 January 2005, and with the Government of Sudan on 31 January 2005.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will urge the UN to define the atrocities committed in Darfur as genocide; [215261]

(2) if he will urge his colleagues in the EU to define the atrocities committed in Darfur as genocide. [215262]

Mr. Mullin: The UK pressed for the establishment of an expert International Commission of Inquiry (ICI) by the UN to investigate the atrocities in Darfur, and determine whether genocide had been committed. The ICI's report, issued to the Security Council on 31 January 2005, concluded that while the Government of Sudan had not pursued a policy of genocide in Darfur, a "competent court" would need to decide whether certain individuals had done so, and that the Government of Sudan, the Arab militias and the rebels are all guilty of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, which may amount to crimes against humanity and/or war crimes.

We are now discussing with EU partners and Security Council members how best to take forward the ICI's recommendations.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what additional resources are being furnished to the African Union by the *(a)* UK, *(b)* EU and *(c)* UN to assist its attempts to resolve the crisis in Darfur. [215270]

Mr. Mullin: We strongly support the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur. Since May 2004 we have provided more than £14 million in funding, from which we have provided logistical support including 143 vehicles, with a further delivery of 470 vehicles to take place soon. A UK officer also provides planning support to the AU and we have a UK observer on the ground.

The European Commission has provided €92 million to support the AU, and many EU member states are also providing bilateral assistance, including significant logistical support.

The UN is also supporting the AU. A UN Assistance cell was established in Addis Ababa to enhance AU/UN co-operation, and includes military, police and logistics experts. A UN planning team is working closely with AU planners, and a UN military liaison officer is attached to AU headquarters in Darfur. The UN Advance Mission in the Sudan is establishing four officers in Darfur to facilitate liaison and co-operation with the AU mission in the field.

We remain in close contact with the AU, and our partners in the international community, about what further assistance we may be able to provide.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have (i) proposed, (ii) scheduled and (iii) had since 7 January with members and representatives of the governments of (A) Argentina, (B) Benin, (C) Brazil, (D) China, (E) Denmark, (F) France, (G) Greece, (H) Japan, (I) Philippines, (J) Romania, (K) Russian Federation, (L) United Republic of Tanzania, (M) United States and (N) Algeria, (1) regarding the situation in Darfur, (2) regarding the Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan pursuant to paragraphs 6,13, and 16 of Security Council resolution 1556 (2004), paragraph 15 of resolution 1564 (2004) and paragraph 17 of resolution 1574 (2004) and (3) regarding the use of the International Criminal Court to prosecute war crimes committed in (X) Darfur and (Y) Sudan in general; when each of these meetings took place; what specific proposals were (V) proposed and (W) accepted; and if he will make a statement. [215405]

Mr. Mullin: We have regular discussions at all levels with our fellow members of the UN Security Council regarding the situation in Darfur. Following the publication of the report of the International Commission of Inquiry, which recommended referring those accused of war crimes in Darfur to the International Criminal Court, we are actively discussing the way forward with our Security Council partners.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* strategy and *(b)* actions of the US Administration to promote the establishment of a temporary UN-African Union court in Arusha, Tanzania to handle war crimes prosecutions with regard to Sudan; and if he will make a statement. [215414]

Mr. Mullin: We are studying US proposals for a Sudan Tribunal based on the infrastructure of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Our initial analysis is that this option is less preferable than a Security Council referral of Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) as recommended by the International Commission of Inquiry's report into the crimes in Darfur which was transmitted to the Security Council on 31 January.

While an ICC referral is our preferred option, the ICC Statute is clear that a state which is not party to the ICC Statute—such as Sudan—can only be referred to the ICC by a decision of the Security Council. This will require consensus in the Council. We will study all options put forward by Security Council partners.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215795]

Mr. Rammell: The Department's targets and performance against them are set out in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Departmental Reports, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

European Union (Court Cases)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those organisations in receipt of European Communities funds that have brought actions against the European Commission relating to interpretation of treaty articles at the European Court of Justice since 1997. [215208]

Mr. MacShane: The number of such bodies who could potentially bring actions against the Commission is very large, including public or private bodies (such as industrial co-operatives and farmers) in any or all of the member states. The Government do not hold records of such actions taken against the Commission, which could be referred to the European Court of Justice by national courts in any member state as well as brought directly by the organisation.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 38W, on whistleblowers, what monitoring of whistleblowing cases in the European Communities his Department undertakes. [215290]

Mr. MacShane: The Government naturally take a close interest in any public comment on the financial or personnel management of the EU institutions. We are in frequent dialogue with the European Commission on a wide range of administrative matters.

The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) investigates all allegations of fraud involving EU institutions which come to its attention, including cases where whistleblowing is involved. In its most recent activities report, relating to the period between 1 July 2003 and 30 June 2004, OLAF for the first time provided information on the different sources of information it receives which lead to investigations. OLAF stated that in June 2004 it had five active cases (out of 511 active cases in total) where the primary source of information was a whistleblower. No new enquiry based on whistleblowing has been opened in the meantime.

Further information about OLAF and its reporting can be found on the following website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/anti_fraud/index_en.html

As I stated in my answer to the hon. Member of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 37W, the Government took an active part in formulating the European Communities Staff Regulations, of May 2004, which offer whistleblowers what we consider to be a comparable measure of protection to that enjoyed by UK officials in Crown Service. The Regulations provide a complaint mechanism for EU officials: to date, no complaint has been lodged concerning the whistleblowing procedures.

The Government will continue to follow closely this aspect of the EU institutions' efforts to protect their budgets against fraud.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on expenditure planned under Council Decision 2005/12/EC of OJ L6 volume 48 of 8 January. [211365]

Mr. Miliband: I have been asked to reply.

The expenditure was reduced by member states in consultation with the European Commission and now stands at €2 million in each of the two years 2005–06. This is a reduction of €0.4 million per annum on the original request cited in explanatory memorandum COM(2004) 512 of the 6 October 2004. The proposal was introduced by the Commission to allow improved and more adequate cover for centrally financed civil protection activity in an enlarged European Union.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the announcement of elections in Zimbabwe and *(b)* the prospect of opposition participation in the elections; and if he will make a statement. [215668]

Mr. Mullin: The opposition movement for democratic change has announced that it will contest the 31 March Zimbabwean parliamentary elections. With our EU partners we have lobbied the Zimbabwean Government and its neighbours on the need for Zimbabwe to comply with the South African Development Community guidelines on democratic elections to which the Zimbabwean Government itself has signed up.

CABINET OFFICE

Aircraft Charters

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much money his office has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213710]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster office has not spent any money on chartering aircraft.

Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each

financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

All Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers".

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) only a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215191]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Departments should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate.

Where the information covered under the Act is of broader and more general interest and importance, it will be placed on the Cabinet Office website. Copies of significant documents may also be placed in the Library. It would not be appropriate to place all the information released on the website or in the Library some of which has relevance or significance only to those that have requested it.

The Cabinet Office will ensure that where appropriate the House is informed of significant publications through a written ministerial statement.

Housing Policy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will make a statement on his role in the development of Government policy on illegal Traveller encampments; [214829]

(2) if he will make a statement on his role in the development of housing policy. [214830]

Mr. Milburn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Harborough (Mr. Garnier) on 20 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 720W.

Overseas Trips

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206663]

Mr. Miliband: The total cost of all overseas travel and overseas air travel for the Cabinet Office from 1997–98 to the financial year 2001–02 is shown in the following table.

Total cost of overseas travel

	£
1997–98	327,583
1998–99	491,682
1999–2000	495,381
2000–01	779,187
2001–02	1,020,505
Of which:	
Total cost of overseas air travel	
1997–98	288,796
1998–99	425,472
1999–2000	428,206
2000–01	682,139
2001–02	912,006

It is not possible to provide a further breakdown of costs as the information is not collected in the format requested, and to do so would incur disproportionate costs.

Due to a change in the way that travel costs are recorded, it is not possible to extract the overseas travel costs from the total cost of travel for 2002–03 without incurring disproportionate costs.

The way in which the data on overseas journeys is recorded does not enable us to extract the number relating to each year without incurring disproportionate costs.

All official travel in the Department is undertaken strictly in accordance with the rules contained in the Cabinet Office Management Code. All ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on training in nursing met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215412]

Mr. Hutton: I have been asked to reply.

This committee has not met during these presidencies. The members' terms of office have expired and the Commission has not sought further nominations.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on the training of midwives met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215413]

Mr. Hutton: I have been asked to reply.

The advisory committee on midwifery training did not meet during these presidencies.

The terms of office of members have expired and the Commission has not sought further nominations.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211655]

Mr. Lammy: Total costs for the early retirement scheme for the Department, which covers costs for the Court Service, the Public Guardianship Office and DCA headquarters, from its published resource accounts are outlined in the following table:

	Total DCA
1998–99	579,000
1999–2000	208,000
2000–01	935,000
2001–02	624,000
2002–03	—
2003–04	1,016,000
2004–05[1]	1,500,000

[1] Estimated

Information on 1997–98 is not readily available. The Department is unable to provide figures for years 2005–06 to 2007–08 without incurring disproportionate costs.

Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the costs of cleaning the Department and its predecessors were in each year since 1997. [213830]

Mr. Lammy: The direct cost of cleaning the Department's estate in 2002–03 was £5.05 million, in 2003–04 was £5.49 million and is estimated to be £5.83 million in 2004–05. These costs represent only those costs directly incurred by the Department through cleaning contracts and do not include cleaning services provided as part of wider facilities management contracts or provided by Landlords under the terms of individual leases. Information prior to 2002–03 is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213625]

Mr. Leslie: "Departmental canteens and bars" is taken to mean facilities provided primarily for use by the Department's staff. This approach is consistent with the definition used in previous questions.

(a) My Department has operated a staff canteen at its London Headquarters, where there is a concentration of staff, since 1997. Visitors to the building also use the facility.

The catering service is contracted out and income from sales is used to offset the cost to the Department. There is, however, a need for a subsidy, the cost of which is shown in the following table.

	Subsidy (£)
1997–98 1998–99 1999–2000 2000–01 2001–02 2002–03	The records for these years contain associated costs, which cannot be separated out. The subsidy could only be identified at disproportionate cost.
2003–04	106,049

(b) There are no departmental bars.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215616]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the Government Department responsible for upholding justice, rights and democracy. The Department's aim is to provide for effective and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and to modernise the law and constitution.

Currently, the Department has six strategic objectives, which cover the delivery of justice, civil and administrative law, protecting the vulnerable, modernising the constitution, increasing consumer choice and working in partnership with the independent judiciary. The Department also has seven Public Service Agreement targets to help deliver its strategic objectives.

Examples of the activity in 2004 to deliver these objectives include work with partners to make sure criminal trials are more efficient with the numbers of ineffective Crown court trials falling from 24 per cent. in 2002–03 to 16 per cent. in September 2004. The rate has reduced from 31 per cent. to 25 per cent. for the same period in the magistrates courts. The Department has also been involved in work to help people resolve their disputes in the most effective way, including pilots to test the effectiveness of court-based mediation. During 2004 there was a reduction from almost 49 per cent. to 41 per cent. in those cases that had eventually to be resolved by a hearing. Another area where pilots were used successfully was for all postal voting in four regions of England at the combined European and local elections in June 2004. Voter turnout doubled in the pilot regions compared with 1999.

The range of the Department's policies and actions is wide and the statistical information relating to all of that activity is not collected on a constituency basis. Consequently, the information requested in the question cannot be provided in the form requested

except at a disproportionate cost. However, statistical information about the Department's activities can be found at: http://www.dca.gov.uk/statistics/statfr.htm as well as at www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk.

An example of the information available on those sites is data on persistent young offenders. The average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced between August and October 2004 was 59 days in the Lancashire criminal justice area, which covers the constituency of Blackpool South. This compares with 124 days in the 1997 calendar year, and 83 days in the 2001 calendar year.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to West Dorset constituency, the effects on West Dorset of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215973]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the Government Department responsible for upholding justice, rights and democracy. The Department's aim is to provide for effective and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and to modernise the law and constitution.

Currently, the Department has six strategic objectives, which cover the delivery of justice, civil and administrative law, protecting the vulnerable, modernising the constitution, increasing consumer choice and working in partnership with the independent judiciary. The Department also has seven Public Service Agreement targets to help deliver its strategic objectives.

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An example of the information available on those sites is data on persistent young offenders. The average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced between August and October 2004 was 51 days in the Dorset criminal justice area, which covers the constituency of West Dorset. This compares with 135 days in the 1997 calendar year.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Folkestone and Hythe constituency, the effects on Folkestone and Hythe of the Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216016]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the Government Department responsible for upholding justice, rights and democracy. The Department's aim is to provide for effective and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and to modernise the law and constitution.

Currently, the Department has six strategic objectives, which cover the delivery of justice, civil and administrative law, protecting the vulnerable, modernising the constitution, increasing consumer choice and working in partnership with the independent judiciary. The Department also has seven Public Service Agreement targets to help deliver its strategic objectives.

Examples of the activity in 2004 to deliver these objectives include work with partners to make sure criminal trials are more efficient with the numbers of ineffective Crowncourt trials falling from 24 per cent. in 2002–03 to 16 per cent. in September 2004. The rate has reduced from 31 per cent. to 25 per cent. for the same period in the magistrates courts. The Department has also been involved in work to help people resolve their disputes in the most effective way, including pilots to test the effectiveness of court-based mediation. During 2004 there was a reduction from almost 49 per cent. to 41 per cent. in those cases that had eventually to be resolved by a hearing. Another area where pilots were used successfully was for all postal voting in four regions of England at the combined European and local elections in June 2004. Voter turnout doubled in the pilot regions compared with 1999.

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An example of the information available on those sites is data on persistent young offenders. The average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced between August and October 2004 was 74 days in the Kent criminal justice area, which covers the constituency of Folkestone and Hythe. This compares with 121 days in the 1997 calendar year.

Domestic Violence Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will take steps to prevent personal cross-examination of victims

by an alleged domestic violence perpetrator in *(a)* Crown court trials and *(b)* family court proceedings. [215690]

Mr. Leslie: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 872W. There are no plans at present to legislate to prevent cross-examination of a witness by a defendant in the criminal court, or by a respondent in the family court.

Section 36 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 already gives the court discretion to prevent cross-examination by a defendant in person in criminal proceedings, if it appears to the court that the quality of the evidence given by the witness is likely to be diminished by such examination. The wide discretion afforded judges in hearing family proceedings gives them sufficient powers to ensure that victims can be protected from intrusive and unfair questioning by the respondent in family proceedings. They can offer assistance in how questions are framed and evidence is presented. The judge also has an inherent power to refuse to admit evidence at a trial if he considers that it is in the interests of justice to do so.

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent on official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214960]

Mr. Lammy: My Department has spent the following amounts on ministerial stationery in the last two years. No central figures are held prior to April 2003 and to obtain them would incur a disproportionate cost.

	2003–04	*2004–05*[1]
Business cards	267.75	535.50
Headed paper	1,145.80	242.20
Compliment slips	91.50	61.00

[1] The figure for financial year 2004–05 is a year to date figure to the 8 February 2005.

The reduction in expenditure in the 2004–05 year to date figure for headed paper is due to the introduction of electronic templates.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214898]

Mr. Lammy: Total cost for mobile phones for my Department which covers costs for the Court Service, the Public Guardianship Office and my Department's headquarters, was £72,000 in 1998–99, £225,000 in 1999–2000, £202,000 in 2000–01, £223,000 in 2001–02, £267,000 in 2002–03, £296,000 in 2003–04 and £241,000 in 2004–05 (up to 31 December).

Information on 1997–98 is not readily available.

Principal Registry Judgments

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of judgments made by district judges in the Principal Registry *(a)* went to appeal and *(b)* were successful or partially successful on appeal in the last year for which figures are available. [214931]

Mr. Leslie: The total number of cases dealt with by a district judge in the Principal Registry since April 2004 was 32,327 of which there were 73 appeals. The outcome of appeal hearings is not recorded centrally, and this information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs on how many occasions the Department's Ministers used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years. [213695]

Mr. Leslie: The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs has used the Queens Flight on three occasions—once in 2001 and twice in 2003.

No other Minister in the former Lord Chancellor Department or the Department for Constitutional Affairs have used the Queens flight.

Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or Parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers, costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the list are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

All Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215092]

Mr. Lammy: Records of the number of lost or stolen identity passes were not kept until 2003 within my Department and the same year applies to the Wales Office. As a result, in 2003 113 passes were reported lost and 16 stolen from within my Department and none were reported as lost or stolen in the Wales Office. In 2004 to date, 140 passes have been reported lost in my Department and 13 stolen and in the Wales Office, five have been reported lost.

A new identity and access system was introduced in my Department in 2004 and as a result the cost of producing a pass is approximately £6.32 per pass. A similarly new system was introduced in the Wales Office in May 2003, with a cost of £6.04 per pass. Both costs have been established by identifying the cost of the equipment and the number of identity passes produced.

When a security pass is issued staff are required to sign a register confirming receipt and where appropriate return any old pass. When passes are lost or stolen all staff are requested to inform the Department as soon as possible and appropriate steps are taken to reduce the risk of unauthorised access into any of the Department's buildings.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether cattle in the early pre-patent stage of bovine tuberculosis may shed significant numbers of infectious organisms and thereby contribute to the spread of the disease by cattle to cattle spread. [214113]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is rare for cattle in the "pre-reactor" stage of bovine tuberculosis (TB) (when the animal is not yet able to react to the skin test) to excrete *Mycobacterium bovis*.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if, following the outcome of the four counties study of bovine tuberculosis in Ireland, she will abandon the Krebs trials and adopt proactive controls on badger hotspot areas where there is significant incidence of bovine tuberculosis in cattle; [214115]

(2) under what circumstances she would consider abandoning the Krebs trials. [214116]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have made it clear that we are prepared to consider a badger culling policy but only if the available scientific evidence supports this as a cost-effective and sustainable solution. We welcome the report of the Irish Four Area Culling Trial and have sought independent scientific advice on whether the findings are readily translatable to the situation in Great Britain. The advice we receive will be published on the Defra website.

The Irish Government are not changing their policy, believing that the type of proactive badger removal carried out in the Four Counties Study to be unviable.

At present, we have no plans to abandon the Randomised Badger Culling Trial. Significant results from the reactive element of the trial, notified to Ministers by the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG), led to suspension of culling in the reactive treatment areas in November 2003. The ISG has undertaken to bring any significant results from the proactive element of the trial to Ministers' attention without delay. The ISG has advised that trial operations should be complete in early 2006 with final data analysis commencing shortly thereafter.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has conducted on the possible use of polymerase chain reaction portable laboratories for the deteetion of bovine tuberculosis in badgers, their excretions or material contaminated by them. [214117]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra is not currently conducting research using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) portable laboratories for the detection of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in badgers.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment her Department has made of whether the conclusion of the four counties study on bovine tuberculosis in Ireland that reducing the badger population controls bovine tuberculosis is applicable to the UK; [214121]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the reasons for the differences in the outcomes between the four counties study of bovine tuberculosis in Ireland and the Krebs trial results so far reported; [214122]

(3) what the significant differences are between the four counties study on bovine tuberculosis in Ireland and the Krebs trial; [214123]

(4) what assessment her Department has made of the four counties study on bovine tuberculosis in Ireland; [214162]

(5) if she will make a statement on the implications for control of bovine tuberculosis in England and Wales of the findings of the four counties study on bovine tuberculosis in Ireland regarding the effect of proactive culling of badgers on the rate at which herds become subject to a confirmed restriction. [214163]

Mr. Bradshaw: We welcome the report of the Irish Four Area Culling Trial and are considering the implications of this work for bovine TB control in GB. We have sought advice from both the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB and the Godfray Group on whether the findings are readily translatable to the situation in Great Britain. The advice we receive will be published on the Defra website.

The data from the Irish Four Area Culling Trial will form part of the evidence base used in the models which we propose to utilise to assess potential policy options for the future, under the new bovine TB Strategy which we aim to publish shortly.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in how many herds in Cumbria, where purchased animals were introduced, cattle to cattle spread of bovine tuberculosis infection was judged by her officials to have occurred within the herd during 2004. [214126]

Mr. Bradshaw: Seven of the 16 confirmed bovine tuberculosis breakdowns disclosed in Cumbria during 2004, were judged, by the Veterinary Officer, to have been introduced through purchased stock. This number is provisional pending culture results for incidents disclosed in the last quarter of 2004.

Three of the seven breakdowns were traced to purchased stock involving a single purchased reactor animal. In the remaining four breakdowns, all of the

reactors taken in the incident were purchased and did not include cattle which were not cattle born onto the holding in Cumbria. However, the possibility that transmission between one introduced animal and another when they were in Cumbria cannot be excluded.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether analyses of TB99 returns provide data on the number of tuberculosis breakdowns attributable to *(a)* cattle to cattle spread and *(b)* badger to cattle transmission. [214131]

Mr. Bradshaw: No. Given the way the questions in the TB99 questionnaire were framed it is not possible to ascribe the relationship between cause and effect to particular risk factors, nor clearly attribute factors to a risk from cattle or wildlife. What the analyses do identify are the probabilities associated with certain risk factors.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the extent to which the spread of tuberculosis by infected cattle in the re-stocking period immediately after foot and mouth disease was eradicated in the UK during 2001 was influenced by the absence of pre-movement tuberculosis restrictions in cattle herds. [214704]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are aware that cattle to cattle spread of bovine TB has taken place as a result of restocking following foot and mouth disease and Defra is funding research, by Warwick University, that aims to (i) identify and estimate risk factors associated with the introduction of bovine TB in restocked farms and (ii) model transmission dynamics within cattle populations. The modelling work will take account of the exposure of cattle to badgers. The research project is due to end in 2006 and results will be published on the Defra website.

While no specific assessment has been made of the possible impact that pre-movement testing would have had on bovine TB in herds restocked following FMD, Government recognise that pre-movement TB testing is important as a mechanism to help prevent further spread of the disease. Defra's advice to farmers, published in the booklet 'TB in Cattle—Reducing the Risk', has always been to consider private TB testing and isolation of any animals bought in to a herd. This advisory booklet has been available to farmers, free of charge, since 1999. Officials are currently working with stakeholders to develop detailed proposals to make pre-movement TB testing of cattle from the areas of the country most badly affected by bovine TB compulsory.

Cattle Passport Scheme

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average period of late receipt was for applications refused on the grounds of lateness under the British Cattle Movement Service Cattle Passport Scheme in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will introduce a grace period to take account of delays in the postal service as a cause of lateness. [214601]

Alun Michael: In the year 2004, the average period of late receipt for cattle passport applications was 207 days. This figure is surprisingly high, because of a fairly small number of applications that were received many months or even years late.

It may be more helpful to explain that 50 per cent. of applications that were refused because of late application were received up to seven days late. 8 per cent. were between eight and 14 days late. A further 18 per cent. were up to six months late, 24 per cent. were over six months late, including some that were several years late.

Approximately 20 per cent. of refused passports are subsequently issued following a successful appeal.

The British Cattle Movement Service allows appeals on the grounds of postal delay only if the applicant can prove by independent evidence that he or she posted the application in good time.

The Cattle Identification Regulations 1998 require that passports be refused when applications are received late. A comprehensive review of these regulations will be carried out shortly and possible changes to the procedures concerning late passport applications will be considered. However, it is important to maintain a system that encourages farmers to register cattle births promptly. The full and accurate traceability of cattle is essential for disease control, and for the protection of public and animal health and welfare.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total expenditure by her Department on all external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211665]

Alun Michael: Defra came into being in June 2001. From information held centrally, the Department spent £30.012 million on all external consultants in 2003–04. On current information, estimated costs on all external consultants in 2004–05 will be approximately £25.8 million. Estimates of expenditure on all external consultants cannot yet be provided because the Department has not yet completed its business planning for the next financial years.

Countryside Access

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many existing agri-environment scheme holders who provided access for walkers under the scheme are now ineligible to receive payment as a consequence of their land being mapped for access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and what the *(a)* area of land affected and the *(b)* effect on income of the agreement holders is. [214499]

Alun Michael: In the first three areas where the right of access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has come into force there are 25 holdings with agri-environment open access agreements on land mapped as access land. These agreements affect some 471 hectares of land and attract payments of £23,549.50 per annum.

In addition, there are 11 holdings with agri-environment linear agreements and one holding with an agri-environment disabled access agreement on land mapped as access land in the first three areas. These affect 6,731 metres and 1,618 metres and attract payments of £3,028.95 and £1,698.90 per annum respectively.

The Rural Development Service is in the process of renegotiating these agreements with the agreement holders.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in respect of how many hectares of land mapped in areas one to four of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 mapping procedure fall within the definition of section 15 of that Act. [214500]

Alun Michael: The amount of land mapped under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in areas one to three, that falls within the definition of section 15, is 49,348.4 hectares. The right of access has not yet come into force in area four but the latest estimate is that this will involve a further 39,397 hectares.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many hectares of land mapped in areas one to four of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 mapping procedure are excepted land under Schedule 1 of that Act, as land the use of which is regulated by byelaws under section 14 of the Military Lands Act 1982 or section 2 of the Military Lands Act 1900. [214501]

Alun Michael: The total area of land mapped under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in areas one to three—but excepted from the right of access by virtue of being regulated by byelaws under section 14 of the Military Lands Act 1982, or section 2 of the Military Lands Act 1900—is 27,337.3 hectares. The right of access has not yet come into force in area four but the latest estimate is that this will involve a further 11,968.6 hectares.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many hectares of land mapped in areas one to four of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has had a restriction or closure applied for under section 28 of that Act for defence or national security; and how many hectares have as a result had a restriction or closure granted under the provisions of the Act. [214502]

Alun Michael: The total area of land mapped under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in areas one to three, which is subject to a restriction or closure under Section 28 of that Act, is 505.5 hectares. The right of access has not yet come into force in area four but the latest estimate is that this will involve a further 178.8 hectares.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the original estimate for the cost of the consultation, mapping and appeals and other associated costs for the implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 was; and what has been the actual cost to date. [214503]

Alun Michael: Defra is funding the Countryside Agency, National Park Authorities and the Planning Inspectorate to implement Part I of the Act throughout the whole of England by the end of 2005. The Countryside Agency's estimate at the end of 2000 for its total costs in implementing the new right of access was £28 million over four years. The agency has so far spent £38.83 million, consisting of £0.75 million in 1999–2000; £0.92 million in 2000–01; £5.17 million in 2001–02; £8.30 million in 2002–03; £13.25 million in 2003–04 and £10.44 million to date in 2004–05. National Park Authorities have been allocated an additional £4.725 million, consisting of £0.875 million in 2002–03; £2.0 million in 2003/04 and £1.85 million in 2004–05. We have also funded the Planning Inspectorate to deal with appeals against the inclusion of land on provisional maps and restriction appeals of £0.11 million in 2001–02; £0.84 million in 2002–03 and £1.20 million in 2003–04. The Planning Inspectorate has spent £1.23 million in the current financial year. Local authorities have been funded to establish local access forums under Part V of the Act.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funds have so far been allocated to the Access Management Grant Scheme; how much to date has been spent; and how much will be available for the grant scheme proposed to run until 2006–07. [214504]

Alun Michael: £2 million has been allocated to the Countryside Agency for the Access Management Grant Scheme in 2004–05. £547,462 has been spent on the scheme to date, with a further £709,503 committed to fund access authorities for work which they are due to complete before the end of this financial year. The scheme has been extended to March 2007, but the level of funding for the next two years has not been finalised.

Dairy Farming

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she next plans to meet dairy farmers to discuss farmgate prices. [216193]

Alun Michael: Price negotiation between producers and processors, or processors and supermarkets is a private commercial matter in which the Government cannot and should not get involved, provided competition rules are respected. However, Ministers frequently meet representatives from all parts of the dairy supply chain and are therefore aware of the issues.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average farm gate price paid to farmers in Lancashire for milk is. [216195]

Alun Michael: We have data covering the United Kingdom as a whole, but we do not hold milk price information for specific areas of the UK. The average price for milk delivered in December 2004 (the most recent month for which figures are available) is 19.12 pence per litre.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average herd size is of dairy farms in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [216197]

Alun Michael: The following figures show the average herd size in June 2003 on holdings where dairy was the predominant activity. The herd numbers include all cattle on the holding.

	Average herd size
(a) Lancashire (comprising Lancashire CC, Blackpool UA , Blackburn with Darwen UA)	168
(b) Chorley	144

Source:
June Agricultural Census

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the ministerial design champion for her Department is. [215647]

Alun Michael: The ministerial design champion for Defra is Alun Michael, Minister of State (Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality).

E-mails

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the deletion of e-mails by her Department; when this policy last changed; and how. [208681]

Alun Michael: Guidance issued from the Head of the Home Civil Service to all departments in July 2004 provided a clear cross-departmental approach to the handling of e-mail correspondence, and a copy is available in the Library of the House.

Equine Breeding

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the European Union institutions *(a)* have made and *(b)* are considering legislation requiring coloured ponies born to any sire or dam that are registered with any of the equine breed societies to be eligible to be included in the breed standard register, if the owner so desires; and if she will make a statement. [216077]

Alun Michael: The rules relating to the eligibility for entry into recognised equine studbooks are essentially a matter for the individual equine studbook Societies to decide. However, their requirements must not be contrary to the rules contained in Commission Decision 96/78/EC—laying down the criteria for entry and registration of "equidae" in stud-books for breeding purposes. We are not aware of any intention on the part of the European Commission to amend this legislation.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on Implementation of the Directive establishing a Community policy regarding water met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [216257]

Mr. Morley: The EU Committee on the implementation of the Directive establishing a Community policy regarding water met at the European Commission buildings in Brussels twice during the Irish presidency on 15 March 2004 and 28 May 2004; and once during the Dutch presidency on 28 October 2004. No meetings took place under the Italian presidency.

The UK Government were represented on the above occasions by water quality officials from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Scottish Executive.

Exercise Triton

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the results of Exercise Triton will be published. [216007]

Mr. Morley: As advised in my answer to you recently in relation to your question about contingency planning, The Environment Agency, with other responders, carries out a regular programme of exercises to test its capability at all levels. Last year's Exercise Triton, was conducted to test the preparedness of organisations at all levels, local, regional and national to a simulated national scale event involving flooding of the east coast from Lincolnshire to Hampshire, with offsets in Gwent and North Wales. A lessons identified report will be published in the spring.

Farm Support

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what initiatives her Department has introduced since 1997 to support farming. [213154]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows:

Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food

The Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food was launched in December 2002. It builds on the work of the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food and is a comprehensive and long-term plan for the future development of the industry. It identifies how the Government will work with the whole of the food chain to secure a Sustainable future for English farming and food industries, as viable industries contributing to a better environment and healthy and prosperous communities.

In practical terms the Strategy means:

industry, government and consumers working together to secure a more positive future for the industry;

helping farmers add value by reconnecting with their customers;

providing good quality assured food that consumers want;

improving co-operation within the food chain and improving its performance across the board;

helping farmers secure the right training and advice to develop their businesses and spread best practice; and

protecting the environment and rewarding farmers for providing environmental goods.

Much progress has already been made in implementing the Strategy, most notably through:

CAP Reform deal agreed in June 2003.

Preparation for launch of a new agri-environment scheme, Environmental Stewardship in the spring this year. The scheme will include Entry Level Environmental Stewardship (ELS),

which is open to all farmers. Higher Level Environmental Stewardship and Organic Entry Level Environmental Stewardship.

Launch of Pilot for Whole Farm Approach. The approach will deliver a range of benefits to both farmers and regulators. For the farmer it will reduce duplication and repeat requests for information, allow participants to understand how new standards and regulations may impact on their business as well as providing direct access to guidance and targeted information which will improve business performance.

Animal Health and Welfare Strategy, Implementation Plan and Evidence Base & launched on 24 June 2004. The Strategy was launched to set out a sustainable future for Animal Health and Welfare, explaining the vision and how this is to be achieved over the next 10 years. Veterinary Surveillance Strategy and revised Scrapie Strategy under the AHW Strategy also published.

A Pilot demonstration farms network has been set up.

Launch of a new Food Chain Centre to encourage greater efficiency in the UK food chain.

Launch of English Farming and Food Partnerships (EFFP)—to drive increased co-operation between farmers and between farmers and the rest of the food chain.

Key grants given under the new Agriculture Development Schemes, including awards to EFFP, Food Chain Centre and the Red Meat Industry Forum—to deliver improvements in competitiveness.

Launch of a programme of support for quality regional food and drinks.

Launch of a Sustainable Food Procurement Initiative to encourage public sector purchasers to buy food in a manner which promotes sustainable development.

The Research Priorities Group set up and the Applied Research Forum launched to ensure better co-ordination of, and support for, research and science in farming and food.

Red Meat Industry Forum—set up to deliver improvements in competitiveness in the red meat sector.

Non Food Crops centre is up and running and was launched on 24 November 2003.

Non-food crops strategy—On November 5 2004 Lord Whitty launched a joint Defra/DTI long-term strategy to create more demand for and use of renewable raw materials made from non-food crops. It is aimed at increasing commercial opportunities, stimulating innovation, cutting waste and environmental damage, and protecting precious natural resources.

A new chairman appointed to take forward AFS 2003 (Assured Food Standards).

Regulation—A new unit has been set up within the Department to look at regulation specifically from the farmer's point of view.

Benchmarking—Farm business benchmarking online database launched in 2004.

Animal Health

OTMS—on 1 December 2004 the start of a managed transition towards the lifting of the OTM rule and its replacement with a system of robust testing of cattle for BSE was announced. An essential first step will be the establishment of a robust and independently audited testing regime. Only cattle for which there is a negative test result will be sold for human consumption.

Foot and Mouth Disease—Defra has conducted a major national exercise to test contingency plans in case of a future outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

National Fallen Stock scheme—a guaranteed, biosecure, low-cost means of animal carcass disposal—came into effect on 22 November 2004. The Government are providing £10 million in the first year to allow the National Fallen Stock Company to pay 30 per cent. of the costs of collection and disposal of fallen farmed stock.

TB—Announced new measures on 1 November 2004 to tighten surveillance and reduce the risk of bovine TB spreading to new areas. These include changes to testing frequency and the imposition of movement restrictions immediately a test becomes overdue.

ERDP

The England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) is principally aimed at the farming industry and provides a framework for the operation of 10 separate but integrated schemes which provide new opportunities to protect and improve the countryside, to develop sustainable enterprises and to help rural communities to thrive.

The ERDP implements the European Rural Development Regulation—also known as the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy. A total of £1.6 billion of EU and Government money is being made available under these schemes in England during the seven years (2000–06) of the Programme.

The ERDP aims to:

significantly increase the area covered by schemes to conserve and improve the environment and maintain the sustainable management of the uplands through the following land-based schemes:

- Hill Farm Allowance
- Countryside Stewardship Scheme
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme
- Organic Farming Scheme
- Woodland Grant Scheme
- Farm Woodland Premium Scheme
- Energy Crops Scheme

assist the creation of more diverse and competitive agricultural and forestry sectors and jobs in the countryside, encourage the development of new products and markets and greater collaboration, and provide training to support these new activities through the following project-based schemes:

- Rural Enterprise Scheme
- Processing and Marketing Grant
- Vocational Training Scheme

The Objective 1 Programme

Complementing the ERDP is the Objective 1 programme, part of the European Structural Funds. The Objective 1 programme runs from 1 January 2000 until 31 December 2006 and covers the areas of the EU, which have incomes below 75 per cent. of the EU15 average.

In England, three areas have been designated to receive funding under Objective 1: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Merseyside and South Yorkshire.

There are a number of European funds that can be drawn upon by those in Objective 1 areas and Defra, in collaboration with Government Offices is responsible for delivering the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund. This fund has the following objectives:

to help to preserve the link between agriculture and the land;

to improve and support the competitiveness of agriculture as a key activity in rural areas;

to ensure diversification of activities in rural areas;

to help retain people in rural areas; and

to preserve and improve the environment, the landscape and our rural heritage.

Across the 3 Objective 1 areas, approximately £133 million is available over the period 2000–06 for supporting projects which have similar aims to the three ERDP project-based schemes mentioned.

Farm Business Advice Service

The Farm Business Advice Service (FBAS) was launched in October 2000 aimed at improving farm business profitability and sustainability. The service has provided farmers in England with up to three days of free one-to-one on-farm advice. Since its launch, the Government have invested around £28 million in FBAS helping over 18,000 farmers.

An enhanced 5-day form of the service was introduced between 2001 and 2003 as part of the recovery package announced for farmers who have had stock compulsorily slaughtered due to foot and mouth disease control measures.

The service was initially launched as a four year service but it was extended for a further year through to March 2005 to help farmers consider the business implications of the impending changes introduced under CAP reform.

New arrangements for the provision of specialist advice to assist farm businesses explore the implications of the introduction of the single payment will be made available in 2005–06 and we will be making an announcement on the detail as soon as possible.

RDS Farm Advice Unit

This new Unit has been set up to oversee delivery of technical and environmental advice to farmers, for example on minimising pollution or conservation to meet the requirements of cross-compliance. There is a Farm Advice Co-ordinator based in each region.

The Planning Consultancy Advice Scheme

The Planning Consultancy Advice Scheme offered to cover the cost of one day's professional planning guidance for farmers considering diversifying their farm business and was implemented in September 2001.

Fresh Start Initiative

An industry-led initiative to encourage new entrants into the farming industry was launched at the Smithfield Show on 2 December 2004, with strong Government support.

Food Miles

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effects of food miles on *(a)* congestion on the roads and *(b)* the environment, through emissions of greenhouse gases from modes of transport used; and what assessment she has made of the effects on the environment of production local to the place of sale. [215866]

Alun Michael: Further to my response of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 943W, the report commissioned by Defra on the impact of food transportation "The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development" is now likely to be published early in the summer. I will write to my hon. Friend to inform him when the report is published.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what actions were taken by the UK authorities in regard to the November 2000 foot and mouth disease outbreak in Mpumalanga that were not taken in regard to the September 2000 foot and mouth outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal; [208825]

(2) what actions were taken by the UK authorities in specific regard to the September 2000 foot and mouth disease outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal; [208826]

(3) what actions on the part of the UK authorities were *(a)* required and *(b)* recommended by the European Union with specific regard to the September 2000 foot and mouth disease outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal; and when these were implemented. [208827]

Margaret Beckett: If there is an outbreak of disease likely to present a risk to human or animal health, European Community legislation allows us to take appropriate safeguard action, which may include a ban on imports of meat from all, or parts, of that country. At the time of the outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal, we did not judge it necessary to take safeguard action since the South African authorities had prohibited the issue of export certificates for fresh meat from the area in which the outbreak had occurred. This meant that exports from South Africa could not take place.

On 7–8 November 2000 the European Commission informed the Standing Veterinary Committee (SVC) (now known as the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health) of the outcome of an inspection carried out in South Africa by Commission inspectors, and indicated that safeguard measures may be necessary because of some difficulties the South African authorities were experiencing in dealing with the outbreak. On 25 November the Commission published legislation prohibiting imports into the Community of fresh meat from 16 districts in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The Government were satisfied that the action taken by the Commission and controls in place in South Africa were sufficient to prevent any risk of disease entering the UK.

By 20 December it was clear that the situation in South Africa had deteriorated. The Government reviewed the situation and a decision was taken to take safeguard action. This was delayed due to the Christmas period, and on 5 January the Government issued a Declaration under Regulation 35 of the Products of Animal Origin (Import and Export) Regulations 1996, prohibiting imports into England and Wales of meat from all of South Africa. Similar action was taken in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The outbreak in Mpumalanga was confirmed on 30 November. The Commission took action in February 2001 to extend EU restrictions on imports of meat in respect of Mpumalanga. By that time, the UK had already banned imports of meat from the whole country, so no further action was necessary.

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when her Department was first informed that Northumberland Trading Standards had *(a)* mounted an investigation into and *(b)* filed charges against the haulier who delivered unprocessed waste food to Burnside Farm, Heddon on the Wall. [214406]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is unaware of any investigation or prosecution by Northumberland Trading Standards Department of any haulier (other than Robert Waugh) who may have delivered unprocessed waste food to Burnside Farm.

Freedom of information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215212]

Alun Michael: Defra plans to publish all such information on its website unless it is considered that the information is unlikely to be of interest to a wider public audience. This is in accordance with the Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and NDPBs should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what applications were made to her Department during January under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; what the *(a)* total and *(b)* average cost was of discovery and distribution of the information requested; how many requests were answered within the statutory 20-day period; and what reasons were given to those whose requests were rejected. [214224]

Alun Michael: The number of requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations recorded on our central tracking system during January was 97. This does not include the many routine requests for information to which the Department responds as part of its normal business. During January, 28 of the 97 requests, were answered within the 20 working day deadline. The deadline has not yet been reached in respect of those requests received from mid January onwards.

Two of the 28 answered cases were refused and one partially refused. The grounds for refusal were section 40 (personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act and Regulations 12(3) (personal data) and 12(4)*(d)* (unfinished documents or incomplete data) of the Environmental Information Regulations.

We do not have information on the total and average cost of locating and providing the information requested.

Sustainable Development (India)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent communications Ministers in her Department have had with counterparts in India on *(a)* sustainable development and *(b)* environmental scientific co-operation. [215864]

Mr. Morley: I visited New Delhi from 3 to 6 February to attend the fifth Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, where I chaired and spoke at a ministerial session on 'Global Sustainability: Challenges for Developed and Developing Countries'. In my remarks, I noted the increasing interdependence of countries on issues of sustainable development and the need for co-operation and partnership. I focussed on the opportunities afforded by the UK Presidencies of the G8 and EU in 2005 to address climate change and development challenges in Africa.

I also met my counterpart, Mr. Raja, the Indian Minister for the Environment and Forests, to discuss India's draft New Environment Policy, co-operation on forests and wildlife protection and progress on the UK—India High-level Sustainable Development Dialogue.

Defra is funding a collaborative project with the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests on the impacts of climate change. Work started in September 2001 and the final reports will be published during 2005. The research programme included the sharing of knowledge through technology transfer and capacity building, with collaboration between scientist in Indian and UK research institutes. The project outputs were presented to me when I visited India in February 2004 and to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State during her visit in October 2004.

The Department plans to take forward further work in this area as part of the collaboration envisaged under the UK and Indian Prime Ministers' September 2004 joint declaration committing to further co-operation between the two countries.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what ministerial visits are planned for each Minister in her Department in the next six months; and if she will make a statement. [199886]

Margaret Beckett: For reasons of security, it would not be appropriate to disclose the information requested.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what ministerial visits are planned for each Minister in her Department in the next six months; and if she will make a statement. [214021]

Margaret Beckett: For reasons of security, it would not be appropriate to disclose the information requested.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214889]

Alun Michael: The following table shows the expenditure in fiscal years since the Department was formed in 2001.

	Mobile phones (£000)
2001–02	2,629
2002–03	839
2003–04	666

New Rural Agency

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff in her Department and agencies *(a)* are and *(b)* will be fully or partly employed in preparing for the merger of English Nature with parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service; and if she will make a statement. [211147]

Alun Michael: Many members of staff across the Department and its Agencies are contributing, to the successful creation of an integrated agency as part of their normal duties. This will be achieved through the merger of English Nature with parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service. The level of involvement varies between individuals according to their specific roles.

The detailed activities involved in establishing an integrated agency are being co-ordinated by a dedicated project team consisting of people from across the three organisations, as well as from within core Defra. The project team consists of 23 people working on the project either full time, or for a significant part of their time. This number is planned to increase to 28 from April 2005.

In addition, a team has been established within Defra to ensure the overall successful implementation of the Modernising Rural Delivery programme, of which establishment of an integrated agency forms a significant part. This team comprises 34 members of staff.

As the establishment of the new agency progresses, there will be increasing involvement from additional members of staff. In due course, all those employed by the three organisations who will join the integrated agency will be involved to some extent.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent on postage by the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [215020]

Alun Michael: The information set out in the following table details postage costs for Defra's London and Guildford HQ sites from 2000–01, when Defra came into existence.

£

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
London				
Post and courier	396,069	447,268	209,240	248,334
Inter departmental service	95,313	93,373	94,640	96,853
Total	491,382	540,641	303,880	345,187
Guildford				
Post and courier	10,000	7,500	8,500	9,000
Grand Total	501,382	548,141	312,380	354,187

REACH Directive

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of the REACH (Chemicals) Directive on UK industry; and if she will make a statement. [215952]

Alun Michael: The Government have worked with all stakeholders to ensure that the REACH proposal is well focused on achieving maximum practical benefit to human health and the environment with a minimum of direct impact on industrial competitiveness. In particular, our proposal for 'one substance, one registration' is intended to lower costs to industry as well as improving the consistency of information available on chemicals across Europe and keeping animal testing to a minimum. We have recently completed a study which indicates that, if 'one substance, one registration' were to be adopted, the cost to industry and the authorities of REACH would be decreased by at least €77 million in comparison to the Commission estimates on the basis of the current proposals.

The UK partial regulatory impact assessment is based on the current proposals and primarily reflects the direct costs to industry of REACH which are estimated at £515 million over the 11-year phase in period. This is equivalent to total direct costs across the EU of approximately £2.4 billion. These are in line with European Commission estimates published in October 2003 of a maximum overall cost of the revised proposal (including indirect costs) of €7.5 billion. We are currently carrying out further impact assessment work to assess the indirect costs passed down the supply chain.

Rural Payments

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the Rural Payments Agency to start making payments under the Single Farm Payment. [214712]

Alun Michael: The payment window for the Single Payment Scheme is 1 December 2005 to 30 June 2006. The objective has always been to make as many payments as early as practicable within that window.

The Rural Payments Agency issued a news release on 19 January confirming that the most probable date for payments to start is February 2006.

Rural Policy

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects

to publish the terms of reference of the agency to be created by the merger of English Nature and parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service. [215679]

Alun Michael: The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill was published in draft on 10 February 2005. Among other things this Bill contains provisions to establish the new Agency and set out its purpose. Copies of the draft Bill have been placed in the Vote Office.

Sewage Discharge (River Thames)

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of sewage were discharged into the River Thames in the last five years, broken down by water utility; and if she will make a statement. [211982]

Mr. Morley: It is important to draw a distinction between treated and untreated sewerage discharges. Treated effluent discharges from sewage treatment works and some intermittent discharges from overflows during wet weather are measured in cubic metres. Discharges consented by the Environment Agency are made to the Thames by three water companies: Thames Water (inland and estuary); Anglian Water and Southern Water (estuary only).

Thames Water

Thames Water reports it has discharged an estimated 4,800 million cubic metres of sewage effluent to the Thames in the last five years. Of this, 4,500 million cubic metres receives secondary treatment. Some of this effluent also receives more stringent treatment at Abingdon, Little Marlow and Windsor's sewage treatment works, which discharge to the freshwater section of the Thames. Approximately, 100 million cubic metres will have been treated storm sewage from treatment works, and the remaining 200 million cubic metres as untreated storm sewage (sewage and rainwater run-off). It is estimated that about 30 per cent. of storm sewage is discharged unmeasured.

I provided a breakdown of this information in a written answer to a similar question from the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker), on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1111W.

Anglian Water

The consented daily dry weather effluent flows, which receive secondary treatment prior to discharge, from three sewage works operated by Anglian Water are 95,514 cubic metres. As it is generally accepted that average daily flows are 1.25 times the dry weather flow, it is estimated that 218 million cubic metres of treated effluent has been discharged from these works (Canvey Island, Southend and Tilbury) in the last five years.

Southern Water

Southern Water discharges effluent after it has received secondary treatment from two sites (Gravesend and Northfleet). In the last five years (2000–04) the sewage treatment works at Gravesend has discharged approximately 19 million cubic metres of treated effluent. Since April 2001, when flow monitors were installed at the Northfleet sewage works approximately 12.5 million cubic metres of treated effluent has been discharge to the end of 2004.

Storm sewage is discharged to the Thames at three sites at times of unusually heavy rainfall when the capacity of sewerage system is exceeded. The consents for these storm overflows do not require Southern Water to monitor the volume of discharges that occur.

Social Enterprises

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make explicit reference in departmental plans and publications to enabling a wider role to be played by social enterprises in delivering her Department's environmental agenda. [212001]

Mr. Morley: Defra's Five Year Strategy, "Delivering the Essentials of Life", set out our commitment to supporting social enterprise in rural areas. Building on that, we will shortly publish a position statement, "Defra and Social Enterprise", which will reflect the contribution of the sector to Defra's wider policy objectives, including sustainable development and environmental protection. The statement will reflect the contribution which social enterprises already make to delivering a range of environmental objectives, including those on waste management, renewable energy, and natural resource protection. It will also set out our plans to contribute to the continued growth of the sector. The position statement is the latest stage in a programme of work to embed support for social enterprise in the development of Defra's policies.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the contracts signed by her special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207279]

Margaret Beckett: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215086]

Alun Michael: Since the creation of Defra in June 2001 the following figures are available for lost and stolen passes. These passes are programmed electronically and once a loss is reported the pass is cancelled immediately. This greatly reduces the possibility of anyone using it illegally to enter Defra premises. The cost to produce an electronic photographic pass is approximately 10 (staff time and material). The sharp increase in lost passes in the core Department is in part due to the larger numbers of passes issued to contractors' staff refurbishing buildings and losses by those staff.

	Lost	*Stolen*
DEFRA Core Department		
2001	60	5
2002	108	16
2003	108	12
2004	152	18

	Lost	Stolen
Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science		
2001	n/a	n/a
2002	10	0
2003	16	1
2004	20	1
Central Science Laboratory		
2001	12	0
2002	14	0
2003	11	0
2004	15	0
Veterinary Laboratories Agency		
2001	5	0
2002	8	1
2003	6	0
2004	7	0
Rural Payments Agency		
2001	5	0
2002	23	1
2003	24	2
2004	19	2
Veterinary Medicines Directorate		
2001	6	0
2002	9	0
2003	10	0
2004	6	0

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Department and its predecessors spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213851]

Alun Michael: Defra came into being in June 2001. From information held centrally, the Department's expenditure on stationery and office supplies are as set out in the table: £2,769,505; £1,516,873; £1,201,899 and £362,828 respectively. The Department's financial system does not classify stationery and office supplies as separate budgetary categories.

	£
2001–02	2,769,505
2002–03	1,516,873
2003–04	1,201,899
2004–05	362,828

Strawberries

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the use of methyl bromide in the strawberry growing sector, with particular reference to its ozone-depleting properties. [216351]

Alun Michael: Methyl bromide is an ozone depleting substance (ODS) that is now banned in developed countries under the Montreal Protocol and EC Regulation 2037/2000. The ozone depleting potential (ODP) of methyl bromide is 0.6, which is a representation of its ability to deplete ozone in comparison to a reference ODS, chlorofluorocarbon 11 (CFC 11).

Following the ban on production, methyl bromide is only permitted to be produced for agreed critical uses, quarantine and pre-shipment and emergency purposes. The Government's policy on future use of methyl bromide is that its use should not be phased back in by excessive critical uses.

The Montreal Protocol makes provision for critical use exemptions where there are no technically and economically feasible alternatives to methyl bromide. The UK applied to the Parties to the Montreal Protocol for a critical use exemption for use on strawberries, to allow additional limited time to bring alternatives on line. Following technical scrutiny by the Methyl Bromide Technical Options Committee (MBTOC) of the Montreal Protocol and the European Commission, the Commission have licensed some 30 tonnes of methyl bromide for critical uses for strawberries for 2005.

Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money is available in each region under the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy. [211078]

Alun Michael: The Government announced a sum of c£500 million to implement the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food as part of the 2002 Spending Review, in addition to existing spending by Defra and other Government Departments which is already being used to deliver aspects of the Strategy.

The following table shows the actual spending in 2003–04 and the broad breakdown over the remainder of the Spending Review period. The majority of this funding is being used for overall delivery of national programmes, for which there is no regional breakdown, or programmes that will ultimately be delivered on a regional basis, but until full implementation is underway, regional figures are unavailable:

£ million

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	Total
Additional money to be made available via grant schemes	9	11	11	31
Investment into research and new technology	1.8	1.8	1.8	5.4
Development and implementation of new agri-environment and rural development schemes, including IT development costs	27	54	151	232
Development and implementation of new Whole Farm Approach to reduce bureaucracy and burden on farmers	2.7	7	8	17.7
IT systems to support livestock identification and tracing	20	48	68	136
Investment to reduce the likelihood and impact of an animal disease outbreak	25	45	45	115
Total				537.1

Existing support programmes, including the ERDP have been targeted to assist in the delivery of SSFF outcomes. Budgets for the three ERDP project-based schemes are managed on a regional basis, and the following table summarises expenditure on these schemes in 2004–05.

£ million

Region	Processing and marketing grant	Rural enterprise scheme[1]	Vocational training scheme
East Midlands	1.438	3.990	0.398
East of England	1.757	2.699	0.545
North East	0.251	2.159	0.075
North West	1.011	3.686	0.921
South East	0.830	2.670	0.498
South West	1.320	5.512	0.689
West Midlands	0.688	3.852	0.374
Yorks and Humberside	0.816	3.233	0.293
National		[2]0.685	[3]0.416

[1] RES funds are also available to non-farming businesses.
[2] RES National marketing measure.
[3] All national projects (four regions +).

Regional delivery of the strategy, through regional action plans, will be facilitated by many public body and industry representatives and these organisations will work together with both resource and funding support to deliver the vision set out in the strategy. They are making use of Government grants, industry support and the resources of Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies, as well as other Government bodies participating in regional steering groups.

Given the number of public and industry bodies contributing to regional delivery, it is not possible to quantify precisely the level of support available to fund regional delivery. Implementation of SFFS is one of the core tasks of the Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies, and their funding from Defra reflects this. Funding for the Government Offices are provided directly by Defra. The current Defra contribution of £45.5 million to the RDA 'single pot', administered by DTI, is to enable RDAs to address rural productivity issues, which are a key factor in achieving the outcomes of the national Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy. In addition, Defra has made a further £1.5 million available to the RDAs in the current financial year to assist with the implementation of regional delivery plans.

TREASURY

Cancer Statistics

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of deaths were due to cancer in the *(a)* North East, *(b)* South East, *(c)* North and *(d)* South in the last year for which figures are available. [215891]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibilities of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what percentage of deaths are due to cancer in the *(a)* North East, *(b)* South East, *(c)* North and *(d)* South. I am replying in his absence. (215891)

Figures are provided in the table below for the North East and South East Government Office Regions for 2003, the latest year for which data are available. As the Office for National Statistics does not have a geographic classification of administrative areas into 'North' and 'South', results are also provided for other Government Office Regions and Wales.

Percentage of deaths due to cancer[1] by Government Office Region[2], 2003[3]

Government Office Region	Percentage of deaths due to cancer
North East	21
North West	25
Yorkshire and The Humber	26
East Midlands	25
West Midlands	25
East of England	26
London	25
South East	25
South West	25
Wales	25

[1] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The codes used are listed below:
"Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-10 COO-C97"
[2] Usual residents of these areas.
[3] Deaths occurring in 2003.

Child Trust Fund Accounts

Mr. Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the Inland Revenue to complete the necessary procedures to allow credit unions to accept child trust fund accounts. [216097]

Mr. Timms: Credit unions have an important part to play in tackling financial exclusion within the communities they serve. The Government is keen to accommodate the special nature of credit unions within the Child Trust Fund where possible. They are already able to make available a CTF stakeholder account to their customers where they have the FSA permissions to do so. However there are a number of issues to be resolved before credit unions can offer cash deposit accounts. Discussions have taken place between credit unions, the Treasury, the FSA and the Inland Revenue and work is being taken forward.

The Child Trust Fund is intended to encourage parents and children to develop the savings habit. It will ensure that every child born since 1 September, whatever their family background, will have access to a stock of assets from the age of 18, so they can invest in their future.

It will also help children and their parents to understand the benefits of savings and investment and how to engage with financial institutions.

Credit Unions

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether existing credit unions will be included for support under the Social Fund loan scheme referred to in the report on Promoting Financial Inclusion; [215676]

(2) how the Social Fund loan scheme monies referred to in the report on Promoting Financial Inclusion will be apportioned; and which institutions will qualify for inclusion. [215677]

Mr. Timms: 'Promoting financial inclusion' announced a series of measures to increase the availability of affordable credit to those on the lowest incomes. These measures include the next steps in the reform of the Social Fund. The Government will abolish the 'double debt' rule for Budgeting Loans eligibility and will lower the highest loan repayment rates. These

reforms will be implemented in April 2006 and amount to an increase in funding for the Social Fund loans scheme of £210 million over the three years to 2008–09.

'Promoting financial inclusion' also announced that the Government are considering arrangements whereby, in certain circumstances, private and third sector lenders—including existing credit unions—could apply for repayment to be made by deduction from benefit where normal repayment arrangements have broken down. The aim of this scheme would be to reduce some of the increased costs and risks of lending to vulnerable groups. The Government have been seeking responses from private and third sector lenders, on this scheme. However no final decisions have been made as to whether and how the scheme will operate.

Subject to any necessary state aids clearance from the European Commission, the Government will also set up a growth fund for third sector lenders from within the Financial Inclusion Fund. This growth fund will be available to credit unions and community development finance institutions to boost the coverage, capacity and sustainability of the sector in providing a source of affordable credit for the financially excluded.

Defence Contractors

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Aldershot of 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 595W, on defence contractors, which *(a)* military units and *(b)* defence contractors he personally visited in 2004. [211453]

Mr. Gordon Brown *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* I regularly hold defence-related meetings including meeting regularly with defence employers and with senior military personnel such as the Chiefs of Staff and their colleagues.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out *(a)* with statistical information relating as closely as possible to Chorley constituency and *(b)* the effect of his actions and policies on Chorley since 1997. [216307]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Chorley constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 56 per cent. while long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have both fallen by 89 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Haltemprice and Howden constituency, the effects on Haltemprice and Howden of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216013]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Haltemprice and Howden constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 51 per cent., long-term unemployment has fallen by 70 per cent. and long-term youth unemployment has fallen by 83 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Maidenhead constituency, the effects on Maidenhead of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216030]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Maidenhead constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 30.5 per cent., long-term unemployment has fallen by 58 per cent. and youth unemployment has remained unchanged albeit at only 30 individuals.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each ward of Stockton, South are *(a)* employed and *(b)* unemployed; and what the figures were in 1997. [215308]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Ms Dari Taylor, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about employment and unemployment in each ward of Stockton South Parliamentary Constituency. I am replying in his absence. (215308)

Regular statistics of employment and unemployment are compiled from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) on the basis of standard international definitions. For individual wards the LFS sample sizes are too small to provide estimates, but information is available from the 1991 and 2001 Population Censuses. Table 1 overleaf shows the information requested from these sources.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics by ward of residence for people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Table 2 overleaf gives the annual average number of JSA claimants resident in each of the wards of Stockton South Parliamentary Constituency for the years 1997 and 2004.

Table 1: Employment and unemployment among people aged 16–74 resident in wards of the Stockton South parliamentary constituency 1991 and 2001

	1991			2001		
	All people	*In employment*	*Unemployed*	*All people*	*In employment*	*Unemployed*
Wards of Stockton South PCA	78,161	43,910	4,995	67,951	40,869	2,836
Ayresome[1]	4,806	2,059	587	[2]	[2]	[2]
Brookfield[1]	5,217	3,296	190	[2]	[2]	[2]
Kader[1]	5,005	2,826	181	[2]	[2]	[2]
Bishopsgarth	6,057	3,753	280	5,623	3,561	185
Egglescliffe	6,271	3,826	235	5,935	3,836	156
Elm Tree[3]	[2]	[2]	[2]	3,415	1,939	88
Fairfield	3,988	2,136	160	3,466	2,056	95
Grangefield	4,083	2,294	230	3,561	2,041	194
Hartburn	5,649	3,490	177	4,982	3,000	121
Ingleby Barwick	4,648	3,344	120	11,923	8,839	280
Mandale	5,214	2,489	513	4,561	2,388	278
Parkfield	4,992	2,341	734	4,159	1,844	475
Preston	2,352	1,400	96	2,181	1,408	63
Stainsby	4,791	2,353	476	4,062	2,056	283
Victoria	4,032	1,890	424	3,970	1,847	261
Village	4,342	2,129	345	3,678	1,849	184
Yarm	6,714	4,284	247	6,435	4,205	173

[1] These wards were located within Stockton South parliamentary constituency (PC) in 1991 but moved to Middlesbrough PC in 2001.
[2] Figure not shown as ward was not in Stockton South PCA in relevant year, due to boundary changes.
[3] Elm Tree ward was located within Stockton North PC in 1991 but moved to Stockton South PC in 2001.
Source:
1991 and 2001 Censuses of Population

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the wards of Stockton South parliamentary constituency (annual averages)

	1997	*2004*
Wards of Stockton South PCA[1]	3,201	1,677
Bishopsgarth	177	89
Egglescliffe	191	68
Elm Tree	124	46
Fairfield	113	43
Grangefield	212	109
Hartburn	145	69
Ingleby Barwick	123	128
Mandate	342	196
Parkfield	657	320
Preston	73	30
Stainsby	308	183
Victoria	342	186
Village	214	138
Yarm	182	72

[1] Based on 1991 frozen wards.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system.

Employment/Education

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were in full-time and part-time work in Easington constituency in each year since 2001. [216090]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. John Cummings, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment. I am replying in his absence. (216090)

The attached table gives estimates of those people resident in the Easington Parliamentary Constituency who were in full-time or part-time employment for the twelve month periods ending in February from 2001 to 2004.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey, as with any sample survey, are subject to sampling variability.

Employed people resident in Easington parliamentary constituency

12 months ending February	*Total*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*[1]
2001	33,000	25,000	8,000
2002	32,000	25,000	7,000
2003	33,000	26,000	7,000
2004	29,000	23,000	6,000

[1] These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the population between the ages of 18 and 25 years were in either employment or education in *(a)* the County of Essex in each year from 1991 to 1997 and *(b)* the County of Essex and the boroughs of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea in each year from 1998 to 2004. [215115]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Alan Hurst, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what percentage of the population between the ages of 18 and 25 years were in either employment or education in *(a)* the County of Essex in each year from 1991 to 1997 and *(b)* the County of Essex and the Boroughs of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea, in each year from 1998 to 2004. I am replying in his absence. (215115)

The attached table gives estimates of those people aged 18 to 24 years old, resident in the county of Essex and the Boroughs of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea, either in employment or education, for the 12 month periods ending February each year for the years 1995 to 2004. Information is not available for earlier periods.

These estimates are from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

18–24 year olds either in employment or in full-time education[1]

Percentage

	Place of residence		
12 months ending February each year	*County of Essex*	*Thurrock UA*[2]	*Southend-on-Sea UA*[2]
1995	80.7	—	—
1996	80.4	—	—
1997	83.2	—	—
1998	84.9	75.9	72.2
1999	85.5	79.2	67.7
2000	88.3	85.3	87.3
2001	86.8	84.0	79.4
2002	85.5	85.6	76.1
2003	79.8	86.3	81.7
2004	85.2	76.8	84.6

[1] Expressed as a percentage of all 18 to 24-year-olds resident in relevant area. Includes some people who are in full-time education who are also in employment.
[2] Data for Unitary Authorities not available prior to 1998.
Note:
Some of these estimates are based on small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, in particular, should be treated with caution.
Source:
ONS—Labour Force Survey

Equitable Life

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have had with the Parliamentary Commission for Administration concerning his inquiry into Equitable Life; and what indications he has given as to when he expects to publish his findings and recommendations. [215783]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* In her letter to all hon. and right hon. Members of 24 November 2004 the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration said that she hoped to complete her investigation during 2005. The Treasury received the statement of complaint from the ombudsman on 9 December. Treasury officials have maintained regular contact with the ombudsman's staff and are co-operating fully with the investigation.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Confidentiality of Statistics Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215900]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on the harmonisation of the compilation of gross national product at market prices met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215901]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Angus Robertson, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions relating to past meetings of the EU Committee on Confidentiality of Statistics (CSC) and the Committee on the Harmonisation of the Compilation of Gross National Product at Market Prices (GNPMP). I am replying in his absence. (215900 & 215901)

During the Italian Presidency the CSC met on 3 December 2003. During the Irish Presidency the CSC did not meet. During the Dutch Presidency the CSC met on 10 December 2004. On both occasions the CSC met in Luxembourg. The UK was represented at both meetings by appropriate Office for National Statistics (ONS) officials. The CSC discusses issues of statistical confidentiality and access to data for the production of statistics for publication and research.

During the Italian Presidency the GNPMP met on 3/4 July 2003 and 5/6 November 2003. During the Irish Presidency the GNPMP met on 25/26 March 2004. During the Dutch Presidency the GNPMP met on 6 July 2004 and 4 November 2004. On all occasions the GNPMP met in Luxembourg. The UK was represented by appropriate ONS officials. The Gross National Income Committee, that replaced the GNPMP Committee, oversees the process for verifying statistics provided for the purpose of determining member states contributions to the EU budget.

European Union

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 597W, if he will make a statement on appropriate vires concerning Government spending on information on the EU. [215314]

Mr. Timms: Full guidance on the powers to incur expenditure is given in chapter 2.2 of Government Accounting (www.government-accounting.gov.uk).

Financial Inclusion

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the *(a)* Financial Inclusion Taskforce and *(b)* Financial Inclusion Fund will be set up. [215675]

Mr. Timms: The 2004 pre-budget report announced the establishment of a Financial Inclusion Taskforce, chaired by Brian Pomeroy. The membership of the Taskforce was announced on 28 January and the Taskforce will be formally launched on 21 February. The Pre-Budget Report also announced a Financial Inclusion Fund of £120 million over three years, to support initiatives to tackle financial exclusion. Further details on the Fund will be announced shortly.

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the report on Promoting Financial Inclusion on existing credit unions. [215678]

Mr. Timms: The Government announced a number of measures for credit unions in the Promoting Financial Inclusion document which was published alongside the pre budget report 2004. These are designed to boost the coverage, capacity and sustainability of the credit union sector in providing a source of affordable credit to the financially excluded.

Local Government

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Departments agreed to the reallocation of funds for the purpose of allocating additional funds to local authorities; how much was reallocated in each case; and if he will make a statement. [203988]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* As the Chancellor of the Exchequer set out in his evidence to the Treasury Select Committee on 16 December, full departmental spending allocations will be available through the publication of the Main Supply Estimates, which will take place in due course.

New Jobs (Scotland)

Mr. Moore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many new jobs have been created in *(a)* Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, *(b)* the Scottish Borders and *(c)* Scotland in each year since 2002. [216127]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Michael Moore, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your parliamentary Question about the number of new jobs created in Scotland and selected regions. I am replying in his absence. (216127)

While statistics of new jobs created are not available explicitly, statistics from surveys enable comparisons to be made of net changes in numbers of jobs from year to year.

The attached table shows the available information for the number of jobs and change in jobs in the parliamentary constituency of Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, the Scottish Borders and in Scotland, from 2001 to 2003.

Number of jobs[1] and change in jobs in the parliamentary constituency of Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, the Scottish Borders and Scotland: 2001 to 2003

Number of jobs	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale[2,3]	19,000	21,500	
Scottish Borders[2]	38,800	39,900	41,000
Scotland	2,299,800	2,279,500	2,298,900
Change in number of jobs from previous year			
Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale[2,3]		2,400	
Scottish Borders[2]		1,100	1,100
Scotland		20,300	19,400

[1] Excludes self-employed jobs.
[2] These figures are aggregates from which agriculture class 0100 (1992 SIC) have been excluded
[3] 2003 Annual Business Inquiry estimates are currently not available by parliamentary constituency
Note:
Each table entry is independently rounded to the nearest hundred
Source:
2001–2003, Annual Business Inquiry.

Pensioners

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households with *(a)* only one adult aged over 65 years and *(b)* two or more adults aged over 65 years there were in (i) England and (ii) each parliamentary constituency in the latest year for which figures are available. [216228]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many households with *(a)* only one adult, who is aged over 65 years and *(b)* two or more adults aged over 65 years there were in (i) England and (ii) each parliamentary constituency in the latest year for which figures are available. I am replying in his absence. (216228)

Specially commissioned table C0453 has been run for each Parliamentary Constituency of England and Wales to identify the number of *(a)* single occupancy households which contain one resident who was aged 65 and over, and b) households containing two or more people where all residents were aged 65 and over on Census day (29 April 2001). This has been placed in the House of Commons Library and is also available from Census Customer Services. Table C0453 shows that there were 2,683,603 households in England which contained one resident who was aged 65 and over. The same table shows that there were 1,566,863 households in England which contained two or more residents who were aged 65 and over.

Pensions Selling

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many pensions were sold in each of the past 10 years on the basis of *(a)* tied advice, *(b)* independent advice and *(c)* execution only; and if he will make a statement. [215709]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available in the format required. However, the "First Report of the Pensions Commission" provides Individual Pension Sales by Channel for 2003 sourced from "ABI new business statistics, 2003". The following figures include all Stakeholder, Group Personal Pension (GPP) and Free Standing Additional Voluntary Contribution (FSAVC) pensions.

Distribution channel	*Percentage of total sales*
Independent financial advisers	79
Direct salesforce and tied agents	18
Direct marketing with no salesforce interview	2
Other	1/<1
Total	100

More detailed statistics relating to premiums collected per annum by distribution channel dating from 1994 are available from the website of the Association of British Insurers.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on postage by the Department in each year since 1997. [215029]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury's postage costs were £62,000 in 2002–03 and £67,000 in 2003–04, being the costs incurred on the Department's franking machines. Letters are posted second class unless specified otherwise. Information in respect of the earlier years is not readily available.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209572]

Mr. Timms: I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the then Financial Secretary (Ruth Kelly) to the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Miss Kirkbride) on 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 810W, which stated that recruitment advertising costs were £126,000 in financial year 2002–03 and £173,000 in the first three quarters of financial year 2003–04. The estimated full year cost of advertising staff vacancies in 2003–04 was £210,000.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215800]

Mr. Timms: Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets have been set every two years as part of the Spending Review. Since 1997 there have been four reviews: the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review, and the 2000, 2002 and 2004 Spending Reviews. A number of targets have been reinforced or refined by subsequent Spending Reviews, and an increasing number of PSA targets have been rolled forward between Spending Reviews. The number of PSA targets set during each Spending Review has fallen from over 250 in 1998 to 110 in 2004.

Performance against all PSA targets is reported in departmental reports. Since 2002, performance has also been reported in departments' autumn performance reports. A performance reporting website was introduced in 2003 (www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/performance).

Tax Credits

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints have been received by the MP tax credits complaints team *(a)* by post and *(b)* by telephone in each month since the service was set up. [215536]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 9 February 2005]:* The information is as follows:

(a) Information on the number of letters received from hon. Members in 2003–04 is not available.

The Inland Revenue Tax Credit Office has a team that deals with all letters from hon. Members. The team received 4,285 such letters directly from hon. Members in the period 1 April 2004–31 December 2004 broken down as follows.

Month	*Number of letters from hon. Members to TCO*
April 2004	223
May 2004	218
June 2004	338
July 2004	377
August 2004	350
September 2004	508
October 2004	603
November 2004	880
December 2004	788

In addition to the letters received by Tax credit Office, Treasury Ministers and Inland Revenue Board members received around 1,650 letters from hon. Members in the same period.

(b) The MPs' Hotline in the Inland Revenue Tax Credit Office deals with calls from hon. Members about their constituents' tax credits claims. The number of calls received by the MP Hotline in 2003–04 and 2004–05 is as follows:

Month	*Number of calls to Tax Credit Office MP Hotline*
April 2003	1,882
May 2003	4,371
June 2003	4,186
July 2003	1,472
August 2003	858
September 2003	815
October 2003	1,032
November 2003	835
December 2003	916
January 2004	1,032
February 2004	1,052
March 2004	839
April 2004	930
May 2004	774
June 2004	1,000
July 2004	1,114
August 2004	991
September 2004	1,326
October 2004	1,328
November 2004	1,714
December 2004	1,675

Teenage Pregnancy (Leicester)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the teenage pregnancy rate in Leicester, South was in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [216386]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Parmjit Singh Gill, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking what the teenage pregnancy rate in Leicester South was in each year since 1997. I am replying in his absence. (216386)

Teenage conception figures by Parliamentary Constituencies are not available.

The most recent year for which figures are available for local and health authorities is 2002. Figures for this year are provisional.

Number and rate of teenage conceptions to women aged under 18 in Leicester UA for 1997 to 2002 are given in the table below.

	Number	*Rate*[1]
1997	304	54.3
1998	365	64.6
1999	326	59.1
2000	329	58.3
2001	273	47.1
2002[2]	308	51.9

[1] Per 1,000 female population aged 15–17.

[2] Provisional

Unemployment

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of those unemployed are *(a)* under 18, *(b)* under 21 and *(c)* under 30 years. [215949]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment. I am replying in his absence. (215949)

The table overleaf gives estimates of the proportion of all unemployed people resident in the United Kingdom who were aged under 18, under 21 and under 30. Estimates are for the 12 months ending February 2004.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are., as with any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Proportions of total unemployed resident in the United Kingdom of these ages:	*Twelve months ending February 2004 (percentage)*
Under 18	11.0
Under 21	24.7
Under 30	49.2

Source:

ONS—Labour Force Survey

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average level of unemployment in Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland was in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2005. [215948]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. I am replying in his absence. (215948)

Table 1 gives estimates of the numbers of unemployed people who were resident in Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland Parliamentary Constituency, for the 12 month periods ending February 1997, 2001 and 2004, the latest period for which figures are available.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants resident in the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency for the year 1997, 2001 and 2004.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland parliamentary constituency

Twelve month period ending February:	
1997	3,000
2001	3,000
2004	3,000

Note:

These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year-to-year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland parliamentary constituency

Annual averages	*Claimants*
1997	3,462
2001	2,427
2004	1,748

Source:

Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Unemployment (Scotland)

Mr. Moore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of unemployment was in each year since 2002 in *(a)* Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, *(b)* the Scottish Borders and *(c)* Scotland, broken down by (i) age and (ii) gender. [216129]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibilities of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Michael Moore, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your parliamentary Question

about unemployment. I am replying in his absence. (216129)

Table 1 gives estimates of the numbers of unemployed people, who were resident in Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale Parliamentary Constituency, the Scottish Borders and Scotland for the twelve month periods ending February for the years 2002 to 2004.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of people resident by age and gender in the Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale parliamentary constituency, the Scottish Borders and Scotland claiming Jobseeker's Allowance benefits for the years 2002 to 2004.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in Tweeddale, the Scottish Borders and Scotland by gender and age

Twelve month period ending February	Total: Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale[1]	Total: Scottish Borders[1]	Total: Scotland	Male: Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale[1]	Male: Scottish Borders[1]	Male: Scotland	Female: Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale[1]	Female: Scottish Borders[1]	Female: Scotland
2002									
All Persons 16+	[2]	1,000	166,000	[2]	[2]	105,000	[2]	[2]	61,000
16–24	[2]	[2]	64,000	[2]	[2]	42,000	[2]	[2]	22,000
25–34	[2]	[2]	36,000	[2]	[2]	19,000	[2]	[2]	17,000
35–49	[2]	[2]	42,000	[2]	[2]	25,000	[2]	[2]	18,000
50 and over	[2]	[2]	24,000	[2]	[2]	19,000	[2]	[2]	5,000
2003									
All Persons 16+	1,000	3,000	164,000	1,000	2,000	99,000	[2]	1,000	65,000
16–24	1,000	1,000	61,000	1,000	1,000	37,000	[2]	[2]	24,000
25–34				[2]	[2]	17,000	[2]	[2]	15,000
35–49				[2]	[2]	25,000	[2]	[2]	18,000
50 and over				[2]	[2]	20,000	[2]	[2]	9,000
2004									
All Persons 16+	1,000	2,000	145,000	1,000	1,000	92,000	[2]	1,000	53,000
16–24	1,000	1,000	58,000	[2]	[2]	36,000	[2]	[2]	22,000
25–34	[2]	[2]	31,000	[2]	[2]	19,000	[2]	[2]	12,000
35–49	[2]	[2]	36,000	[2]	[2]	22,000	[2]	[2]	14,000
50 and over	[2]	[2]	20,000	[2]	[2]	15,000	[2]	[2]	5,000

[1] These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.
[2] Estimates are not shown as they are potentially disclosive.

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in Tweeddale, the Scottish Borders and Scotland by gender and age

Annual Average	Total: Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale	Total: Scottish Borders	Total: Scotland	Male: Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale	Male: Scottish Borders	Male: Scotland	Female: Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale	Female: Scottish Borders	Female: Scotland
2002									
All Persons 16+	745	1,400	103,590	570	1040	80,030	175	360	23,565
18–24	210	400	26,395	155	270	18,890	55	130	7,500
25–34	165	300	26,585	135	245	22,070	30	55	4,515
35–49	210	380	30,290	165	295	23,965	45	85	6,325
50 and over	130	275	17,635	95	200	13,605	35	75	4,030
2003									
All Persons 16+	685	1,200	101,560						
18–24	190	330	26,405						
25–34									
35–49									
50 and over									
2004									
All Persons 16+	650	1,125	94,105						
18–24	175	320	25,170						
25–34	140	235	22,600						
35–49	195	315	27,195						
50 and over	120	220	16,435						

	Male			Female		
	Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale	Scottish Borders	Scotland	Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale	Scottish Borders	Scotland
2003						
All Persons 16+	515	870	77,875	165	330	23,690
18–24	135	225	18,800	55	105	7,600
25–34	120	195	20,850	25	50	4,370
35–49	145	250	23,090	45	85	6,460
50 and over	95	175	13,595	30	70	4,005
2004						
All Persons 16+	495	830	71,700	155	295	22,410
18–24	130	220	17,865	45	100	7,310
25–34	115	185	18,665	25	45	3,935
35–49	155	240	21,125	40	70	6,070
50 and over	90	160	12,560	30	60	3,875

Note:
Age breakdown is analysed by computer claims only.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Vitamins and Supplements

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have died from the effects of vitamins and supplements in *(a)* Lancashire, *(b)* Chorley and *(c)* the north west in the last three years. [216241]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people have died from the effects of vitamins and supplements in *(a)* Lancashire, *(b)* Chorley and *(c)* the North West in the last three years. I am replying in his absence. (216241)

Available figures relate to poisoning by vitamins and vitamin supplements. They do not include adverse effects of vitamins and vitamin supplements in therapeutic use. The most recent available figures are for the calendar year 2003. There were 2 deaths recorded nationally from poisoning by vitamins and vitamin supplements[1] between the calendar years 2001 and 2003. Because of the risk of disclosure these data can not be disaggregated by area.

[1] Selected using the International Classification of Diseases Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes:

T45.2—Poisoning by vitamins, not elsewhere classified,

T45.7—Poisoning by anticoagulant antagonists, vitamin K and other coagulant,

T46.7—Peripheral vasodilators, and

T47.1—Poisoning from other antacids and anti-gastric-secretion drugs.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum/Immigration

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to increase the removal of failed asylum seekers in the last 12 months. [214831]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration Service has introduced a number of initiatives in the last 12 months to increase the number of failed asylum seekers removed from the United Kingdom. These include; creating a clear and distinct national framework of offices dedicated to delivery the enforcement and removals agenda; increasing the number of removals under the assisted voluntary returns scheme; increasing the number of returns to safe third countries through the increased use of ring fence detention; increasing the number of removals in London by using flexible and mobile teams able to better support other agencies; re-evaluating the way in which we deal with family removals; maximising removals for our network of reporting centres and working to reduce disruptive behaviour designed to frustrate removal at the point of departure.

Mr. Osten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's targets are for *(a)* the proportion of asylum cases to be decided within (i) two and (ii) six months, *(b)* the proportion of asylum decisions to be audited as fully effective or better and *(c)* the proportion of failed asylum seekers who are removed from the country. [214983]

Mr. Browne: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The Home Office's Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for 2003–04 was to ensure that 75 per cent. of new substantive asylum applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases[1]) were decided within two months. That target remains for 2004–05. This was an increase from the 65 per cent. and 60 per cent. targets met in 2002–03 and 2001–02 respectively.

The 2003–04 target was exceeded, with 82 per cent. of new substantive applications having an initial decision reached and served within two months. The speed of initial decisions continues to improve with 84 per cent. of substantive applications received in Q2 (April to June) 2004 having an initial decision reached and served within two months, and reflects the Governments commitment to, and continued success in, speeding up the initial decision-making process.

(ii) The PSA target for 2003–04 was to ensure that 60 per cent. of new substantive asylum applications are decided (including final appeal) within 6 months. The target increased to 65 per cent. for 2004–05. The target was exceeded with 64 per cent. of applications received

in 2003–04 (April 2003 to March 2004) having a final decision, up to and including appeals at the IAT, within six months.

(b) The PSA target for the quality of initial asylum decisions is to ensure that: 80 per cent. of asylum decisions sampled at random in 2003–04 are found to be fully effective or better, and that 80 per cent. of asylum decisions assessed by external assessors sampled at random in 2003–04 are found to be fully effective or better. Both criteria increase to 85 per cent. for the year 2005–06.

The 2003–04 target was exceeded with 85 per cent. of criteria assessed on asylum decisions sampled at random by internal assessors during 2003–04 (April 2003 to March 2004) found to be fully effective or better. 81 per cent. of criteria assessed on asylum decisions sampled at random by external assessors during 2003–04 (April 2003 to March 2004) were found to be fully effective or better.

(c) The current PSA target for the removal of failed asylum seekers is to enforce the immigration laws more effectively by removing a greater proportion of failed asylum-seekers.

The ratio of numbers of asylum seekers removed (including dependants) in 2003–04 to those becoming failed asylum seekers (either did not appeal or appeal rights exhausted) in 2003–04 was 21 per cent. (compared with an estimated 21 per cent. for 2002–03).

The five-year strategy for asylum and immigration, published on 7 February, commits the department to ensure that the monthly rate of removals exceeds the number of unfounded applications by the end of 2005.

Information on the number of asylum applications outstanding, and the timeliness of initial decisions are published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

[1] Cases which may be the responsibility of other EU member states under the Dublin Convention.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether special measures have been put in place to assist asylum seekers and refugees *(a)* to find family members directly affected by the tsunami and *(b)* to go home to help with reconstruction. [214985]

Mr. Browne: There are no separate arrangements in place to assist asylum seekers and refugees to find family members directly affected by the tsunami. However, the British Red Cross does provide assistance in searching for missing family members.

Those asylum seekers wishing to return to countries in the region are able to apply for assistance through the International Organization for Migration's voluntary assisted returns and reintegration programme. Requests by recognised refugees to return temporarily, for example to undertake reconstruction, are being considered on a compassionate and case by case basis.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish a body independent of his Department to compile immigration statistics. [215894]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office is satisfied that there is already sufficient independence in the immigration statistics, for which it is responsible. Immigration control and asylum statistics are part of National Statistics. They are produced by statisticians, whose independence is established under the National Statistics Code of Practice, and the statistics themselves are acknowledged as reliable. The National Audit Office's review in May last year found that "the asylum data and statistics are in most respects reliable".

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing National Statistics on migrants entering or leaving the United Kingdom, and England and Wales. The ONS' estimates of migrants are compiled from a number of data sources, including the International Passenger Survey and date from the Home Office.

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. As such, they undergo quality assurance reviews and are produced free from any political interference.

The Government's White Paper, 'Building trust in statistics', sets out the framework for assuring the quality of National Statistics. A key component of the framework is to conduct a programme of thorough reviews of key outputs, at least every five years. The National Statistics Quality Review of the International Migration was published on 2 September 2003 and covered all forms of migration between the UK and the rest of the world, including statistics relating to all migrants and statistics relating to migrants subject to UK immigration control. The Home Office is about to embark on a National Statistics review of its publications relating to the control of immigration statistics, including the presentation of asylum statistics within these.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has received from the High Commission in Islamabad case papers on the case of Mr. I. H., husband of Mrs. S. B. of Aylesbury, reference ISB/747450. [215728]

Mr. Browne: The case papers of Mr I. H. were received by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate on 15 November 2004 and were forwarded to the Immigration Appellate Authority on 9 February 2005.

British Passports

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many British passports have been reported lost or stolen *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* abroad in each year since 1997. [204447]

Mr. Browne: The UK Passport Service did not routinely collect information on the number of lost and stolen passports prior to 1999. Up until the introduction in December 2003 of a new comprehensive system for the reporting and recording of lost and stolen passports, only the total number of these passports was recorded.

The information shown in the table for 1999 to 2003 cannot therefore be broken down between the UK and abroad. Also it is mainly based on information

contained in applications for replacement passports. It may not therefore show the true number of passports lost and stolen in these years.

In 2004 of the total number of 306,406 lost and stolen passports reported under the UK Passport Service's improved reporting and recording arrangements, 49,802 were reported lost/stolen abroad, and 256,604 were reported lost/stolen in the UK.

	Number of lost and stolen passports	*As a percentage of total passports issued*
1997	Not available	—
1998	Not available	—
1999	62,364	1.11
2000	114,624	2.08
2001	148,230	2.61
2002	166,358	3.08
2003	184,301	3.33
2004	306,406	5.04

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 30 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Mr. Dwight Swanson. [215101]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 10 February.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213777]

Fiona Mactaggart: The cost of cleaning the Department is not centrally recorded. Cleaning usually forms part of a wider facilities management contract and separating out the cleaning element of these contracts for the Home Office estate could be done only at disproportionate cost. However, the cost of cleaning the Central London estate in 2003–04 was £1,097,606.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [213804]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the cost of parking spaces at Home Office buildings is not recorded centrally and could be estimated only at disproportionate cost. The Home Office does not reimburse staff for any parking tickets or penalties they may incur while on official business. Staff are personally responsible for meeting the costs of any such fines.

Deportation Orders

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many deportation orders against British prison inmates who were also Irish nationals there have been since 2000. [214695]

Mr. Browne: The numbers of deportation orders enforced against British prison inmates who are also Irish nationals are as follows:

	Number
2002	2
2001	5
2002	3
2003	19
2004	10

These figures are provisional, based on management information and are not National Statistics.

European Public Bodies

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* budget, *(b)* role and *(c)* staffing levels of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Co-operation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union; when this body was agreed in Council; whether this body was notified to Parliament; under what legal treaty base it will operate; where it will be based; and whether its staff will enjoy diplomatic immunity. [215207]

Mr. Browne: The provisional budget for the European Agency for the Management of Operational Co-operation at the External Borders of the member states of the European Union was set out in the legislative financial statement annexed to the first version of the Agency Regulation (14766/03). The initial estimate for the years 2005–09 is as follows: 2005—€6,157 million; 2006—€9.754 million; 2007—€15,754 million; 2008—€15.754 million; and 2009—€8.754 million. But the final figures are still being discussed as part of the negotiations on the new financial perspective which begins in 2007. As the UK has been excluded from participation in adoption of the Agency Regulation, we will not be making a financial contribution to the Agency through the EU budget—we receive an automatic rebate on measures in which we do not participate. UK contributions will only be made when we request to participate in specific activities undertaken by the Agency.

The role of the Agency will be to provide effective co-ordination of member states joint actions at the EU external borders. Article 2 of the final version of the Agency Regulation (2007/2004) outlines the Agency's main tasks:

"1. The Agency shall perform the following tasks:

(a) co-ordinate operational co-operation between member states in the field of management of external borders;

(b) assist member states on training of national border guards, including the establishment of common training standards;

(c) carry out risk analyses;

(d) follow up on the development of research relevant for the control and surveillance of external borders;

(e) assist member states in circumstances requiring increased technical and operational assistance at external borders;

(f) provide member states with the necessary support in organising joint return operations."

The UK fully supports the aims and objectives of the Agency.

The staffing levels of the Agency will be set once the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director and the Management Board are in place—it will be their responsibility to decide what the staffing levels should be (within the limits of the provisional budget).

The Agency Regulation was adopted by the Council on 26 October 2004, was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* on 25 November 2004 and came into force on 26 November 2004. The Agency itself should be operational by May 2005.

Parliament was kept fully informed of negotiations on the Border Agency Regulation through the usual European Parliamentary Scrutiny mechanisms. It cleared scrutiny in the European Scrutiny Committee *[Commons]* on 25 February 2004 and in the European Union Committee *[Lords]* on 2 March 2004.

The Agency will operate under a joint legal treaty base—Articles 62(2)*(a)* and 66 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.

No decision has yet been taken on where the Agency will be based. Five member states (Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia and Malta) submitted bids to host the Agency. The UK supports the Polish bid. The Agency will still become operational by May 2005, even if no decision has been taken on its permanent location by then.

Permanent staff of the Agency will have the same status as the staff of the other EU institutions (e.g. including the Commission). This is in accordance with the existing Staff Regulations and conditions of employment of officials of the European Communities, as set out in Article 17 of the Border Agency Regulation.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices were issued during the last week of October and the first week of November 2004 for *(a)* letting off or throwing fireworks in any highway, street, throughfare or public place, *(b)* possession of fireworks in a public place by those under the age of 18 years and *(c)* breaching the curfew time for the use of fireworks. [214368]

Ms Blears: The available information, relating to the four offences connected with fireworks for which penalty notices for disorder can be given, is contained in the table:

Penalty notices for disorder issued for firework offences in England and Wales between 25 October and 7 November 2004—provisional figures

Fireworks offence for which PND issued	Issued between 25–31 October inclusive	Issued between 1–7 November inclusive
Throwing fireworks in a thoroughfare	18	36
Breach of fireworks curfew	3	4
Possession of a Category 4 firework	2	3
Possession by under 18 of adult firework	—	—
Total PNDs issued for firework offences	23	47

Graffiti

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been prosecuted for graffiti in each of the last five years in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend. [215932]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to distinguish offences of graffiti from other types of criminal damage in the Home Office figures for court proceedings as the circumstances of individual offences are not collected centrally.

Police

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in *(a)* the Metropolitan police, *(b)* the UK Atomic Energy Authority constabulary and *(c)* the British Transport police in each year since 1994; and what projections there are for numbers of officers in the force in future years. [214291]

Ms Blears: Information on police numbers in the Metropolitan Police Service is set out in the table. Police officer numbers for the UK Atomic Energy Authority constabulary (UKAEAC) and the British Transport police (BTP) has been provided by my right hon. Friends, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Secretary of State for Transport.

Metropolitan police, British Transport police and the Civil Nuclear constabulary—police officer strength since 1994

	Officer strength		
As at 31 March	Metropolitan police	British Transport police	UK Atomic Energy Authority constabulary
1994	27,699	2,155	490
1995	27,480	2,147	476
1996	27,343	2,166	471
1997	26,677	2,132	459
1998	26,094	2,095	496
1999	26,073	[1]2,113	501
2000	25,485	2,091	503
2001	24,878	2,109	506
2002	26,223	2,123	534
2003	27,984	2,176	558
2004	29,735	2,267	575
2004 (31 August)	30,021	Not available	[2]528

[1] BTP figures for 1999 to 2002 inclusive are for actual officers. Figures for 1994 to 1999 and from 2003 onwards are full-time equivalent. BTP police numbers from 2003 has been collected by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate as part of police strength statistics for England and Wales.
[2] UKAEAC as at 1 February 2005.

Following boundary changes on 1 April 2000 with Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey, the Metropolitan police district was reduced in size and some resources were transferred to the other three forces. Metropolitan Police Service strength data prior to April 2000 is therefore not comparable with later information.

The Home Secretary has not set projections of police strength for future years for England and Wales, or for individual forces. I understand that neither the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry and Transport have set targets for police strength for the UKAEAC or the BTP. The number of police officers in any force is a matter for the Chief Officer of Police and the Police Authority, subject to the available budget

Speed Cameras

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total amount of revenue from speed cameras was in the area policed by the Lancashire Constabulary in the last year for which figures are available. [215255]

Ms Blears: Information on the total revenue from offences detected by speed camera is not collected centrally, but an estimate can be made from the number of fines and fixed penalties and is given in the table for 2002 (latest available).

2003 data will be available shortly.

Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for speeding offences detected by cameras[1] in the Lancashire police force area, 2002

	Fixed penalties		Court proceedings[2]		
	Number of tickets[3]	Estimated revenue (£)[4]	Number of fines	Total amount of fine (£)	Average fine (£)
2002	88,700	5,322,000	1,700	110,400	66

[1] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[2] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.
[3] Paid i.e. no further action.
[4] 'Estimate' based on £60 penalty charge.

Student Visa Extensions

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the impact of the proposals to increase visa charges on the number of international students studying in the UK. [214050]

Mr. Browne: Following on from the Home Office consultation document 'Review of Charges for Immigration Applications', I am introducing new fees for a range of immigration applications. On 7 February I published a summary and analysis of the consultation responses, the supporting Regulatory Impact Assessments and an analysis of the likely impact of the new charges on international student numbers. These documents are available on the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

International students bring significant economic and social benefits to the UK. In recognition of this, students seeking to vary or extend their conditions of stay in the UK will be charged a reduced fee for postal applications. Our analysis, which is set out in the published Regulatory Impact Assessment, indicates that at the level proposed, the postal charges were unlikely to have a significant impact on the UK's ability to attract and retain international students. However, in order to ensure that remaining to study in the UK remains a competitive option, we have decided that charges should be at a lower rate of £250 for the standard postal service. The higher, premium fee is an optional service which students can take advantage of if they so choose.

Visa Applications

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visa applications made in the UK prior to 1 August 2003 remain to be dealt with; how many personnel are dealing with the applications; and when he expects the applications to be processed and a decision made. [211002]

Mr. Browne: Some 500 applications for further leave to remain predating 1 August 2003 are currently awaiting decision in General Group 2, which is part of the Managed Migration Directorate.

The equivalent of 7.3 caseworkers are allocated full-time to this work with a further nine working part-time. The work is dealt with in priority order.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Advertising Costs

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the projected expenditure of his Department for advertising and publicity is for the year 2004–05, broken down by campaign; and what the projected total expenditure on advertising and publicity is for the following three years. [213507]

Jane Kennedy: The following table details the estimated total expenditure on advertising and publicity in 2004–05:

£

2004–05 campaign	*Advertising expenditure*	*Total publicity expenditure*
Future pensioners/Informed Choice	—	854,400
State Second Pension	—	84,200
State Pension Deferral	200,000	300,000
Pensioners Guide	—	1,000,000
Pension Credit	4,023,810	6,500,000
The Pension Service	—	559,000
Direct Payment Information Campaign	8,808,000	9,500,000
Direct Payment roadshow	—	3,000,000
Fraud	6,450,000	7,150,000
New Deal	—	1,650,000
Jobcentre Plus employer marketing	443,000	1,300,000
Jobcentre Plus Awareness	—	275,740
Age Positive	—	600,000
DDA Awareness	1,122,000	2,000,000
Council Tax Benefit	661,640	850,000
Winter Fuel Payments	514,910	815,000
Totals	22,223,360	36,354,140

Decisions have not yet been made on future expenditure for 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Notes:

1. All costs exclude VAT.

2. All figures have been rounded

3. Advertising costs are total media costs excluding all production costs

4. Information campaigns costing under £250,000 and details of highly localised publicity activity by the Department's customer-facing businesses have generally not been included as a disproportionate cost would be incurred in compiling these figures.

Benefit Claims

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time taken to process a claim for council tax benefit was in each year for which figures are available. [215247]

Mr. Pond: Average processing times are only available for new claims for council tax benefit. Figures are not available prior to April 2000. The available information is in the following table.

Average number of days to process new council tax benefit claims, Great Britain: April 2000 to September 2004

Period	*Days*
2000–01	60
2001–02	58
2002–03	53
2003–04	47
2004–05[1]	
April to June 2004	46
July to September 2004	47

[1] 2004–05 data is available for the first two quarters only.

Notes:

1. The figures are rounded to the nearest whole day.

2. The figures are taken from April to March each year and are four quarter averages.

Source:

Housing Benefit Management Information System Quarterly Administration Returns April 2000 to September 2004.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people claimed job seekers' allowance in each constituency in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available; [215386]

(2) how many people claimed income support in each constituency in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available. [215388]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the following table.

Income support (IS) and jobseekers allowance (JSA) claimants in Scotland by parliamentary constituency, as at August 2004.

		JSA			
	IS	*All*	*Contribution-based only*	*Income-based*	*Credits-only*
Aberdeen Central	3,300	1,300	*400	800	*100
Aberdeen North	2,500	700	*200	500	—
Aberdeen South	2,100	700	*100	600	—
Airdrie and Shotts	4,700	1,500	*400	1,000	*100
Angus	2,400	1,600	*400	1,000	*200
Argyll and Bute	2,100	1,000	*100	800	*100
Ayr	2,500	1,300	*300	900	*100
Banff and Buchan	2,600	900	*200	600	*100
Caithness Sutherland and Easter Ross	1,800	1,100	*300	700	*100
Carrick Cumnock and Doon Valley	3,700	1,600	*200	1,200	*200
Central Fife	3,800	2,000	*300	1,600	*200
Clydebank and Milngavie	3,200	1,200	*200	900	*100
Clydesdale	3,500	1,200	*300	600	*200
Coatbridge and Chryston	3,700	1,300	*200	1,000	*100
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	2,900	1,000	*200	600	*200
Cunninghame North	3,100	1,700	*300	1,300	*100
Cunninghame South	4,100	2,700	500	1,900	*300
Dumbarton	3,100	1,700	*200	1,300	*100

Income support (IS) and jobseekers allowance (JSA) claimants in Scotland by parliamentary constituency, as at August 2004

		JSA			
	IS	*All*	*Contribution-based only*	*Income-based*	*Credits-only*
Dumfries	2,600	1,000	*200	800	*100
Dundee East	4,600	2,000	*200	1,700	!—
Dundee West	4,300	1,800	*400	1,300	*200
Dunfermline East	3,000	1,700	*300	1,300	*100
Dunfermline West	2,200	1,200	*100	1,000	*100
East Kilbride	2,600	1,400	*400	800	*200
East Lothian	2,500	800	*300	*300	*100
Eastwood	2,100	1,100	*200	700	*200
Edinburgh Central	3,200	1,200	*300	700	*200
Edinburgh East and Musselburgh	4,400	1,400	*200	1,000	*100
Edinburgh North and Leith	3,700	1,400	*300	1,000	*100
Edinburgh Pentlands	2,700	1,000	*100	700	*100
Edinburgh South	2,300	1,000	*200	700	*100
Edinburgh West	2,200	1,000	*200	800	!—
Falkirk East	2,400	1,100	*300	700	*100
Falkirk West	3,300	1,400	*300	1,100	*100
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale	2,400	900	*100	700	*100
Glasgow Anniesland	5,300	1,500	*200	1,200	*100
Glasgow Baillieston	6,000	1,500	*200	1,100	*100
Glasgow Cathcart	5,000	1,400	*300	900	*200
Glasgow Govan	5,400	1,800	*300	1,300	*100
Glasgow Kelvin	4,400	1,700	*100	1,500	*100
Glasgow Maryhill	7,200	2,100	*300	1,700	*100
Glasgow Pollok	5,400	1,400	*200	1,100	*100
Glasgow Rutherglen	4,400	1,200	*100	1,000	*100
Glasgow Shettleston	8,600	2,400	*300	2,000	*200
Glasgow Springburn	6,800	2,700	*300	2,300	*100
Gordon	1,200	700	*200	*300	*100
Greenock and Inverclyde	3,800	2,300	600	1,500	*200
Hamilton North and Bellshill	4,000	1,500	*300	1,100	*100
Hamilton South	3,600	1,400	*200	1,100	*100
Inverness East Nairn and Lochaber	2,200	800	*200	500	*100
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	3,900	2,000	*200	1,600	*100
Kirkcaldy	3,000	2,200	*200	1,700	*300
Linlithgow	3,100	1,200	*300	800	*100
Livingston	3,500	1,100	*200	800	*100
Midlothian	2,300	800	*200	600	*100
Moray	1,900	900	*200	600	*200
Motherwell and Wishaw	4,200	1,600	*300	1,200	*100
North East Fife	1,100	900	*200	*400	*300
North Tayside	2,000	1,100	*200	700	*100
Ochil	2,700	1,500	*300	1,000	*100
Orkney and Shetland	800	500	*100	*300	*100
Paisley North	4,900	1,600	*400	1,100	*100
Paisley South	3,900	1,400	*300	1,000	*100
Perth	2,400	1,100	*300	800	*100
Ross Skye and Inverness West	2,700	1,200	*200	700	*200
Roxburgh and Berwickshire	1,800	500	*100	*400	!—
Stirling	2,300	1,000	*100	700	*200
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	2,000	900	*100	700	*100
Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale	1,300	500	*200	*200	*100
West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine	1,300	600	*200	*300	!—
West Renfrewshire	2,600	1,200	*300	800	*100
Western Isles	700	600	*100	*400	!—

!— denotes nil or negligible

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Numbers marked "*" are based on very few sample cases and are subject to a high degree of sampling variation. These figures should be used as a guide to the current situation only.

3. Income-based JSA figures include claimants who would also be entitled to the contributory element.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. sample.

Benefit Payments (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Chorley constituency received the winter fuel allowance in 2004–05; and what total amounts such payments represented in that year. [216200]

Malcolm Wicks: Information is not yet available for winter 2004–05. Information about the number of payments at each rate to people in the Chorley constituency for winter 2003–04 is in the Library. We would expect the number to be similar for this winter.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Chorley constituency have received pension credit in each year since it was introduced. [216201]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the table. Further information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit and average awards at 31 December 2004 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report, which was published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Pension credit recipients, Chorley, 2003–04

As at December:	*Households*	*Individuals*
2003	3,065	3,660
2004	3,920	4,795

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures relate to the end of the month.
3. Individuals comprise claimants and partners and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
4. Pension credit replaced minimum income guarantee from 6 October 2003.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS directory.
6. The figures for December 2004 are the latest available.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 100 per cent. sample

Benefits Agency

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what guidance his Department gives to the Benefits Agency on steps to be followed in relation to payment of income support when the Agency has made an error in calculation; and if he will make a statement. [214844]

Mr. Pond: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Laurence Robertson, dated 17 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply direct to your question concerning what guidance is given to the Benefits Agency on steps to be followed in relation to payment of Income Support when the Agency has made an error in calculation. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

It may be helpful if I first explain that the Benefits Agency ceased to exist in April 2002 and was replaced, for people of working age, with Jobcentre Plus. Our aim is to provide people of working age with the help and support to which they are entitled.

In answer to your specific question, if an Income Support decision is found to be erroneous, the Decision Maker's Guide and the Income Support specific Guidance and Procedures advise the Decision Maker of the appropriate steps to take to revise the decision. If there has been an underpayment of Income Support, any arrears of benefit will be paid. If an overpayment has occurred, a decision will be made as to whether the overpayment has been caused by official error and whether the overpayment is recoverable or can be offset.

I hope this is helpful.

Child Poverty

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of children in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Vale of Clwyd were living in poverty in each of the last 30 years; and what projections he has made of each figure in each of the next three years. [214019]

Malcolm Wicks: Our first step towards eradicating child poverty as set out in our current Public Service Agreement target is to reduce the number of children in low-income households by a quarter by 2004–05. This is measured using the proportion of children in relative low income households. Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in 'Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03'. Data is not available below the regional level and is only available as proportions at the regional level. It should be noted that the reporting of year on year changes in the regional low-income rates are not reliable.

The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting absolute and relative trends in low income.

The available information is in the table.

Percentage and number of children living in households with income less than 60 per cent. of median

	Before housing costs		*After housing costs*	
	Number (million)	*Percentage*	*Number (million)*	*Percentage*
1979[1]	1.7	12	1.9	14
1981[1]	2.4	18	2.7	20
1987[1]	2.6	21	3.1	25
1988–89[1]	2.9	23	3.3	26
1990–91[1]	3.2	26	3.9	31
1991–92[1]	3.4	27	4.1	32
1992–93[1]	3.5	27	4.3	33
1993–94[1]	3.3	25	4.2	32
1994–95[1]	3.2	24	4.2	32
1995–96[1]	3.5	26	4.6	35
1994–95[2]	2.9	23	4.0	32
1995–96[2]	2.7	21	4.0	32
1996–97[2]	3.2	25	4.3	34
1997–98[2]	3.2	25	4.2	33
1998–99[2]	3.1	24	4.2	33
1999–2000[2]	3.0	23	4.1	32
2000–01[2]	2.7	21	3.9	31
2001–02[2]	2.7	21	3.8	30
2002–03[2]	2.6	21	3.6	28

Notes:
1. Family Expenditure Survey (FES) figures are for the United Kingdom, Family Resources Survey (FRS) figures are for Great Britain.
2. The reference period for FRS figures is single financial years.
3. FES figures are single calendar years from 1979–87, two combined calendar years from 1988–89 to 1992–93 and two financial years combined from 1993–94 to 1995–96.

Sources:
[1] Family Expenditure Survey (UK)
[2] Family Resources Survey (GB)

'Measuring child poverty', published in December 2003, outlines the Government's measure of UK child poverty for the long-term. The measure will consist of three tiers; absolute low income, relative low income and material deprivation and low income combined. The Government will set a target as part of the 2006 SR06 Spending Review to halve by 2010–11 the numbers of children suffering a combination of material deprivation and relative low income. This new measure will commence with estimates taken from the 2004–05 Family Resources Survey. Data will not be available below the regional level.

Future projections are unavailable.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to Chorley constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies since 1997 on Chorley. [216202]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Chorley will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to national level which shows that 24 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in the north west are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Chorley who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Chorley

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	5,700
2002	6,300
2003	6,900
2004	6,800

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Chorley, the proportion in employment has risen to 78.0 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with over 1,580 in Chorley alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 1,200 families in Chorley.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the State Second Pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 3,920 pensioners in Chorley are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £38.82 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 17,500 pensioners in Chorley have benefited from this increase.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Havant constituency, the effects on Havant of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216026]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Havant will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to national level which shows that 18 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in the south east are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Havant who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Havant

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	5,000
2002	4,900
2003	5,200
2004	5,800

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Havant, the proportion in employment has fallen to 69.0 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with over 1,880 in Havant alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,100 families in Havant.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the State Second Pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 4,185 pensioners in Havant are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £38.63 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 21,200 pensioners in Havant have benefited from this increase.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Reading, West constituency, the effects on Reading, West of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215819]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government has significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Reading West will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 18 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in the south-east are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Reading, West who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the following table.

Reading West

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	3,100
2002	3,200
2003	3,300
2004	3,600

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Reading, West, the proportion in employment has risen to 81.3 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with 970 in Reading West alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18 years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 1,400 families in Reading, West.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 3,050 pensioners in Reading, West are receiving Pension credit, with an average award of £39.12 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70 plus payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80 plus annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 14,600 pensioners in Reading, West have benefited from this increase.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Technical Adaptation Committee on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [216341]

Mr. Pond: The Committee did not meet during these Presidencies. Council Directive 80/1107/EEC of 27 November 1980 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work that made provision for the Committee was revoked in 1998 by the Chemical Agents Directive. The European Commission elected to tackle these risks by individual directives. Separate directives now exist on Chemical and Biological Agents. In relation to Physical Agents, there are now individual directives on Noise, Vibration and Electromagnetic Fields and a fourth on Optical Radiation is under negotiation. Each of the adopted directives makes provision for creation of a Technical Adaptation Committee.

There have been three Command Papers produced on prospects for the European Union which include highlights from the Presidencies in question—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005. They are available in the Library and on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Housing

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of private landlords in the pilot areas who *(a)* will and *(b)* will not participate in the new flat-rate local housing allowance scheme. [215560]

Mr. Pond: All private sector tenants in the nine pathfinder areas who require help towards their housing costs will claim local housing allowance (LHA) instead of housing benefit. A comprehensive, independent programme of evaluation will examine the impact of LHA across a range of areas, including the decisions and strategies of landlords and impact on the housing market in the areas concerned. This research will be completed in March 2006.

A further nine local authorities, known as the second wave group, will implement LHA between April and July 2005. Although not part of the formal evaluation programme, their experiences will be used to help inform best practice for extending the scheme nationally.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how the processing of housing benefit by local authorities is measured in terms of *(a)* efficiency, *(b)* accuracy and *(c)* fraud. [215132]

Mr. Pond: The Department for Work and Pensions sets performance standards, which includes performance indicators, to help DWP, and local authorities themselves, assess performance in the administration of housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB). Additionally, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate reports to the Secretary of State on the administration of HB and CTB and, in particular, on the prevention and detection of fraud relating to these benefits.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much housing benefit expenditure was overpaid by local authorities due to fraud and error in each year for which figures are available. [215133]

Mr. Pond: We undertake a continuous measurement of fraud and error in housing benefit. The Department published "Fraud and Error in Housing Benefit, April 2002 to September 2003" on 12 August 2004. This report represents progress against the first national headline estimates, for the level of fraud and error in HB. The report is available in the Library.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time taken to process a claim for housing benefit was in each year since 1975. [215243]

Mr. Pond: The available information is in the following table.

Average number of days to process new housing benefit claims, Great Britain: April 2000 to September 2004

	Days
2000–01	49
2001–02	53
2002–03	48
2003–04	45
April to June 2004	45
July to September 2004	43

Notes:
1. The average time taken to process a housing benefit (HB) claim is available for new claims only and the data is not available prior to April 2000.
2. The figures are rounded to the nearest whole day.
3. The figures are taken from April to March each year and are four quarter averages.
4. 2004–05 data is available for the first two quarters only, i.e. April to September 2004.

Source:
Housing Benefit Management Information System Quarterly Administration Returns April 2000 to September 2004.

Incapacity Benefit

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the 52 week linking rule; and what qualitative research his Department has commissioned to evaluate it. [214628]

Mr. Pond: The 52 week linking rule was introduced in 1998 to allow people moving off an incapacity benefit into work to re-access any higher rates of benefit that had been in payment if their job did not work out and they needed to re-claim. It was introduced as a result of research evidence which found that people feared moving off benefit in case their job did not last, leading to difficulties in requalifying for their old benefit. The importance of linking rules was confirmed in subsequent research. For example, an evaluation in 2003 of clients eligible for the new deal for disabled people identified the most important 'bridge to work' was the knowledge that they could return to their original benefit if needed.

The Department of Social Security Research Report 141 incapacity benefits and work incentives included qualitative research into the operation of the 52 week linking rule. The conclusions of the researchers were that knowing about the linking rule could influence decisions to move into work; that it reduced some of the risks and anxieties about loss of income and security attached to moving into work and that it was generally appreciated by clients. There were also indications that lack of awareness of the rule reduced its incentive effect as did anxiety that the rule would be hard to access and there was evidence that this was the case. This has been borne out by recent research. The Department for Work and Pensions Research Report "A Stepping Stone to Employment" published last December noted the very low levels of awareness of the linking rules amongst clients on permitted work.

The Department's five year strategy published earlier this month includes our commitment to review the operation of the linking rules to ensure that existing claimants' position is protected if they take a job and they then need to return to incapacity benefits.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to change the conditions for receiving income support on the grounds of incapacity. [215559]

Mr. Pond: The changes to incapacity benefits as set out in the Five-Year Strategy apply equally to contributory incapacity benefit and income support on the grounds of incapacity. We will be looking to simplify current arrangements by incorporating both contributory and income-related elements into the new benefits.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures are in place to assess the speed, efficiency and accuracy of the provision of benefits at Jobcentre Plus. [215245]

Mr. Pond: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Howard Flight, dated 17 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the measures that are in place to assess the speed, efficiency and accuracy of the provision of benefits at Jobcentre Plus. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

In answer to your specific question, the Secretary of State assesses the accuracy of benefits provision through the Jobcentre Plus target regime. Each year, annual targets are set for Jobcentre Plus and currently include the measures of Monetary Value of Fraud and Error, and Business Delivery. The latter includes elements on the accuracy of Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, and Jobseeker's Allowance. The targets are published in the Jobcentre Plus Business Plan each year, which is placed in the House of Commons Library.

Turning to the subject of efficiency, Jobcentre Plus, within its unit cost target, has one element based on the total costs incurred for benefit processing divided by the number of claims actually processed. This measure forms a key part of the Jobcentre Plus aim to improve efficiency and is continually monitored by HM Treasury.

Jobcentre Plus also has a range of internal management measures that detail levels of expectation for key business areas and includes average clearance times for Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, and Jobseeker's Allowance claims and changes of circumstance, and Social Fund applications.

Performance against targets is reported on the Jobcentre Plus website.

I hope this is helpful.

National Insurance Numbers

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many national insurance numbers are currently in issue. [213991]

Mr. Pond: There are approximately 72 million national insurance numbers currently in issue.

Source:
DWP Departmental Central Index

Occupational Health

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he is taking in co-ordination with other Government Departments to *(a)* disseminate advice and good practice on occupational health in the workplace and *(b)* clarify the official vehicles for doing so. [215726]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is working with Department of Health to deliver action from the 'Choosing Health?' White Paper, and to support NHS plus to provide occupational health services where capacity is available.

The Health and Safety Executive disseminates occupational health advice and best practice through its own staff, its website and written guidance.

In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, announced 'Workplace Health Direct' on 2 February 2005 as part of DWP's five-year strategy on employment opportunities for all. This is a £20 million pilot scheme to give free occupational health, safety and return-to-work advice and support to small and medium sized businesses and workers.

We are also exploring the potential role of vocational rehabilitation in support of occupational health through its Framework for Vocational Rehabilitation published in October 2004.

Pension Credit

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are in receipt of pension credit in Birmingham, broken down by constituency; and what the total value of pension credit paid to them is. [214033]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit in each constituency at 31 December 2004 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report, which was published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library. Between 1 October 2003 and 31 December 2004 an estimated total of £181.7 million, rounded to the nearest £100,000, was paid in pension credit in the ten Birmingham constituencies. The average award over this period was £50.67.

Sources:
Programme Accounting Computer System and IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many pensioners have received pension credit in the constituency of Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East; [215897]

(2) how many pensioners benefited from the minimum income guarantee in Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency in each year of its operation. [215898]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the two tables. Further information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit and average awards at 31 December 2004 is contained in the most recent quarterly Pension Credit progress report, which was published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Table 1: Minimum income guarantee recipients, Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East, 1999–2003

	Households	*Individuals*
August 1999	2,700	3,100
August 2000	2,800	3,300
August 2001	3,000	3,600
August 2002	2,900	3,500
August 2003	3,100	3,700

Notes:
1. Figures have been taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Individuals comprise claimants and partners and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
4. Minimum income guarantee was introduced in April 1999
5. Minimum income guarantee was replaced by pension credit from 6 October 2003.
6. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS directory.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 5 per cent. sample.

Table 2: Pension credit recipients, Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East, 2004

Date	*Households*	*Individuals*
August 2004	4,955	6,120
December 2004	5,055	6,250

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures relate to the end of the month.
3. The figures for December 2004 are the latest available.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 100 per cent. sample.

Pensions

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average charge was for selling a pension in each of the last 10 years. [215706]

Malcolm Wicks: Available information on average management charges for personal pensions over the last 10 years (including stakeholder pensions from 6 April 2001) is in the following table. The average charges are based on 25 year regular premiums of £60 per month except for 2004 which is based on £50.

Average reduction in yield for personal and stakeholder pensions from 1995 to 2004

Percentage

	Personal pension	*Stakeholder pension*
1995	1.9	—
1996	1.9	—
1997	1.8	—
1998	1.7	—
1999	1.6	—
2000	n/a	—
2001	1.1	1.0
2002	1.1	1.0
2003	n/a	n/a
2004	1.1	1.0

The figures are from the Financial Services Authority (FSA), and its predecessor the Personal Investment Authority (PIA), who collected information on pension charges and reported this using the Reduction in Yield (RIY) measurement. This is defined as the percentage point reduction in the gross return on a pension fund as a result of explicit charges and fees. Dealing costs and other implicit charges are not included. Until 2002, the figures were collected as part of the FSA and PIA annual disclosure surveys. However, they have been replaced by online comparative tables, which give present not historical data and so some figures are unavailable.

The RIY on personal pensions has fallen significantly since the mid 1990's, from around 1.9 per cent. in 1995 to around 1.1 per cent. in 2002, where it has remained. This drop can largely be attributed to the introduction of the stakeholder pension charge cap, currently set at 1 per cent. and the FSA restrictions on advised sales of personal pensions with significantly higher charges than this.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of pensions were sold to each income decile of the population in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [215707]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the form requested, and such information that is available is shown in the table.

The table shows income and status of people contributing to a Personal Pension or Stakeholder Pension in the 2002–03 tax year, not people purchasing a pension product; some of the personal pensions recorded in the table will have been in existence for several years.

The table shows that the majority of contributors to both Personal and Stakeholder Pensions are employees, with the next largest group of contributors being the self-employed. For both Personal Pensions and Stakeholder Pensions the majority of contributors in 2002–03 were those earning under £20,000 a year and there are very few contributors who are either outside normal working ages or not in employment.

This Government want people with modest incomes to have access to good value pensions, and to make the right pension provision for a secure retirement; stakeholder pensions are helping to meet this aim.

Number of individuals contributing to a Personal or Stakeholder Pension by earned income and status 2002-03

	Personal pensions	*Stakeholder pensions*	*Personal and Stakeholder pensions*
Employees	4,520,000	860,000	5,130,000
Of which:			
Earning £0-£9,999	900,000	210,000	1,070,000
Earning £10,000-£19,999	1,790,000	360,000	2,050,000
Earning £20,000-£29,999	980,000	180,000	1,100,000
Earning £30,000 plus	850,000	110,000	910,000
Self-Employed	980,000	130,000	1,060,000
Of which:			
Earning £0-£9,999	310,000	50,000	340,000
Earning £10,000-£19,999	300,000	40,000	320,000
Earning £20,000-£29,999	160,000	20,000	180,000
Earning 30,000 plus	210,000	20,000	230,000
In receipt of a Pension	30,000	10,000	40,000
Child	0	20,000	20,000
Full-time Education	0	0	0
Carer	0	10,000	10,000
Unemployed	0	10,000	10,000
Other	30,000	20,000	50,000
All	5,560,000	1,060,000	6,320,000

Notes:
1. The table refers to the number of individuals whose Personal or Stakeholder Pension has received a contribution during the year.
2. Status is largely based on what is reported by an individual when making their opening application, or for existing business by the provider.

3. Earned income is derived from the Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) and consists of all income chargeable under Schedule E (mainly pay, private and occupational pensions, retirement annuities and state retirement pensions), Schedule D Cases I and II (self-employment income), and miscellaneous other earnings.
4. The Personal and Stakeholder column includes people contributing to either, or both, a Personal and Stakeholder Pension. For this reason, it will not total the individual columns for Personal Pensions and Stakeholder Pensions.
5. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10,000 and may not sum as a result.
Source:
Inland Revenue.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the current level of stakeholder charges on the uptake of personal pensions by low income workers; and if he will make a statement. [215708]

Malcolm Wicks: In the period between April 2001 and September 2004 over 40 pension providers have sold nearly 2.2 million stakeholder pensions, and the average charge on personal pensions has fallen from a 1.9 per cent. Reduction In Yield in 1996 to 1.1 per cent. in 2004, a fall the Pensions Commission attributes a significant part of to the stakeholder pension charge cap. This fall in charges has ensured more of peoples savings go towards their retirement, and less is consumed by charges.

However the Government recognises that it has been difficult to ensure that the pensions industry can effectively market stakeholder pensions within the constraints of a 1 per cent. charge cap, and to increase the proportion of under-savers actively targeted by providers the Government have, after commissioning an independent review by Deloitte, announced a revised charge cap of 1.5 per cent. for new members joining on or after 6 April 2005 for the first 10 years of membership, reverting to 1 per cent. thereafter. These changes will increase the number of under-savers these pensions industry can cost effectively target, while still ensuring good value for the consumer.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on postage by the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [215017]

Jane Kennedy: DWP was formed in June 2001 from the Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service (ES).

The figures given below for postage include general postage, courier and carriage costs for DWP and its predecessors.

The available information is in the following table.

	Postage £000
1997–98[1]	78,525
1998–99[1]	78,348
1999–2000[1]	72,857
2000–01[1]	76,746
2001–02	77,749
2002–03	78,248
2003–04	83,805

[1] The annual postage cost for 1997 to 2001 includes expenditure from the Department of Social Security, The Employment Service and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment.

Rehabilitation Support Allowance

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people claiming the new Rehabilitation Support Allowance each year whose benefits will be reduced on account of a refusal to attend work-focused interviews or undertake the required preparation for work. [215549]

Jane Kennedy: No such estimate has been made.

Unemployment (Ilford, North)

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were in *(a)* youth unemployment and *(b)* long-term unemployment in Ilford, North on 31 December (i) 1997 and (ii) 2004. [214949]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Ms Linda Perham, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about youth and long-term unemployment in Ilford North parliamentary constituency. I am replying in his absence. (214949)

Table 1 overleaf gives estimates of the numbers of youth and long-term unemployed people, who were resident in the Ilford North parliamentary constituency, for the twelve-month periods ending February 1998 and 2004.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's allowance (JSA) for local areas. Table 2 overleaf gives the annual average number of young people aged 18 to 24 years old resident in the Ilford, North parliamentary constituency claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) benefits. It also shows all JSA claimants claiming for over 12 months for the years 1997 and 2004.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in Ilford, North parliamentary constituency 12 months ending February

	Youth (aged 16–24)	*[1]Long-term unemployed*
1998	1,000	1,000
2004	[2]...	[2]...

[1] Defined as one year or more.
[2] Estimates not shown as they are potentially disclosive.
Note:
These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a high degree of sampling variability.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Ilford, North parliamentary constituency

Annual averages	*[1]Youth claimants (aged 18–24)*	*[1]Claimants over 12 months*
1997	470	725
2004	320	170

DEFENCE

Aircraft

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list his Department's spending on *(a)* new aircraft and *(b)* up-grades to aircraft since 1997; and how much of the money was spent in (i) Lancashire and (ii) the North West. [216231]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to sign contracts placing orders for the two CVFs. [215766]

Mr. Ingram: Discussions continue on the contracting arrangements for the Demonstration and Manufacture of the Future Aircraft Carriers (CVF). These will be confirmed following the main investment decision, which we currently anticipate will take place mid-late 2005.

Armed Forces Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to apply the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Decent Homes Standard to housing provided for members of the armed forces. [214539]

Mr. Caplin: The standard for condition is used by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) is higher than the criteria defined within the Decent Homes Standard. The application of the Decent Homes Standard to Service Families Accommodation would, therefore, result in the application of a less comprehensive standard than is currently the case.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many homes are provided in the UK for members of the armed forces, broken down by location at which such homes are provided; and when the last time was that properties in each location were *(a)* surveyed and *(b)* inspected. [214550]

Mr. Caplin: As at the end of January 2005, approximately 49,700 properties were provided for the families of armed forces personnel, located at over 600 sites across mainland United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales).

Management of service families accommodation (SFA) is carried out by Defence Estates (DE). The housing stock is currently spread across nine regional offices, as set out in the following table. Included in the overall figures are about 1,000 substitute SFA properties, which although not managed by DE, are supplied under contract, where appropriate SFA cannot be provided from its own resources.

Given the number of sites involved, the numbers of houses have been grouped on a regional basis.

Region	*Total SFA provided*[1]
Anglia (covering Norfolk and Suffolk areas)	5,750
Central (covering Bucks, Oxon, and parts of Wiltshire)	5,800
London (covering locations within the M25)	3,600
North (covering counties to the east)	7,150
Scotland	3,900
South east (covering Portsmouth and Kent areas)	4,500
South (covering parts of Surrey, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset)	9,550
South west (covering Somerset, Cornwall and parts of Wiltshire)	5,250
West (covering Wales and the western counties)	4,200

[1] As at end January 2005

The majority of the housing stock was surveyed as a single exercise in the period 1997–98 to achieve a database of the condition of the stock, and provide the necessary information for investment decisions concerning an ongoing upgrade programme. Following that major exercise, properties are subject to further survey as required, for example when a package of properties is identified for upgrading. To set out the details for each individual location would incur disproportionate effort.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent by his Department on housing for members of the armed forces in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* abroad, broken down by (i) revenue and (ii) capital for each year since 1992 (A) in nominal terms and (B) at 2003–04 prices; and what the projected spending is for the next three years. [214554]

Mr. Caplin: Details of Ministry of Defence's housing expenditure are set out in the published accounts for the former Defence Housing Executive for 2001–02 to 2003–04 and these are available in the Library of the House.

The information sought for years prior to 2001–02 is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Projected spending for the next three years is still under consideration.

I will write to the hon. Member with regard to the requested information on overseas housing.

Army Legal Service

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he intends to review the Army Legal Services; and if he will make a statement. [215702]

Mr. Caplin: A study in 2004, by the Directorate of Management Consultancy Services into the organisational requirements of the Ministry of Defence Legal Advisor recommended that the future structure and organisation of Legal Services in the Department should be reviewed further. This work has yet to be taken forward. In addition, proposals for the forthcoming Armed Forces Bill, which will introduce a single system of Service law, will have implications for the prosecuting arm of the Director of Army Legal Services' organisation notably through the creation of a single prosecuting authority to replace the three separate Service Prosecuting Authorities.

Autonomy plc

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contracts for which his Department is responsible have been awarded to Autonomy plc. [212202]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has no record of existing direct contracts with Autonomy plc. Although the company may be involved with the MOD at a sub-contract level, this is not visible to us centrally.

B-52 Crash (1991)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the loss in February 1991 of the US B-52 bomber in the Indian Ocean en route to Diego Garcia; and whether survivors were subsequently landed at Diego Garcia. [215520]

Mr. Ingram: In February 1991, a US B-52 bomber crashed in the waters just to the north of Diego Garcia after suffering a technical fault. Of the six US crew members on board, three were killed in the crash. The surviving three crew members were landed at Diego Garcia prior to being repatriated.

Battalion Costs

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* personnel costs and *(b)* equipment and maintenance costs were of (i) an armoured infantry (Warrior) battalion, (ii) an air-portable infantry battalion, (iii) a parachute regiment battalion and (iv) a Gurkha regiment battalion in the last year for which figures are available. [199587]

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* personnel and *(b)* equipment and maintenance costs of (i) an armoured infantry (warrior) battalion, (ii) an air-portable infantry battalion, (iii) a parachute regiment battalion and (iv) a Gurkha regiment battalion were in the last period for which figures are available. [201009]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to the letter dated 11 November from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding his constituent, Mr. G. Evans of Banffshire. [206199]

Mr. Ingram: I wrote to the hon. Member on 7 February 2005.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to the letter dated 22 March 2004 from the hon. Member for Brent, East regarding Mr. Karel Bartosik. [215634]

Mr. Ingram: I replied to the hon. Member on 22 April 2004, within our 15 working day target for answering all correspondence.

Cost Recovery (DFID)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1080W, on military assistance following the tsunami, if he will list the costs his Department has recovered from the Department for International Development in relation to the relief effort following the Indian ocean earthquake and tsunami. [214418]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 February 2005]:* No costs have yet been recovered by the Ministry of Defence from the Department for International Development for this assistance.

Deaths in Service

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he has taken to invite the participation of bereaved relatives in hearings of Boards of Inquiry into the deaths of service personnel who have lost their lives in non-combat situations; what provision he has made to give relatives *(a)* full disclosure of statements available to the Board, *(b)* the right to address the Board, *(c)* the right to cross-examine witnesses and *(d)* copies of the transcript of proceedings at a reasonable cost; whether he has provided for the costs of legal representation to the families to be met from the public purse; and whether it is his policy that the Board of Inquiry would sit in public. [214258]

Mr. Caplin: The Services, as part of their system of support to bereaved relatives, seek to provide full information on the progress of inquiries. However, a Board of Inquiry is an internal inquiry held to investigate the facts of an incident in order to prevent recurrence. It is not a court of law and it does not fulfil the same function as a Coroner's inquest (or a Procurator Fiscal's inquiry in Scotland), which is to establish the cause of death. Boards of Inquiry do not sit in public; and members of the public, bereaved relatives and the press have no right to be present. It has been the policy of the MOD since December 1992 to make available to the next of kin, at no cost, copies of completed Board of Inquiry reports, subject only to the redaction of security sensitive information and third party data, and the avoidance of prejudice to any other investigation.

Defence Airfield Review

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the Defence Airfield Review has been completed; how the review differs from the Airfields Review Study; and if he will make a statement. [214270]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Airfield Review is still in progress; there is no separate airfield review study. On the current status of the review, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 21 to the hon. Member for Moray (Angus Robertson).

Defence Logistic Organisation

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the Department's Defence Logistic Organisation employees are located in the West Midlands region. [215173]

Mr. Ingram: As at 1 January 2005 a total of 2,110 Defence Logistic Organisation civilian personnel were located in the West Midlands.

The civilian personnel figure listed above uses the revised definition of civilian personnel (see www.dasa.mod.uk for details), and is based on full time equivalent (FTE) data.

For Service Personnel, data by budgetary area for the United Kingdom as a whole are collated annually and presented in Table 2.2 of UKDS, a copy of which is held in the Library of the House.

DASA are currently reviewing the source data and process by which UK Location statistics for Service Personnel are compiled. New figures will not be available until the review is complete. The outcome of this review is due to be announced later this month.

Defence Procurement

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list *(a)* the defence procurement contracts with a value of greater than £5 million in each year since 1999 and *(b)* the companies involved in each of those contracts, indicating how many have their headquarters in (i) the UK, (ii) Scotland, (iii) the rest of Europe and (iv) the US. [214417]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested has been placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much the Department spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213846]

Mr. Caplin: The following table details how much the department has spent on stationery and office supplies since 1997.

Financial year	*Stationery including office supplies-figures excl. VAT (£)*
1997–98	28,151,808
1998–99	26,952,195
1999–2000	23,310,909
2000–01	23,813,768
2001–02	25,056,520
2002–03	24,743,264
2003–04	23,742,105

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of his Department's policies and activities since 2nd May 1997. [214976]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has a small presence within Pendle, in the form of an Army Cadet Force centre at Barnoldswick, this has not undergone any significant changes since 1997.

Since 2 May 1997, the Department has placed a number of contracts with companies based within Pendle, most notably with Euravia Engineering & Supply Co of Barnoldswick and TUF Tools Ltd. of

Departmental Staff and Facilities (Scotland)

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated human resources bill associated with his Department's facilities in Scotland is for the 2004–05 financial year. [215059]

Mr. Caplin: Estimates of personnel costs by region will be published in the Country and Regional Analysis 2005 as part of the Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis, which is due to be published in May 2005.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many armed forces personnel are based in Scotland; [215061]

(2) how many armed forces civilian support staff are based in Scotland. [215060]

Mr. Caplin: The Defence Analytical Services Agency is currently reviewing the source data and process by which UK location statistics are compiled. New figures will not be available until the review is complete. The outcome of this review is due to be announced later this month.

There are 6,980 civilian personnel based in Scotland at 1 January 2005.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated capital value is of his Department's buildings and facilities based in Scotland. [215062]

Mr. Caplin: The value of the defence estate in Scotland is £1.25 billion, excluding property in the course of disposal. This figure, taken from the 2002 quinquennial revaluation of the estate which is the most recent available, is an asset valuation.

The estate is currently being revalued on a rolling programme, which will be complete in 2007.

Electoral Registration

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British service personnel are serving overseas; and how many of these have submitted overseas service declarations to their electoral registration officer *(a)* in 2004 and *(b)* to date in 2005. [215285]

Mr. Caplin: As at October last year, when data was last collated centrally, there were approximately 42,000 service personnel based permanently overseas or engaged on operations.

Service personnel overseas may opt to register to vote as a service voter or overseas voters. It is not possible to identify service voters separately from overseas voters. Neither it possible to identify separately service personnel registered in the UK as ordinary voters, nor whether service registered voters are based in the UK or abroad.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the advice contained in the Army Families Advice Bureau Factsheet 7.1 on the Ministry of Defence website states that a serviceman only needs to complete F/Vote/33 once during his career unless there is a change of circumstances; and if he will

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 9 February 2005]*: The latest instruction to service personnel on voter registration options was Joint Service Defence Council Instruction issued on 28 January 2005. It was placed on the MOD's internal website, reinforced with the release of a Defence Internal Brief, signal and distribution of an information leaflets to all units, and TV and radio coverage on British Forces Broadcasting Service. A press brief was also offered to in-house MOD publications.

I can however confirm that out of date information remained on the Army Welfare Service information pages. This was an oversight which was corrected immediately when it came to our attention.

European Armaments Research and Military Capabilities Agency

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the objectives are of the Government's policy on the European Armaments Research and Military Capabilities Agency. [215771]

Mr. Ingram: The Government are a strong supporter of the European Defence Agency, as it is now known. The Agency will drive forward work on improving European defence capabilities by encouraging and supporting the efforts of individual EU member states.

By rationalising and harmonising capability requirements, and linking those directly to industrial and research efforts, the Agency will significantly strengthen both the European Security and Defence Policy and Europe's contribution to NATO.

Falcon Communications System

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision on the procurement of the Falcon secure communications system. [214607]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 730W to the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope).

Falklands Anniversary

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what talks have taken place between *(a)* Falklands veterans, *(b)* Falklands representatives and Government and *(c)* the British Legion and his Department on marking the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War. [216234]

Mr. Caplin: I met the Chairman of the South Atlantic Medal Association (82) on 1 February to discuss the form commemorations might take. The Falkland Islands Government has recently set up a committee to consider the 25th anniversary of the war in 2007 and Ministry of Defence officials will be liaising with that committee through the Falkland Islands Government office in London. The Department has had no talks with The Royal British Legion on this subject.

Harrier Aircraft

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to replace Harrier jets deployed in Afghanistan with Jaguars. [216318]

Mr. Ingram: There are no plans to replace the Harriers based at Kandahar with Jaguars.

Infantry Regiments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 730W, on infantry regiments, what other options were proposed as names for the new regiment; and for what reason the name does not include the word Royal. [216056]

Mr. Ingram: As has been made clear in previous responses, the process of restructuring the infantry has been worked through by the Army in consultation with the divisions and regiments concerned. As part of this process, infantry divisions were asked to suggest options for new regimental titles. 'The Royal Lancashire Regiment' was put forward by the King's Division as an option for the new regimental title. However, of the options put forward by the Division, the proposed title of the 'King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment' was judged by the Army Board to best reflect all the antecedent regiments from which it will be drawn. This was felt to be particularly important because of the fact that this reorganisation involved the merging of three previously distinct regiments, into a two-battalion regiment. That the word 'Royal' is not included in the new title should not be taken as an omission. Rather it simply reflects the fact that, of the options put forward by the Division, the one settled upon by the Army Board happened not to contain the word 'Royal'.

Iran

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the financial value of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines' equipment which remains in the possession of the Iranian authorities. [215486]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 February 2005]*: The estimated financial value of the equipment held by the Iranian authorities is just over £130,000.

Iraq

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the medical units serving in Iraq. [214355]

Mr. Caplin: In MND(SE) the five General Support Medical Regiment (RAMC) and the Hospital Squadron from 33 Field Hospital are the main medical units. They are supported by a number of augmentees from all three services. In addition, at Basrah Airport there is a RAF medical facility formed from a variety of RAF medical services and each United Kingdom battlegroup has its own intrinsic medical support in the form of a Regimental Aid Post.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reports he has received from British troops in Iraq on the effectiveness of *(a)* SA80A2 rifles, *(b)* Minimi light machineguns and *(c)* grenade launchers; what length of training troops received in the use of each weapon prior to deployment; and if he will make a statement. [214690]

Mr. Ingram: As part of the lessons identified process following Op Telic, which draws on the experiences of those in theatre, it was concluded that the SA80 A2 had performed well in theatre. The Minimi light machine gun and the underslung grenade launcher, procured as urgent operational requirements, also performed well. Indeed, these are now being brought into full service following the success of the UOR variants.

No individual conversion training is given to soldiers issued with SA80 A2 as the drills for using the weapon are very similar to the A1 version. Personnel are required to be advised of the new cleaning regime required for the modified parts of the weapon together with being issued updated user publications during unit briefings.

Soldiers are required to complete the mandatory weapon handling test and familiarisation firing of the weapon before being issued with the Minimi light machine gun or grenade launcher. This has been conducted either prior to deployment or in theatre as part of reception staging and onward integration training.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Iraqi and *(b)* non-Iraqi nationals are held in prisons administered by United Kingdom armed forces; how many of these prisoners are female; how many are aged under 16 years; how many have been transferred from United States administered prisons; how many have been (i) tried and (ii) sentenced since March 2003; how old the (A) oldest and (B) youngest detainee is; and if he will list the offences under which detainees are being held. [215865]

Mr. Ingram: As at 7 February 2005, there were thirty three internees held in the UK Divisional Temporary Detention Facility in Iraq, which is the only such facility administered by the UK. Thirty-two are Iraqi nationals and one has both Iraqi and British nationality. None of the internees are female, and none have stated that they are under eighteen. Three were transferred from US custody in December 2004.

None of these internees have been tried or sentenced. They are held in custody as security internees on the grounds that they are deemed to be an imperative threat to security. Any Iraqis taken into custody by UK forces who are not deemed to be an imperative threat to security, but are suspected of criminal activity, are transferred to the Iraqi authorities at the earliest possible opportunity.

The oldest internee currently held by the UK has stated that he is sixty-two. The youngest we are aware of has stated that he is twenty.

Landing Ships Contract

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the original contract price was for the delivery by Swan Hunter of two landing ships dock (auxiliary) vessels; and whether there has been a change in that contractual price since award of the contract. [214223]

Mr. Ingram: The original contract with Swan Hunter for design and build of two LSD(A)s was valued at £148 million. This has since been increased to £232 million, with a further £3 million added to cover enhancements that have included aspects to ensure the vessels comply with the latest statutory safety requirements.

Manpower

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total manpower is of in role *(a)* airborne engineer forces, *(b)* airborne Army logistic forces, *(c)* parachute artillery forces and *(d)* airborne Army medical forces; and what the cost was of each of those forces in the last year for which figures are available. [201011]

Mr. Ingram: The military manpower numbers for the relevant formations, for Financial Year 2003–04, are shown in the following table:

Ser	*Unit title*	*Manpower totals*
(a)	23 Engineer Regiment	176
(b)	13 Air Assault Support Regiment RLC	590
(c)	7 (Para) Royal Horse Artillery	447
(d)	16 Close Support Medical Regiment	273

The information relating to the costs of these forces is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Medical Supplies Agency

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people work for the Medical Supplies Agency; how many are employed in Scotland; what the personnel costs of the agency are; and what the figures were in 2003–04. [214750]

Mr. Ingram: Medical Supplies Agency (MSA) currently employs 312 staff, seven of whom are employed at the Medical Distribution Centre, Greenock, Scotland. In accordance with MSA Annual Report and Accounts 2003–04, 380 staff were employed in 2003–04 with nine employed at the Medical Distribution Centre, Greenock. The MSA total staff cost for 2003–04 was £8.489 million with a forecast of £8.996 million for this year.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many mobile telephones have been reported lost or stolen from the Department in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year; [214884]

(2) what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214888]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1226–227W, to the hon. Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis).

NATO Transformation Programme

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress made on the NATO Transformation Programme in respect of British forces. [216109]

Mr. Hoon: NATO has made good progress since the Prague Summit in 2002 in transforming its capabilities through initiatives such as the Prague Capabilities Commitment, the NATO Response Force (NRF), and the streamlining of its command structures.

Key to the transformation process is the delivery of flexible, deployable, sustainable, technologically advanced and interoperable armed forces that are capable of undertaking the full spectrum of modern military missions required by the new international security environment. The United Kingdom's armed forces are, of course, already well down this route as a result of the changes introduced in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (Cm 3999), the SDR New Chapter of 2002 (Cm 5566) and the 2004 Future Capabilities Paper (Cm 6269).

The UK's armed forces are well suited to, and continue to play a leading role in providing capability to the NRF, NATO's principal tool for the transformation of its military capability.

Network Interoperability

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are for improving network interoperability; what Ministry of Defence agency is responsible for funding the Joint Network Management System and Multiple Tactical Datalink Management Systems; what the nature is of the relationship between these two systems; how they will interact with the US Joint Interface Control Officers Support System; what the time scale is for each project; and if he will make a statement. [214269]

Mr. Ingram: Improving interoperability between networks is a key theme of Network Enabled Capability, and there are a number of initiatives to this end. The Joint Network Management System is a programme funded by the Defence Communication Services Agency to manage tactical datalink networks in the UK. The Multiple Tactical Datalink Management System (MTDMS) forms part of a programme funded from the Equipment Plan to provide a deployable tactical datalink management capability for out of area operations. Neither programme has yet received final approval to proceed but our current planning assumption is that they will be introduced in 2006. The two systems address different requirements but they are required to be interoperable as there are circumstances when the MTDMS could be used in the UK. The MTDMS is intended to be usable in operations with US forces and we are therefore monitoring closely the development of the US Joint Interface Control Officers Support System.

Overseas Defence Estates

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the defence estates the Department has overseas. [215175]

Mr. Caplin: The MOD overseas estate comprises airfields, ports, warehousing, barracks, schools, technical facilities and supporting infrastructure (power, water, wastewater, communications, etc.), Service Family Accommodation (SFA), commercial facilities and training areas. Details are as follows.

Country	*Facility*
Bahamas	Autos Island
Belize	Price Barracks—HQ British Army Training Support Unit Belize
	4 × other training areas
	adventure training facility
Brunei	(facilities owned and operated by Brunei Government)
Canada	Suffield—British Army Training Unit Suffield
	Goose Bay—in process of handback
	Wain right Camp—in process of handback
Kenya	Kifaru Camp Nairobi—British Army Training Unit Kenya
	Extensive leased up-country training areas
Nepal	Kathmandu—HQ Brigade of Gurkhas Nepal, Pokhara
Norway	Stavangar, Bardufoss
Singapore	Sembawang
South Atlantic	Falkland Islands, Ascension Island and St. Helena—weather station
USA	Washington DC (leased SFA)
Cyprus	Episkopi Garrison
	RAF Akrotiri
	Dhekelia Garrison
	Troodos/Olympus
	Aya Nikolaos Station
Diego Garcia	Port and Storage facilities (all other facilities owned and operated by the USAF)
Gibraltar	Gibraltar Garrison and other facilities
Falkland Islands	Mount Pleasant Airfield
	Various hill-top Radar/Tech sites
	Various helicopter Re-fuelling sites

All of the estate in Germany is owned by the German government and occupied by MOD under SOFA and its supplementary agreements. The German estate is located within five main garrison areas:

Country	*Facility*
Hohne Garrison, including:	Fallingbostel and Celle
Osnabrück Garrison, including:	Munster and Rhiene
Gütersloh Garrison, including:	Herford, Bielefeld, Lubbecke and Bunde
Paderborn Garrison, including:	Sennelager and Hameln
Rhine Garrison, including:	JHQ Rheindahlen, Dulmen and Elmpt

Additionally there are major training areas located at Senne and Haltern and smaller training areas in Paderborn, Gütersloh, Osnabrück and Rhine Garrisons.

In addition, a small numbers of leased properties are occupied in:

Country	*Facility*
Belgium	Brussels, Antwerp, Mons
Germany	Ramstein
Holland	Brunssum
Italy	Rome, Milan, Naples, Verona
Norway	Stavangar
Portugal	Lisbon
Spain	Madrid, Valencia
Turkey	Izmir, Istanbul
Russia	Moscow (one residence)

Parachute Battalion (Costs)

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of *(a)* an in role parachute battalion and *(b)* a parachute battalion not in role was in the last year for which figures are available. [201002]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208929]

Mr. Caplin: Provision of car parking space on defence establishments worldwide is determined locally, taking into account availability of public transport links, space on the establishments, and operational requirements.

Centrally held records of defence estate assets do not identify provision of car parking space, and would require disproportionate cost to collect this information.

Pendle Hill Munitions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the munitions recovered on Pendle Hill, Lancashire, in the last four years. [213914]

Mr. Caplin: Since 1 January 2001, a total of 95 live items and 5478 expended items have been cleared from Pendle Hill, Lancashire. This data is correct as at 1 Febuary 2005.

	Live items		*Expended items*	
	Nature	*Number*	*Nature*	*Number*
2001	Mortar 3"	12	Mortar 2" smoke	376
	Mortar 2" Smoke	2	Fin Mortar 3"	861
	Mortar 2"	1	Fin Projectile Infantry Anti Tank (PIAT)	1
	PIAT	1		
	Mortar 2" high explosive (HE)	2		
2003	Mortar 3"	18	Mortar 2" Smoke	299
	Mortar 2" HE	4	Fin Mortar 3"	1,445
	Mortar 2" Smoke	1	Fin Mortar 2"	13
	Mortar 2" Parachute illumination (Para Ilium)	2	PIAT	1
	PIAT	1	Fuse mortar 3"	107
	Mortar 3" HE	4	Mortar 3"	7
			Mortar 3" HE	1
			Fuse	15
			Mortar Spigot practice	1
			mortar 2" Para Ilium	2
2004	Mortar 3"	20	3" Fin Mortar	1,726
	PIAT	2	Fin PIAT	1
	Fuse mortar 3"	1	3" Fuse mortar	185
	Mills grenade no 36	1	2" mortar	4
	Mortar 2" Para Ilium	2	2" mortar Para Ilium	1
	Mortar 2" smoke	14	2" mortar smoke	342
	Mortar 3" HE	3	3" mortar	26
	Mortar 2" HE	3	3" mortar HE	18
			PIAT	9
			PIAT spigot	1
			spigot	2
2005	2" Mortar smoke	1	3" Fin mortar	18
			3" fuse mortar	4
			2" mortar smoke	12

Pensions

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel in each service have opted to move to the new pension arrangements; and what proportion of serving personnel that represents in each case. [215501]

Mr. Caplin: These details will not be available until April 2006. Individual Offers to Transfer packs will be sent to members of the current scheme between mid July 2005 and the end of October 2005, for a Transfer Date of 6 April 2006.

Pentagon (Nuclear Weapons Plans)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has received from his United States counterpart in respect of Pentagon plans to build earth-penetrating nuclear weapons designed to destroy hardened underground targets. [214640]

Mr. Hoon: None. Although US policy is a matter for that Government, I understand that to date it has only sought to conduct studies into the concept of such weapons and has no plans to build any.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent on postage by the Department in each year since 1997. [215021]

Mr. Caplin: The cost of postage is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Rapid Deployment

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department is taking to procure equipment to improve the rapid deployability of the British armed forces. [213368]

Mr. Ingram: The 'Future Capabilities' White Paper published in July 2003 explains how we plan to make the armed forces more flexible and deployable. At sea, deployability has already been improved through six new Roll-On-Roll-Off ships. A robust and modern amphibious capability, based around two new ships, HMS Alibon and Bulwark, supported by the Bay Class landing ships, will provide a step change in our ability to launch and support forces ashore. For the Army, there will be a shift in emphasis towards light and medium weight forces. These will be supported by a number of new equipment programmes, including the Future Rapid Effects System family of vehicles and the Light Mobile Artillery Weapon System. In the air, as well as introducing 25 A400M aircraft from 2011, we now intend to buy our current fleet of four leased C-17 aircraft together with one additional aircraft, significantly increasing our strategic lift capability.

Recruitment (Scotland)

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on recruitment levels to the armed forces in the past three months from applicants in Scotland. [213338]

Mr. Caplin: The number of personnel recruited into the armed forces other ranks from applications registered in Scotland from 1 October to 31 December 2004 was 322. Information for officers is not available on a regional basis.

Research Expenditure

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent on research by his Department in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003 and *(e)* 2004. [215888]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to Table 1.7 of United Kingdom Defence Statistics 2004, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of his Department's research budget is spent on the development of new weaponry. [215890]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence's research budget is focussed on examining technical possibilities in a variety of technology areas. These can be exploited through many different routes to new techniques, concepts and equipment. It is not possible to definitively split weaponry research out of that on materials, electronics, system integration, engines, communications and others. The development of technology into equipment is handled by the Defence Procurement Agency and it has a development budget that is spent on specific items such as satellites, communications equipment, vehicles, and weaponry, such as small arms, missiles, artillery. As we do not collate information on research activity in the way requested, it would be disproportionately expensive to provide a more detailed breakdown.

Royal Navy

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many orders were placed for Royal Navy ships in each year between 1980 and 2004. [214057]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* Details of past orders for Royal Navy ships and the year in which they were placed is not held centrally and would involve disproportionate cost to collate in a way that ensured the information was complete. Readily available data on orders placed in each year is shown in the following table: these total 39. In comparison, records show that 125 vessels entered service over the same period. Design and build lead times mean that a number of these vessels would have been ordered before 1980.

	Orders placed
1980	—
1981	—
1982	—
1983	1
1984	2
1985	—
1986	8
1987	5
1988	4
1989	—
1990	1
1991	—
1992	1
1993	1
1994	—
1995	—
1996	2
1997	3
1998	—
1999	—
2000	5
2001	3
2002	3
2003	—
2004	—

The table includes all Royal Navy surface ships and submarines and excludes Royal Fleet auxiliary vessels, any vessels chartered for Royal Fleet auxiliary use and the six-ship RoRo Strategic Sealift PFI service.

Royal School of Military Engineering

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he intends that final payment on the Royal School of Military Engineering private finance initiative project should be made; and if he will make a statement. [215150]

Mr. Caplin: The Royal School of Military Engineering Public Private Partnership (PPP) is currently subject to the Ministry of Defence's Approvals process. If approval is granted, full negotiations will begin with the Preferred Bidder. It is not possible, at this stage, to state when the PPP contract will begin and when final payment would therefore be made, which would be 30 years after the start of service delivery.

Scottish Regiments

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where he plans permanently to base the battalions of the Royal Regiment of Scotland. [212110]

Mr. Ingram: No decisions have been made on the future locations for the five Battalions of The Royal Regiment of Scotland.

St. John's Wood Barracks

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of St. John's Wood barracks; and for how long he expects the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery to be stationed there. [216112]

Mr. Caplin: There are currently no plans to relocate the King's Troop from St. John's Wood barracks, which is occupied by the Ministry of Defence under a lease agreement. The lease is due to expire in 2012. As with all lease arrangements within the Department, our requirements beyond the expiry date will be subject to review.

Submarines

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Submarine Acquisition Modernisation Initiative: who the participants are; and what the *(a)* purpose and *(b)* timescale of its work is. [216103]

Mr. Ingram: The purpose of the Submarine Acquisition Modernisation (SAM) project is, through a coherent, long-term approach to the management of the nuclear submarine programme, to implement a more efficient, more effective and sustainable submarine enterprise through life, leading to a significant reduction in whole life costs and greater submarine availability.

SAM is a joint project, with MOD and industry working in collaboration. It is led by a MOD team leader, with membership drawn from BAE Systems, Devonport Management Limited, Babcock Naval Services and Rolls Royce, together with key MOD project and change management teams. The aim is to reach agreement in principle on the future management arrangements during spring 2005. Subject to approval by Government and industry stakeholders, the long-term aim is to begin implementation by early 2007.

The SAM project forms part of a wider strategy for optimising the UK industrial maritime base: other elements include the UK Naval Shipbuilding Industrial Strategy which is currently addressing future loading and skills retention within the surface shipbuilding industry, and the Surface Ship Support Study, which is addressing the in-service support strategy for surface ships.

Tanzania

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what stage the prosecution of Brett Richard Mallinson and David Moffett of the Light Dragoon Guards by the legal authorities of Tanzania has reached; [208382]

(2) what disciplinary action has been taken against soldiers and officers of *(a)* the Light Dragoon Guards and *(b)* other regiments following the death of Conjesta Ulikaye in Dar es Salaam in November 2004; what steps have been taken to establish a Board of Inquiry to investigate the background to her death; and whether an apology or expression of sympathy has been made to (i) the family of Conjesta Ulikaye and (ii) the Government of Tanzania. [208383]

Mr. Ingram: The Tanzanian Director of Public Prosecutions has decided that there is to be no prosecution of Brett Mallinson or David Moffett in connection with the death of Conjesta Ulikaye in Dar es Salaam in November 2004.

It is not Ministry of Defence policy to discuss internal employment matters. The requirement for a Board of Inquiry is currently being considered.

It has not been appropriate to make an apology or expression of sympathy to family of Conjesta Ulikaye or the Government of Tanzania in relation to this incident.

Trident

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate how many *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect civilian jobs in (i) Scotland and (ii) the rest of the UK rely upon the Trident programme. [214416]

Mr. Hoon: The number of civilian jobs which directly rely upon the Trident programme is estimated to be 936 in Scotland, with an additional 6,640 in the rest of the United Kingdom. The number of civilian jobs which indirectly rely upon the Trident programme is estimated to be 300 in Scotland and 5,700 for the rest of the UK.

War Remnants (Iraq)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many explosive remnants of war have been cleared in Iraq to date; at what cost; how many casualties have resulted; what assessment has been made of the amount remaining; how much longer the clearance is expected to take; at what cost; and if he will make a statement. [200301]

Mr. Ingram: Significant quantities of munitions exist in Iraq as a result of the most recent period of hostilities, as well as the 1990–91 Gulf Conflict and Iraq's conflict with Iran. These consist of large stockpiles of Captured Enemy Ammunition (CEA) as well as explosive remnants of war, and the United Kingdom is not responsible for clearing these munitions, but any details of sites we hold are passed onto the relevant organisations.

The clearance of CEA is organised across Iraq by the Multi-National Corps-Iraq, and is done by civilian contractors, non-governmental organisations and military Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams. Over 850,000 individual munitions have been cleared from MND(SE). We do not have details of progress made by other coalition partners. Neither the total cost of the clearance of CEA nor the number of casualties from unexploded ordnance is available.

Warships

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what he expects the average age by 2009 of the Royal Navy's *(a)* frigate fleet and *(b)* destroyer fleet to be. [216107]

Mr. Ingram: By 2009 the average age of a Royal Navy frigate will be around 15 years and of a destroyer around 25 years.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many new *(a)* frigates and *(b)* destroyers will be delivered to the Royal Navy between 2005 and 2009. [216110]

Mr. Ingram: The first of class type 45 destroyer, HMS Daring, is planned to enter service in 2009. There are no plans to deliver any new Royal Navy frigates or destroyers before then.

HEALTH

Abortion

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend section 1(3a) of the Abortion Act 1967 to allow women to have abortions at home. [215176]

Miss Melanie Johnson: All abortions in England are currently carried out in a national health service hospital or an approved independent sector place. There are no current plans to change this.

Accident and Emergency Services

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of the introduction of *(a)* the new general practitioner contract and *(b)* the four-hour waiting time target for accident and emergency attendances on the demand for accident and emergency services. [215137]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The available evidence shows no relationship between the new general practitioner contract and demand for accident and emergency (A and E) services. Rising demand for emergency care is a trend that long predates this change or the four hour A and E target.

Factors involved in recent reported rises in demand include the better range of services now available, together with the improved reporting and increased patient satisfaction that the progress in cutting A and E waits has delivered.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been treated in accident and emergency departments in hospitals in Worcestershire in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [215001]

Dr. Ladyman: Data were not collected centrally on an individual trust basis prior to 2000–01. The table shows the number of first attendances, follow up attendances and total attendances for the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals National Health Service Trust from 2000–01 up to and including the second quarter of 2004–05.

	First attendances	*Follow up attendances*	*Total attendances*
2000–01[1]	115,644	6,702	122,346
2001–02[1]	114,966	7,302	122,268
2002–03[1]	116,366	7,556	123,922
2003–04[2]	120,407	7,406	127,813
2004–05 quarters 1 and 2[2]	66,892	2,006	68,898

Note:
The figures include attendances at major accident and emergency departments and minor injuries units. The figures include all type 1 (major A and E), 2 or 3 (which include minor injuries units and walk-in-centres) A and E services that a trust provides.
Sources:
[1] Department of Health form KH09.
[2] Department of Health dataset QMAE.

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to relocate the accident and emergency department at the Royal County Hospital, Winchester. [214573]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 9 February 2005]:* In line with our policy of Shifting the Balance of Power, decisions about the configuration of local health services are made locally by primary care trusts in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders. This process provides the means for addressing local needs within the health community, including the provision of accident and emergency services.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* Taunton and *(b)* Somerset used accident and emergency services in each of the last five years. [214475]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Attendances at accident and emergency departments, minor injury units and walk in centres, national health service organisations in England, 2000–01 to quarter 2 (Q2) 2004–05

		Up to Q2 2004–05	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
RA4	East Somerset NHS Trust	19,941	39,884	39,784	39,379	37,813
5FX	Mendip PCT	13,780	23,046	4,690	19,449	—
5FW	Somerset Coast PCT	15,324	28,801	—	—	—
5K1	South Somerset PCT	1,092	1,834	867	—	—
RBA	Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust	24,155	44,994	74,946	76,024	73,632
5FL	Bath and North East Somerset PCT	16,289	28,383	14,473	13,850	—
5M8	North Somerset PCT	4,681	9,374	—	—	—
Total		99,578	183,292	145,189	158,437	111,445

Source:
Department of Health dataset QMAE/KH09.

Alcohol Misuse

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the incidence of alcohol-related problems in the under 60s. [214933]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The alcohol harm reduction strategy for England takes a cross Government approach to reducing harm caused by alcohol. Data is listed from hospital episode statistics where the primary diagnosis or cause code shows incidence of alcohol-

related problems available specifically for the age range 'under 60s'.

Counts of finished in-year admissions where there was a primary diagnosis code or cause code for selected alcohol related diseases. Age at admission up to 60 years—national health service hospitals, England 2003–04

Primary diagnosis	*Admissions*
F10.0—Acute intoxication	8,937
F10.1—Harmful use	2,012
F10.2—Dependence syndrome	8,946
F10.3—Withdrawal state	6,023
F10.4—Withdrawal state with delirium	858
F10.5—Psychotic disorder	370
F10.6—Amnesic syndrome	142
F10.7—Residual and late-onset psychotic disorder	52
F10.8—Other mental and behavioural disorders	52
F10.9—Unspecified mental and behavioural disorders	506
K70—Alcoholic liver disease	9,543
T51—Toxic effect of alcohol	1,424
Cause code	
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol	—

Notes:

1. Finished in-year admissions—A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the datayear. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

2. Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)—The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

3. Cause code—The cause code is a supplementary code that indicates the nature of any external cause of injury, poisoning or other adverse effects.

4. Ungrossed data—Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health

Alzheimer's Disease

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the availability, in advance of the outcome of the appraisal by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, of Ebixa on the NHS for advanced Alzheimer's disease; [214529]

(2) what guidance he has issued to *(a)* primary care trusts and *(b)* other funding organisations regarding the availability, in advance of the outcome of the appraisal by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, of Ebixa on the NHS for advanced Alzheimer's disease; and if he will make a statement; [214530]

(3) what representations he has received regarding the availability of Ebixa for advanced Alzheimer's disease; and if he will make a statement. [214531]

Ms Rosie Winterton: National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) Appraisal Guidance No. 19, relating to the use of Donepezil, Rivastigmine, and Galantamine for the treatment of patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease, was issued in January 2001. This guidance is currently under review, and the revised version due for publication in July 2005 will include an assessment of Memantine Hydrochloride (Ebixa).

I have received a number of representations on the availability of Ebixa since the product received its license.

In August 1999, the Department issued Health Service Circular 1999/176, which asks national health service bodies to continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where guidance from NICE is not published at the time the technology first becomes available in the United Kingdom. These arrangements should involve an assessment of the available evidence.

Ambulance Drivers

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the implications for UK ambulance drivers' working time limits of European Court of Justice cases C-397/01 to C403/01, reference OJ C300 vol. 47 of 4 December 2004. [207104]

Mr. Hutton: The Pfeiffer judgment should not have implications for United Kingdom ambulance staff because the vast majority work less than 48 hours per week, on average. Ambulance staff who sign the individual opt-out can legitimately work more than an average of 48 hours per week.

Cancer Specialists

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many trained cancer specialists were practising in England *(a)* by headcount and *(b)* expressed as a whole-time equivalent figure in each year since 1997; [215692]

(2) how many cancer specialist students began training in each year since 1997; [215693]

(3) how many cancer specialists qualified in each year since 1997; and what his policy is on the optimum number of cancer specialists. [215694]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* The number of consultants, within the cancer specialties, who were working in the national health service since September 1997 is shown in table one.

The number of staff in the registrar group within the cancer specialties, in each year since September 1997 is shown in table two.

The number of specialist registrars who became consultants within the cancer specialties in each year since September 1997 is shown in table three.

It is for cancer networks, in partnership with strategic health authority workforce development directorates and postgraduate deaneries, to plan their workforce. This includes the education and training needs of all staff and will be linked to local and national priorities for cancer.

Table 1: Hospital, medical consultants within the cancer specialties

numbers (headcount) and whole time equivalents

	September 1997		September 1998		September 1999		September 2000		September 2001	
	no	*wte*	*no*	*wte*	*no*	*wte*	*no*	*wte*	*no*	*wte*
All 'Cancer' specialties	3,155	2,897	3,273	2,991	3,362	3,082	3,528	3,183	3,721	3,331
Clinical oncology	287	265	299	277	305	283	307	279	333	299
Clinical radiology	1,442	1,364	1,481	1,387	1,507	1,414	1,585	1,460	1,645	1,492
Haematology	488	447	478	437	510	465	527	475	556	500
Histopathology	769	692	828	748	836	760	865	778	915	827
Medical oncology	89	68	102	79	110	87	133	103	147	120
Palliative medicine	80	61	85	64	94	73	111	88	125	94

	March 2002		September 2002		March 2003		June 2003		September 2003	
	no	*wte*	*no*	*wte*	*no*	*wte*	*no*	*wte*	*no*	*wte*
All 'Cancer' specialties	3,864	3,534	3,913	3,569	4,059	3,704	4,096	3,730	4,169	3,787
Clinical oncology	316	292	315	295	366	334	367	337	347	325
Clinical radiology	1,679	1,575	1,702	1,582	1,781	1,658	1,794	1,669	1,810	1,669
Haematology	575	521	588	532	598	541	590	530	609	549
Histopathology	959	876	968	882	994	915	1,015	936	1,021	939
Medical oncology	183	151	185	152	172	141	176	141	202	167
Palliative medicine	152	118	155	125	148	114	154	118	180	138

	December 2003		March 2004		June 2004	
	no	*wte*	*no*	*wte*	*no*	*wte*
All 'Cancer' specialties	4,240	3,841	4,332	3,932	4,337	3,940
Clinical oncology	358	332	376	347	381	353
Clinical radiology	1,822	1,680	1,862	1,720	1,859	1,721
Haematology	632	568	32	567	632	569
Histopathology	1,036	950	1,070	985	1,075	986
Medical oncology	211	173	197	164	195	160
Palliative medicine	181	138	95	149	195	151

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

Table 2: Hospital, Public Health medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): New cancer registrars[1] 1998–2003

England, as at 30 September *numbers (headcount)*

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
All cancer specialties	370	421	473	478	590	520	517
of which:							
Medical oncology	26	56	59	48	48	48	67
Clinical oncology	54	46	51	52	70	68	52
Haematology	56	72	86	58	82	90	76
Histopathology	61	68	77	73	125	107	100
Clinical radiology	153	157	188	208	238	180	191
Palliative medicine	20	22	12	39	27	27	31

[1] The term "new cancer registrars" denotes those registrars who have a cancer specialty, and did not appear in the census as registrars in the previous year.

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

Table 3: Hospital, Public Health medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): New cancer consultants[1] 1998–2003

England, as at 30 September *numbers (headcount)*

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
All cancer specialties	120	113	99	114	130	123	140
of which:							
Medical oncology	5	5	1	9	10	9	11
Clinical oncology	15	19	16	14	14	15	14
Haematology	13	14	12	14	20	12	18
Histopathology	35	22	21	17	29	18	16
Clinical radiology	50	50	45	55	52	60	77
Palliative medicine	2	3	4	5	5	9	4

[1] The term "new cancer consultants" denotes those consultants who have a cancer specialty, and who appeared in the census as a registrar in the previous year.

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

Care Homes

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* privately owned and *(b)* local authority owned nursing and residential homes are located in the Easington constituency; and what the bed capacity is of each. [214140]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Data are not available for the area requested. Information on the number of independent and local authority-owned care homes and places for adults aged 18 and over in County Durham at 31 March 2001 is shown in the table.

I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission, and now CSCI, but comparable details are not available.

Number of independent and local authority-owned care homes and places for adults aged 18 and over in County Durham[1], 31 March 2001

	Residential		Nursing[2]	Total[3]
	Local authority	Independent	Independent	
Homes	40	220	100	350
Places	1,080	4,000	3,250	8,330

[1] Nursing care relates to County Durham health authority; residential care relates to Durham and Darlington councils with social services responsibilities.
[2] Nursing home figures include places in general nursing homes, mental nursing homes, private hospitals and clinics.
[3] Figures may not add up due to rounding.
Source:
RA and RH(N) form A

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* privately owned and *(b)* local authority owned care homes there are in the Vale of York; where each is located; and what the bed capacity of each is. [213464]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Data are not available for the area requested. Information on the number of independent and local authority-owned care homes and places for adults aged 18 and over in North Yorkshire at 31 March 2001 is shown in the table.

Information on individual locations of care homes and the capacity of each is not available centrally.

I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission, and now CSCI, but comparable details are not available.

Number of independent and local authority-owned care homes and places for adults aged 18 and over in North Yorkshire[1] at 31 March 2001

		Rounded numbers
	Independent[2,3]	Local authority[4]
Homes	510	40
Places	9,230	1,320

[1] Nursing care relates to North Yorkshire health authority; residential care relates to York and North Yorkshire councils with social services responsibilities.
[2] Independent home figures includes nursing and residential care homes
[3] Nursing home figures include places in general nursing homes, mental nursing homes, private hospitals and clinics.
[4] Local authority home figures include residential care homes only.
Source:
RA and RH(N) form A

Chiropodists/Podiatrists

Miss Begg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions he has had with organisations representing chiropodists and podiatrists; and what issues were discussed. [214054]

Dr. Ladyman: I met the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists on 4 November 2004 and my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health met the Allied Health Professions Federation on 14 October 2004 and 31 January 2005. We cannot comment on discussions with particular organisations unless the body concerned has indicated to what extent it wishes us to.

Miss Begg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of practising chiropodists and podiatrists who will not seek registration with the Health Professional Council. [214055]

Mr. Hutton: The title chiropodist or podiatrist is dependent upon achieving registration with the independent regulator, the Health Protection Council (HPC). In October 2004 10,123 chiropodists and podiatrists were registered with the HPC.

Community Hospitals

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community hospitals there were in England in each year since 1997. [215869]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* The Department does not collect this information.

Consultant Urologists

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many consultant urologists are working in the NHS in the areas served by the *(a)* Birmingham and Black Country and *(b)* West Midlands South strategic health authority; and how many are over the age of 55 years in each case. [214917]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the numbers of hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) consultants within the urology speciality in Birmingham and the Black Country strategic health authority (SHA) and West Midlands South SHA, and the numbers in each SHA within the specified age group.

Number (headcount)

As at 30 June 2004	All ages	Of which 55 and over
Birmingham and the Black Country	25	9
West Midlands South	15	4

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total expenditure by his Department on external

consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211687]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Expenditure by the Department on external consultancy and professional services in each year since 1997 is shown in the table.

	£ million
1996–97	14.699
1997–98	12.694
1998–99	7.332
1999–2000	8.132
2000–01	6.531
2001–02	6.800
2002–03	7.266
2003–04	10.031

Centrally held estimated consultancy costs for later years are not available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

Dentistry

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the results of his most recent meeting with the Scottish Health Minister on bringing in foreign dentists to Scotland. [203054]

Ms Rosie Winterton: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health has not held a recent meeting with the Scottish Health Minister on bringing foreign dentists to Scotland.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money his Department has spent in total on the Keeping in Touch scheme to recruit dentists back into the NHS. [209194]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of the Keeping in Touch (KIT) scheme in 2004–05 is £169,287 to date, covering grants to KIT scheme team members, salaries and administration costs.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects the working group on undergraduate dental school places to publish its report; and whether the dental profession has been involved in the working group. [211728]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The group, which included among its members the former Dean of Newcastle Dental School who is currently co-chair of the General Dental Council's Visiting Panel, held its final meeting on 19 November 2004. It recommended the establishment of a joint implementation group (JIG), co-chaired by the Department of Health and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The JIG held its first meeting on 18 January 2005 and will submit its initial proposals for consideration at the HEFCE board meeting on 24 February.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he plans to take to attract more dentists to the Community Dental Service. [211732]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* On 15 December 2004, we issued for consultation a report, "Creating the Future: Modernising careers for salaried dentists in primary care", copies of which are available in the Library. The report proposes reforms to the roles, education and career structures of salaried primary care dentists—those working in community dental services, salaried personal dental services and dental access centres, and salaried general dental practitioners—and the framework of leadership and pay principles within the context of wider reform of national health service dentistry. The consultation period ends on 31 March 2005.

Hywel Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Healthhow many full-time equivalent dentists were employed by the NHS in England per 10,000 of the population in the last three years for which figures are available. [213325]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on a whole time equivalent basis is not available, as dentists working in the general dental service (GDS) and personal dental service (PDS) are able to vary the amount of hours they work and to vary their national health service commitment. The majority of dentists working in the GDS do some private work.

The available information is for the number of NHS dentists (headcount) per 10,000 population in England and is given in the table for September for the years 2002, 2003, 2004. The figures given cover dentists working in the GDS and PDS.

Year (September)	*Dentists per 10,000 of the population*
2002	3.84
2003	3.88
2004	4.01

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to increase the number of NHS dentists in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement; [213923]

(2) how many NHS dentists are in practice in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement. [213924]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* At 31 December 2004, there were 19,810 dentists (General Dental Service and Personal Dental Service) in practice in England and 259 in Gloucestershire.

We are undertaking the most far-reaching reforms of national health service dentistry since 1948, supported by the biggest investment programme in the history of NHS dentistry. We are providing NHS dentistry with extra funding of over £250 million a year from 2005–06, an increase of nearly 20 per cent. over 2003–04 levels. We are also funding an extra 170 dental training places from this October (a 25 per cent. increase) supported by £80 million capital investment. We are recruiting the

equivalent of 1,000 extra dentists this year and we have allocated £59 million to improve access to NHS dentistry.

Within this programme, primary care trusts (PCTs) in the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) are planning to interview eight dentists from Poland. The SHA has received £2 million from the access funding and the three PCTs in Gloucestershire have reported proposals to spend their share on commissioning additional capacity to provide for the registration of 7,100 patients and the treatment of 900 additional orthodontic patients. In addition, West Gloucestershire PCT is one of the 16 PCTs in England receiving assistance from the Department's dental access support team. With the team's support a new dental practice has been established in Cinderford, in the Forest of Dean, and there are plans to establish a new four surgery practice within the centre of Gloucester city by mid-2005.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental schools are operating within the Greater London area. [214387]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are two undergraduate schools: Guy's Kings and St. Thomas', and Queen Mary's University London. In addition, the Eastman Dental Institute provides postgraduate training education for dentists.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS *(a)* general dental service and *(b)* personal dental service dentists have left the NHS for wholly private practice in (i) England, (ii) each strategic health authority and (iii) each primary care trust in each year since 1997. [213172]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* We do not routinely collect information about dentists' private practice. The great majority of dental practices treat both private and national health service patients. The Office of Fair Trading Report, "The private dentistry market in the UK", published in March 2003, estimated that, out of 11,000 dental practices, about 210 are totally private. We are not aware of any dentists with personal dental service contracts who have sought to reduce the value of their contractual commitment to the NHS.

NHS Dentists

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the percentage change in the number of NHS dentists in north-west London has been in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [214562]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following table shows the percentage change in the number of general dental service or personal dental service dentists, each year, in north-west London from 1997 to 2004, by parliamentary constituency.

Percentage

Parliamentary constituency name	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Brent East	4.2	-8.0	2.2	-2.1	19.6	-12.7	16.7
Brent North	6.0	-11.3	-3.2	3.3	9.5	-2.9	4.5
Brent South	15.4	1.7	6.6	-3.1	0.0	-15.9	1.9
Brentford and Isleworth	7.4	-4.0	-8.2	3.4	-19.6	9.5	1.2
Cities of London and Westminster	4.1	-4.0	-0.5	-6.3	-12.2	-1.3	4.5
Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	11.0	4.5	-19.0	2.1	-17.5	13.3	5.3
Ealing North	5.7	-5.4	-9.4	8.3	-7.7	12.5	-1.9
Ealing, Southall	5.0	-2.4	-13.7	1.9	-17.4	10.0	-5.1
Feltham and Heston	6.9	1.6	-1.6	6.5	-6.1	4.8	-3.1
Hammersmith and Fulham	13.5	4.0	-13.3	26.4	-13.0	5.0	-2.9
Harrow East	5.5	-6.9	11.1	8.3	3.1	-10.4	8.3
Harrow West	7.5	7.0	-6.6	1.8	3.4	5.0	6.3
Hayes and Harlington	12.9	2.9	0.0	5.6	0.0	-15.8	18.8
Kensington and Chelsea	-3.2	3.3	0.0	4.8	-4.5	-11.1	21.4
Regent's Park and North Kensington	8.6	3.2	4.6	-11.8	1.7	6.6	10.8
Ruislip-Northwood	13.7	-1.7	0.0	-10.5	11.8	1.8	5.2
Uxbridge	-10.0	-3.7	11.5	-3.4	21.4	-11.8	6.7

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of dentists in *(a)* North West London Strategic Health Authority, *(b)* Brent and *(c)* Brent, East has stopped taking NHS patients in each year since 1997. [214563]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows by North West London strategic health authority, Brent local authority, Brent East parliamentary constituency and Brent Teaching Primary Care Trust, the numbers of dentists who stopped doing general or personal dental service work during the year as a percentage of the total number of dentists for the years 1997 to 2004. These figures do not include dentists who moved to other areas and continued to work in the general or personal dental services. The dentists could have ceased doing national health service work for a number of different reasons, for example retirement or to take a short-term absence, as well as because the dentists only wished to treat private patients.

Percentages per year

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Strategic Health Authority								
North West London	4.5	5.3	6.8	8.0	6.8	10.1	5.8	5.2
Local Authority								
Brent	4.3	4.6	6.1	3.6	6.0	3.9	6.1	2.3
Parliamentary Constituency								
Brent East	6.3	4.0	4.3	8.5	6.5	3.6	4.2	0.0
Primary Care Trust								
Brent Teaching	4.3	5.2	6.1	3.6	6.0	3.9	6.1	2.3

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time to become a patient of an NHS dentist in north-west London has been in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [214564]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect this information centrally.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much; over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211616]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not hold centrally a record of individual contracts for all policy areas nor does it have similar details for its agencies. However, information is available in the major information technology procurement areas for the Department and shows only one contract has been let to Fujitsu over the last two years. It was an open competition under Official Journal of the European Community/Official Journal of the European Union rules for the provision of IT systems for the primary and acute care sectors as part of the national programme for IT southern regional cluster. The contract, which will run over nine years, commenced on 30 June 2004 and has a value of £896 million. EDS was an unsuccessful bidder for this contract.

Departmental Expenditure

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much and what percentage of his Department's expenditure went on research and development in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [206985]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The total departmental expenditure on research and development, and what percentage of the Department's total net expenditure this represents is shown in the table.

	Total research and development spend (£ million)	*Research and development as a proportion of net Departmental spend (percentage)*
2001–02	538	0.80
2002–03	574	0.86
2003–04	not available	not available

Note:
These figures Include expenditure on research and development by agencies sponsored by the Department.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what expenditure was made by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible on research projects by private sector companies in each financial year since 2001–02; [206991]

(2) what expenditure *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible have made on research and development by private sector companies in each financial year since 2001–02; [206994]

(3) how much and what percentage of the expenditure of each agency sponsored by his Department went on research and development in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04; [206999]

(4) what expenditure was made by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* agencies for which the Department is responsible to research and development projects undertaken by organisations other than university departments, Government-funded research establishments and private sector companies in each year since 2001–02. [207015]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information available is shown in the tables.

Department of Health

£000

Research and Development (R&D) Expenditure	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
on research and development by private sector companies	[1]312	0	[1]25
on research projects by companies with HQ in the UK	[1]312	0	[1]25
on research projects by companies with HQ in other EU member states	0	0	0
on research projects by companies with HQ in non-EU member states	0	0	0

Department of Health

£000

Research and Development (R&D) Expenditure	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
on R&D relating to UK University Departments and research centres	91,722	85,621	n/a
on R&D undertaken by organisations other than university departments, Government-funded research establishments and private sector companies	[1]90	[1]425	[1]709

Agencies for which the Department of Health is responsible

£000

Research and Development (R&D) Expenditure	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
on research and development by private sector companies	[1]112	[1]273	0
on research projects by companies with HQ in the UK	[1]112	[1]273	0
on research projects by companies with HQ in other EU member states	0	0	0
on research projects by companies with HQ in non-EU member states	0	0	0
on R&D development relating to UK University Departments and research	397	433	511
on R&D undertaken by organisations other than university departments, Government-funded research establishments and private sector companies	[1]15	[1]15	0

n/a = Not available.
[1] Total value of contracts that began in these financial years.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency for which his Department is responsible spent on research and development with overseas Government laboratories or research establishments, including collaborative Government funded laboratories and research establishments, in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [207001]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Expenditure by the Department on research and development projects where the contractor undertaking the research was based overseas was as follows:

	Amount (£)
2001–02	0
2002–03	9,547
2003–04	34,704

None of the Department's executive agencies incurred expenditure of this sort in the years in question.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214720]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government has put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Burnley constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale primary care trust (PCT) had fallen to 0, from 497 in June 2002.

At the end of November 2004 the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT had fallen to 326, from 1,267 in June 2002.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a general practitioner within two working days, an improvement from 74.2 per cent., in June 2002.

Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT's financial allocation increased to £265 million for 2004–05 a real terms increase of 7.1 per cent. By 2007–08 the PCT's financial allocation will increase to £371.2 million.

In June 2003, at East Lancashire hospitals national health service trust, 90.6 per cent., of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 94.0 per cent.

Between September 2003 and June 2004 the number of consultants at East Lancashire hospitals NHS trust has increased from 182 to 184. There were 2,143 nurses at the trust in September 2003.

In the Burnley local authority area death rates from cancer per 100,000 population were 194.5 in 2003, compared with 197.1 in 1997.

In the Burnley local authority area death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population were 153.0 in 2003, compared with 228.0 in 1997.

The latest phase of modernisation of Burnley general hospital will include 170 in-patient medical beds, an acute rehabilitation suite and a 15 station renal satellite dialysis unit.

Sources:
Department of Health.
Office for National Statistics

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effects of changes to his Department's policies on the Gravesham constituency since 1997; [215352]

(2) if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effects of the changes to his Department's policies on the Dartford constituency since 1997. [215393]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Dartford and Gravesham areas.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for inpatient treatment within Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley primary care trust (PCT) has fallen to zero from 680 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for outpatient treatment within Dartford, Gravesham, and Swanley PCT has fallen to 390 from 809 in June 2002.

In 2003, at the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust 84.1 per cent., of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 98.6 per cent.

Between September 1997 and June 2004, the number of consultants at the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust has increased from 52 to 58. The number of nurses increased from 796 in September 1997 to 868 in September 2003.

Figures for December 2004 show that 100 per cent. of patients within Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days.

In the Dartford local authority area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen from 192.1 in 1997 to 183.3 in 2003. In the Gravesham local authority area death rates from cancer per 100,000 have fallen from 200.6 in 1997 to 185.0 in 2003.

In the Dartford local authority area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 134.5 in 1997 to 89.9 in 2003. In the Gravesham local authority area, death rates from coronary heart disease have fallen from 139.0 in 1997 to 110.4 in 2003.

Dartford, Gravesham, and Swanley PCT allocation has received an allocation of £214.2 million in 2004–05. In the recently announced PCT allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT will receive an increase of £23 million in 2006–07 and £26 million in 2007–08. A total increase of 19.3 per cent., over the two years. By 2007–08, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT will receive an allocation of £299 million.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Hemsworth constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on Hemsworth constituency. [214498]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Hemsworth constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Eastern Wakefield Primary Care Trust (PCT) had fallen to 131, from 380 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004 the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Eastern Wakefield PCT had fallen to 425, from 1,055 in June 2002.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Eastern Wakefield PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days, an improvement from 68.7 per cent. in June 2002.

Eastern Wakefield PCT's financial allocation increased to £189.1 million for 2004–05 a real terms increase of 7.3 per cent.

Between September 2002 and June 2004 the number of consultants at Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 202 to 211.

In the Wakefield metropolitan district council area death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen to 201.5 in 2003, from 217.2 in 1997.

In the Wakefield Metropolitan District Council area death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen to 125.9 in 2003, from 178.2 in 1997.

In 2003 both Pinderfields general hospital and Dewsbury and district hospital received new cardiac catheter laboratories.

Source:
Department of Health
Office for National Statistics

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Hull, North constituency, the effects on Hull, North of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211800]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Hull, North constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for inpatient treatment within West Hull Primary Care Trust (PCT) had fallen to zero, from 424 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within West Hull PCT had fallen to 233, from 1,140 in June 2002.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within West Hull PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days, an improvement from 63.3 per cent. in June 2002.

West Hull PCT's financial allocation increased to £163.4 million for 2004–05, a real terms increase of 6.4 per cent.

In September 2002, at Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust, 63.7 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 95.7 per cent.

Between September 2000 and September 2003, the number of consultants at Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 187 to 234. The number of nurses increased from 2,161 to 2,399.

In the Kingston upon Hull local authority area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have risen to 224.6 in 2002, from 222.1 in 1997.

In the Kingston upon Hull local authority area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen to 154.6 in 2002, from 180.3 in 1997.

In March 2003, a new women's and children's hospital was opened at the Hull Royal Infirmary, which brings together all maternity, gynaecology and children's out-patients services on the same site.

A £6 million eye hospital, opened in November 2002, with 12 new beds and three theatres, enables 1,000 additional eye operations per year.

£60 million private finance initiative oncology centre development at Castle Hill, to open in 2006.

£29 million new cardiac centre announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, on a visit to Hull Royal Infirmary on 13 January 2004. The new unit will be at Castle Hill Hospital and will employ an additional 150 staff.

An additional magnetic resonance imaging scanner was delivered to Hull Royal Infirmary in March 2001.

A replacement linear accelerator was delivered to Princess Royal Hospital in January 2001.

Sources:
1. Department of Health.
2. Office for National Statistics.

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effects of his Department's policies since 2 May 1997 on the constituents of Ilford North. [215205]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom.There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded benefits for the Ilford North constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for inpatient treatment within Redbridge primary care trust (PCT) fell to zero, from 384 in June 2003.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients, waiting over 13 weeks for outpatient treatment within Redbridge PCT has fallen to 914, from 1,710 in June 2003.

Figures for June 2003 show that 82.2 per cent., of patients within Redbridge PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days. In December 2004, the figure was 100 per cent.

In the Redbridge PCT area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen to 172.6 in 2003, from 176 in 1997.

In the Redbridge PCT area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen to 127.7 in 2003, from 146.7 in 1997.

Between September 2001 and June 2004, the number of general practitioners at Redbridge PCT has increased from 120 to 129.

In September 2001, figures show 90 practise nurses within Redbridge PCT. Figures for September 2003 show 89.

In June 2003, figures show 110 dentists within Redbridge PCT. Figures for September 2004 show an increase to 120.

Over the period 2003–04 to 2005–06, Redbridge PCT has received an increase in funding of £40.9 million, an increase of 19.7 per cent.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information as directly related as possible to the constituency, the effect on the constituency of North Durham of his Department's policies since June 2001. [214675]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the North Durham constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Durham and Chester-Le-Street primary care trust (PCT) had fallen to 0, from 284 in June 2002.

At the end of November 2004 the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Durham and Chester-Le-Street PCT had fallen to 149, from 1,048 in June 2002.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Durham and Chester-Le-Street PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a general practitioner within two working days, an improvement from 89.6 per cent., in June 2002.

Durham and Chester-Le-Street PCTs financial allocation increased to £142.5 million for 2004–05, a real terms increase of 6.3 per cent. By 2007–08 the PCTs financial allocation will increase to £197.6 million.

Between September 2003 and June 2004 the number of consultants at County Durham and Darlington acute hospitals NHS trusts has increased from 182 to 191. There were 1,946 nurses at the trust in September 2003.

In the Derwentside local authority area death rates from cancer per 100,000 population were 219.5 in 2003, compared with 228.4 in 1997.

In the Derwentside local authority area death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population were 144.6 in 2003, compared with 219.0 in 1997.

In February 2002 and December 2004 new computed tomography scanners were delivered to the County Durham and Darlington acute hospitals NHS trust.

In February 2002 a new magnetic resonance imaging scanner was delivered to the trust.

Sources:
Department of Health, Office of National Statistics

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of his Department's policies and activities since 2 May 1997. [215010]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Pendle constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004 the number of people waiting more than nine months for inpatient treatment in the Pendle constituency had fallen to 0, from 497 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004 the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for outpatient treatment within Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT had fallen to 669 from 1258 in June 2002.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days, an improvement from 74.2 per cent, in June 2002.

Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCPs financial allocation increased to £265 million for 2004–05 a real terms increase of 7.1 per cent. By 2007–08 the PCT's financial allocation will increase to £371.2 million.

In June 2002 at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust 92.5 per cent., of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 97.1 per cent.

Between September 2002 and September 2003 the number of consultants at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 167 to 169. The number of nurses increased from 1915 to 1928.

In the Pendle local authority area death rates from cancer per 100,000 have fallen from 188.4 in 1997 to 171 in 2003.

In the Pendle local authority area death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 205.3 in 1997 to 128.8 in 2003.

A multi-million pound flagship education centre for NHS staff has been unveiled at Royal Preston Hospital. It is the first stage of a major new building development.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Reading, West constituency, the effects on Reading, West of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215803]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government has put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Reading area.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Reading primary care trust (PCT) area has fallen to zero from 365 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Reading PCT area has fallen to 211 from 1,250 in June 2002.

In 2003, at the Royal Berkshire and Battle hospitals NHS trust 82.4 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement of 97 per cent.

Between September 1997 and June 2004, the number of consultants at the Royal Berkshire and Battle hospitals NHS trust has increased from 109 to 158. The number of nurses from 1,332 in September 1997 to 1,498 in September 2003.

Figures for December 2004 show that 100 per cent. of patients within Reading PCT area able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days.

In the Reading local authority area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen from 179.9 in 1997 to 184.1 in 2003.

In the Reading local authority area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 133.7 in 1997 to 111.9 in 2003.

Reading PCT has received an allocation of £175.8 million in 2004–05. In recently announced PCT allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08, Reading PCT will receive an increase of over £19 million (9.1 per cent.) in 2006–07, and an increase of over £21 million (9.2 per cent.) in 2007–08. By 2007–08 Reading PCT will receive an allocation of £249.3 million.

Notes:

1. Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.
2. The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for 1997, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2003. The codes used are listed as follows: Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-9140–208; ICD-10 COO-C97; Coronary Heart Disease—ICD-9 410–414; ICD-10120–125.
3. Usual residents of this area.
4. Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who the ministerial design champion for his Department is. [215649]

Mr. Hutton: The Ministerial design champion for the Department is the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Lords) Lord Warner.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for a patient to receive a digital hearing aid in England has been in each year since 2000. [216181]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many audiology departments there are in England; what proportion are routinely fitting digital hearing aids; and what he expects the proportion to be in March. [216182]

Dr. Ladyman: There are 164 national health service audiology departments in England. 95 per cent. (156) are, as of 9 February 2005, routinely fitting digital hearing aids. By the end of March 2005 all areas will be doing so.

Delayed Discharges

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will encourage hospitals to discharge patients into the community for treatment as soon as clinically possible to reduce exposure to MRSA and other hospital acquired infections; [215821]

(2) what guidance he has given to primary care trusts on funding the treatment of patients once they are discharged into the community to complete their treatment. [215822]

Dr. Ladyman: In England, the Government are committed to reducing the number of delayed discharges from hospital. The launch of the "Cash for Change" programme in 2001 signalled the Government's determination to tackle the problem of delayed hospital discharges through a major cash investment of £300 million over two years. By 2006, older people's services will receive an extra £1 billion a year to expand home care services, extra care housing, community equipment, services for carers and intermediate care. The number of delayed discharges has fallen from 7,065 to 2,742 between September 2001 and June 2004.

Since 5 January 2004, if a patient remains in hospital because social services have not provided the assessments or services the patient or their carer needs to be safely discharged, the local authority is liable to pay the national health service a charge per day of delay. The charge has been set at a level higher than the cost of providing services to support discharge and will act as an incentive to councils to improve their assessment and service provision. It also acts as a stimulus to ensure prompt discharge.

Hospitals are expected to take all practical measures to safeguard their patients from health care associated infections, as set out in the Chief Medical Officer's strategy "Winning Ways", published in December 2003.

It is for primary care trusts to manage their obligations effectively, within the total resources available to them. The position in Wales is a matter for the Welsh Assembly.

Doctors (Refugees)

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress his Department has made in employing refugee doctors; [214161]

(2) what assistance is given to refugee doctors to enable them to *(a)* register and *(b)* practise in this country. [214168]

Mr. Hutton: We have invested over £2 million in providing support, advice and training for refugee health professionals over the past four years. A significant amount of this funding has to gone to refugee doctors to help them develop their knowledge of the English language and their clinical skills. This investment has helped many refugee doctors pass the General Medical Council's English language and clinical competence exams, and therefore gain limited registration to practise medicine in the United Kingdom.

Like everyone else, refugee doctors must then apply in open competition for posts in the national health service. We have invested in curriculum vitae and interview skills coaching and NHS induction courses to help refugee doctors become more competitive at application stage. We have also supported the development of a national career advice and information website for refugee health professionals through North East London strategic health authority.

In addition to this, the NHS is making its own investment in the refugee workforce locally.

Drug Action Teams

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role his Department is allocating to drug action teams (DATs) in delivering the Government's alcohol strategy; and what funding is being provided to DATs for that role. [216395]

Miss Melanie Johnson: At present the Department is not allocating any role to drug action teams (DATs) in delivering the Government's alcohol strategy nor is funding directly provided. However, a large number of Drug Action Teams have voluntarily taken on alcohol within their remit and these are now known as Drug and Alcohol Action Teams.

Drugs

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting time is in the Greater London area for a person suffering from drug addiction to receive treatment; and if he will make a statement. [215164]

Dr. Ladyman: A person waiting to receive treatment for drug addiction in Greater London has the following waits (projected regional average across all 33 boroughs) for December 2004:

	Weeks
In-patient treatment	2.8
Residential rehabilitation	2.5
Specialist prescribing	2.4
General practitioner prescribing	1.4
Structured day care	1.6
Structured counselling	2.2

Full waiting times data, including breakdown by each drug action team area—in London, are available on the National Treatment Agency for substance misuse website at http://www.nta.nhs.uk.

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies his Department has undertaken of treatment regimes for drug abuse in other countries. [214278]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has not commissioned any formal studies into treatment regimes for substance misuse in other countries.

However, to help ensure the best current policy and practice, the Department and National Treatment Agency draw on a wide range of expertise on the treatment of drug misuse to develop guidance, guidelines and policy. This allows knowledge of local, national and international approaches to influence developments.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is for residential drug rehabilitation in the Easington constituency; and how many patients are awaiting treatment. [214106]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The average waiting time information is not available at constituency level.

The National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse reports that the average waiting time for residential drug rehabilitation placements commissioned by County Durham Social Services Department, which covers the Easington constituency is 2.5 weeks, calculated from the date of assessment at an identified rehabilitation provider to the date of admission. This figure only includes individuals who were actually admitted to residential rehabilitation.

The number of patients awaiting treatment in Easington is low, and therefore not disclosable due to issues of patient confidentiality.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients received treatment for drug abuse in Easington constituency over the last three years. [214454]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected by constituency.

In 2003–04, 967 people were in contact with structured drug treatment services within the Durham Drug Action Team. Comparable figures were not published for the previous two years.

Source:
National Treatment Agency

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is for a residential drug rehabilitation place in Somerset. [214473]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The average waiting time for a residential drug rehabilitation place in Somerset was four weeks in December 2004.

Source:
National Treatment Agency

E111 Forms

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate his Department has made of the number of British citizens possessing E111 forms issued *(a)* before and *(b)* after August 2004; and if he will make a statement. [213292]

Mr. Hutton: About three and a half million old-style E111s were issued in each of the last three years. New-style E111s began to be issued, on a per person rather than per family basis, from August 2004. About three million have now been issued.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to publicise the expiry of old E111 reciprocal health certificates and the introduction of new ones; and if he will make a statement. [215177]

Mr. Hutton: Old-style forms E111 ceased to be valid on 31 December 2004. The United Kingdom started issuing new style E111s from mid-August 2004. A marketing campaign was begun in October 2004 with a press release and paid advertising in the national press. 10 million information flyers, and associated posters, giving information about the need to obtain new E111s were made available at a number of high street outlets and through the travel trade. The Post Office has run a separate poster campaign in their offices. About 3 million new style E111s have been issued to date. A further marketing campaign about E111 and its eventual replacement by the European Health Insurance card is planned to run between now and September when issue of the card in the UK is planned to start.

Eating Disorders

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many strategic health authorities provide outreach workers to support people with eating disorders in the community; [215960]

(2) how many primary care trusts commission outreach workers to support people with eating disorders living in the community. [215961]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not collected centrally. There are at least five assertive outreach teams operating within each strategic health authority. All such teams can have people with eating disorders on their caseloads. However, the activity information captured centrally for assertive outreach teams is not broken down by diagnostic criteria.

Engagements

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what ministerial visits are planned for each minister in his Department in the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [214022]

Ms Rosie Winterton: For reasons of security, it would not be appropriate to disclose the information requested.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the member states concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco products met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215445]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Experts' Committee established under Article 10 of European Union Directive 2001/37/EC has to date met three times on 23 September, 2002 (Italian presidency), 10 February 2003 (Irish presidency) and 15 November 2004 (Dutch presidency), each time at the headquarters of the European Commission in Luxembourg. The United Kingdom was represented at two of those meetings by a departmental official. However, no official attendance list was kept. A summary record of each of the meetings can be found on the European Commission website at www.europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm. In addition, an ad hoc expert working group on the directive met in September 2003 and 18 February 2004. The UK expert's role was to provide an update on regulation of tobacco nationally and to provide an update on the implementation of the Directive in the UK. The UK Government's priorities for the work of the expert committee are to ensure that the Directive provisions are implemented effectively across the EU and that the Directive is strengthened in line with responses to the 2004 consultation.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on the training of dental practitioners met, when and where these meetings took place, what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214774]

Mr. Hutton: The Advisory Committee on Dental Training did not meet during these presidencies, and is unlikely to do so again.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on the training of chemists met, when and where these meetings took place, what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214775]

Mr. Hutton: The Advisory Committee on Pharmaceutical Training did not meet during these presidencies, and is unlikely to do so again.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee of senior officials on public health met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215912]

Mr. Hutton: The European Union Committee of Senior Officials on Public Health (CSOPH) met in Brussels on 30 June 2003, 3 December 2003 and 9 June 2004. The next meeting of the CSOPH is scheduled for the 17 February 2005 in Brussels. Two senior departmental officials attend these meetings.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU-Cm 6174 laid in April 2004, Cm 6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm 6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies. Copies are available in the Library and on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

NHS Appointments

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of patients failed to attend NHS appointments in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each strategic health authority in each year since 1997. [216375]

Mr. Hutton: The number of patients not attending an out-patient appointment which includes first and subsequent appointments in England from 1997–98 to 2003–04 is shown in the following table.

	Number of patients who did not attend out-patient appointment	*Percentage of patients who did not attend out-patient appointment*
1997–98	5,629,429	11.9
1998–99	5,648,971	11.8
1999–2000	5,882,510	12.0
2000–01	5,954,819	12.0
2001–02	5,947,730	11.9
2002–03	5,885,369	11.7
2003–04	5,876,438	11.5

Source:
KH09 and QMOP Department of Health Returns

Information on the number of patients not attending an out-patient appointment, which includes first and subsequent appointments by region from 1997–98 to 2001–02 and by strategic health authority from 2002–03 to 2003–04 has been placed in the Library.

Female Prisoners

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of female prisoners who are users of prescription medication *(a)* on entering prison and *(b)* on release. [214984]

Dr. Ladyman: No such estimate has been made.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215213]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's policy is to assess each request for information in terms of both the public interest in disclosure and whether the information is of sufficient interest to justify publication on the Departments website. Information that passes both tests is placed on the website at the same time as it is released to the applicant. We do not place information released under Freedom of Information in the Library unless the applicant specifically asks us to do so.

Guidance on publication schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and non-departmental public bodies should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the publication scheme where appropriate.

General Practitioners

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 192W, on general practitioner referral, what his Department's policy is on encouraging direct referral of patients by general practitioners to *(a)* therapists, *(b)* hospital diagnostics and *(c)* other general practitioners with a specialist interest. [213536]

Mr. Hutton: The Department encourages direct referrals to any healthcare service where clinically appropriate and in line with primary care trust commissioning arrangements.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he plans to increase the flexibility of continued professional development for general practitioners, with particular reference to opportunities offered to those working in rural or remote medical practices. [212137]

Mr. Hutton: Responsibility for work force planning and development lies with strategic health authorities, in consultation with primary care trusts (PCTs). Provision of, and participation in, continuing professional development for general practitioners is the responsibility of the postgraduate deaneries and individual GPs respectively.

We accept that continuing professional development should be flexible and responsive to the needs of individual practitioners, their patients and the organisations they work in. It is for this reason that the new GP contract specifically includes an element for protected time to allow GPs and their practice staff opportunities for development, but which also allows GPs, with support from their PCTs, to decide what their local development needs are and how best to meet them.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there were per 100,000 population in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority and *(c)* each primary care trust for each year since 1997. [216388]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the number of general practitioners, excluding retainers, registrars and locums, per 100,000 weighted population in England broken down by strategic health authority and by primary care trust in each year since March 2002 has been placed in the Library.

Information prior to 2002 is not available in a comparable format.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by name and address each of the general practitioner surgeries in *(a)* Mendip primary care trust (PCT), *(b)* South Somerset PCT, *(c)* Somerset Coast PCT and *(d)* Taunton Deane PCT; and what is the number of full-time equivalent (i) doctors and (ii) nursing staff in each. [214615]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The names and address of general practitioner surgeries in each of the areas above and number of full-time equivalent doctors and nursing staff are not held centrally. However, the list of names and addresses for general medical practitioners for each of the primary care trusts in Somerset can be found at the following website: http://195.105.0.110/pcis/gpreports.asp

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners were practising in the London borough of Redbridge at 31 December *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [214950]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not hold the number of general practitioners in the London borough of Redbridge from 1997. However, the table shows the number of GPs in North East London from 1997 and the number of GPs in Redbridge Primary Care Trust from 2001.

All practitioners (excluding retainers registrars and locums)[1] as at 1997 2001 and June 2004 for specified organisations

Number (headcount)

		1997	2001	June 2004
Q06	North East London	849	855	927
SNA	Redbridge PCT	—	111	118

[1] All practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums) include general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other and flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

Note:
Data as at 1 October 1997, 30 September 2001 and 30 June 2004.
Source:
Department of Health GMS and PMS statistics.

Health Professionals

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to ensure that numbers of health professionals in London's schools are sufficient; and if he will make a statement: [215317]

(2) how much the NHS has spent on school nurses in each constituency in London in each year since 1997; [215319]

(3) how many children per school nurse there have been in each London constituency in each year since 1997; [215320]

(4) how many schools in each constituency in London have had a full-time school nurse in each year since 1997; [215321]

(5) which health professionals are employed in London's schools. [215322]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the number of school nurses employed in the national health service was collected in the September 2004 non-medical workforce census. This data will be published shortly. In line with our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", it is the responsibility of primary care trusts (PCTs), in conjunction with strategic health authorities, to ensure that services meet the needs of their local communities.

The Department recognises the important role that school nurses have to play in addressing health priorities, and this has been reinforced in the children's national service framework and the Chief Nursing Officer's review of the nursing, midwifery and health visiting contribution to vulnerable children and young people. We are providing new funding so that by 2010 every PCT, working with children's trusts and local authorities will be resourced to have at least one full-time, year-round qualified school nurse working with a group of primary schools and its related secondary school.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what tests are conducted on health professionals trained in England for *(a)* HIV, *(b)* tuberculosis and *(c)* hepatitis B. [214764]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is contained in the recent publication from NHS Employers: "The management of health, safety and welfare issues for NHS staff" which is available at http://www.nhsemployers.org/docs/blue_book_complete.pdf

Health Services (North Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the level of capital of expenditure on health care was in North Durham in *(a)* 2001 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [214458]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following table and is based on the net book value of purchased capital additions for the national health service trusts and primary care trusts in the North Durham area.

	£000
2001–02	18,145
2003–04	11,454

Notes:
1. The figures in the table do not include Private Finance Initiative (PFI) expenditure where PFI costs are revenue expenditure in the books of NHS bodies.
2. Capital investment will vary between years owing to the investment decisions at individual NHS bodies.
Sources:
1. Audited summarisation schedules of relevant NHS trusts 2001–02 and 2003–04
2. Audited summarisation schedules of relevant primary care trusts 2003–04

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the change has been in waiting lists in North Durham since 1997. [214672]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

In-patient waiting list and timebands figures for the following trusts

Month	Trust name	Patients waiting for admission by months waiting: Total	6 to 8 months	9 plus months	12 plus months
Quarter ending March of each year					
March 1997	Community healthcare: North Durham NHS trust	0	0	0	0
March 1997	North Durham acute hospitals NHS trust	5,474	933	465	0
March 1997	South Durham NHS trust	0	0	0	0

In-patient waiting list and timebands figures for the following trusts

Month	Trust name	Patients waiting for admission by months waiting: Total	6 to 8 months	9 plus months	12 plus months
March 1997	Bishop Auckland hospitals unit NHS trust	1,302	163	24	0
March 1997	Darlington memorial hospital NHS trust	2,660	317	122	0
	Total	9,436	1,413	—	—
September 2004	County Durham and Darlington acute hospitals NHS trust	5,586	511	0	0

Source:
Department of Health KH07

Out-patients waiting over 13 weeks and timebands figures for the following trusts

Month	Unit name	Weeks not yet seen by consultant after GP referral: Not seen 13 to 25	Not seen 26 plus	13 weeks plus
Quarter ending March of each year				
March 1997	Bishop Auckland hospitals unit NHS trust	0	0	0
March 1997	Darlington memorial hospital NHS trust	0	0	0
March 1997	Community healthcare: North Durham NHS trust	113	2	115
March 1997	North Durham acute hospitals NHS trust	1,203	688	1,891
March 1997	South Durham NHS trust	27	0	27
	Total	1,343	690	2,033

Month	Name	Weeks not yet seen by consultant after GP referral: Not seen 13 to < 17	Not seen 17 to < 21	Not seen 21 plus
September 2004	County Durham and Darlington acute hospitals NHS trust	766	0	0

Note:
Changes in timebands.
Source:
Department of Health QM08

Health Services (Somerset)

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many consultant episodes have been completed in Somerset in each year since 1997; [214479]

(2) what the *(a)* maximum and *(b)* average waiting times for in-patient treatment in Somerset have been in each year since 1997. [214480]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of consultant episodes completed in Somerset and the maximum and average waiting times for in-patient treatment in Somerset in each year from 1997 are shown in the table.

Strategic health authority (SHA) of residence: Q22 Somerset and Dorset in 2002–03 and 2003–04
Health authority of residence: QD5 Somerset between 1996–97 to 2001–02
Method of admission: elective (waiting list and booked cases)
Count of finished in-year admission episodes and mean time waited in days
Count of finished consultant episodes
National health service hospitals, England 1996–97 to 2003–04

	Health authority of residence or strategic health authority of residence		Median waiting time in days	Mean waiting time in days	Finished in-year admission episodes	Finished consultant episodes
1996–97	QD5	Somerset	43	72	37,147	109,314
1997–98	QD5	Somerset	47	89	36,475	106,767
1998–99	QD5	Somerset	53	101	43,555	119,281
1999–2000	QD5	Somerset	52	101	42,277	121,557
2000–01	QD5	Somerset	56	105	39,584	122,429
2001–02	QD5	Somerset	57	109	36,831	124,649
2002–03	Q22	Somerset and Dorset	46	84	104,165	349,061
2003–04	Q22	Somerset and Dorset	48	79	98,116	354,449

Finished in-year admissions
A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the datayear. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
Finished consultant episode (FCE)
An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
Ungrossed data
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Time waited

Time waited statistics from Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health

Health Services (Stockton, South)

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the number of *(a)* nurses and *(b)* doctors employed in Stockton, South has changed since 1997. [215312]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested for those national health service organisations serving the Stockton, South constituency is shown in the tables.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS) Doctors1 and General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers)2 for specified organisations

		As at 30 September	
		1997 All Doctors	2003 Doctors
Q10	County Durham & Tees Valley	2,015	2,329
Of which:			
RRY	Hartlepool & East Durham NHS Trust	126	n/a
RCH	North Tees Health NHS Trust	166	n/a
5E1	North Tees PCT	n/a	141
RVW	North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust	n/a	318
		292	459

n/a = Not applicable.

[1] Excludes Hospital Medical Hospital Practitioners and Hospital Medical Clinical Assistants, most of whom are GPs working part-time in hospitals.

Note:

Data as at 30 September every year.

Sources:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Department of Health Medical and Dental Workforce Census.

Department of Health Non-medical Workforce Census.

Qualified Nursing, Midwifery & health visiting staff and Practice Nurses for organisations serving the Stockton South constituency

		As at 30 September	
		Nurses	
		1997	2004
Q10	County Durham & Tees Valley	7,732	9,084
Of which:			
RRY	Hartlepool & East Durham NHS Trust	710	n/a
RCH	North Tees Health NHS Trust	951	n/a
5E1	North Tees PCT	n/a	307
RVW	North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust	n/a	1,237
		1,661	1,544

n/a = Not applicable.

Note:

Data as at 30 September every year.

Sources:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Department of Health Non-medical Workforce Census.

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many senior citizens in Stockton, South have received *(a)* free eye tests and *(b)* assistance for glasses and contact lenses since 1997. [215313]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures for the number of sight tests and vouchers by constituency and for senior citizens are not collected centrally. The nearest available is for patients aged 60 and over for sight tests, at former health authority (HA) or current primary care trust (PCT) levels.

The table shows the number of national health service sight tests paid by Tees HA for the years ending 31 March 2000 to 2003 and the four PCTs covering the Stockton South constituency for the year ending 31 March 2004.

General ophthalmic services: number of sight tests paid by HAs and primary care PCTs covering the Stockton South constituency for patients aged 60 and over for the years ending 31 March 2000 to 2004

	HA name/ PCT name	Number of sight tests for aged 60 and over (thousand)
1999–2000	Tees HA	40.9
2000–01	Tees HA	39.8
2001–02	Tees HA	42.5
2002–03	Tees HA	42.9
2003–04	North Tees PCT	13.2
	Hartlepool PCT	10.7
	Middlesbrough PCT	15.3
	Langbaurgh PCT	10.1
2003–04	Total	49.3

Notes:

1. Eligibility for NHS sight tests was extended to patients aged 60 and over from 1 April 1999. PCTs took over responsibilities from HAs in October 2002.

2. Sight tests can not be equated to the numbers of patients. Although most people do not come back for a sight test within the year, some patients suffering from medical conditions are advised to have re-examinations sooner.

3. Patients aged 60 and over are not eligible for free NHS optical vouchers for help towards glasses or contact lenses on age grounds. However, some patients will be eligible under other category such as adult income support, Pension Credits guarantee credit or holders of HC2/HC3 certificates. It is not possible to break down voucher numbers by age for these categories.

Healthy Eating (Hospitals)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is on promoting healthy eating in hospitals. [214326]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The 2004 White Paper, "Choosing Health" commits the Government to developing nutritional standards for all foods provided by the national health service, increasing access to a range of healthier foods and taking account of the different formats of provision including restaurant, fast food and vending.

The NHS recipe book, issued in May 2001 as part of the better hospital food programme, also requires hospitals to meet estimated average requirements for food energy, and reference nutrient intake for all other nutrients. These standards were set by the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy, now known as the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition.

Hospital Patient Statistics

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of stay for an in-patient at *(a)* Derriford Hospital, Plymouth and *(b)* other tertiary hospitals in England was in the latest period for which figures are available. [213985]

Mr. Hutton: Data on tertiary hospitals cannot be separately identified. Data at trust level have been placed in the Library.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the updated influenza pandemic plan. [211551]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The influenza pandemic plan is being drafted and will be published in due course.

Lancashire Teaching Hospital

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the foundation hospital application of Lancashire teaching hospitals. [215513]

Mr. Hutton: Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust is a wave 1A applicant for national health service foundation trust (NHSFT) status. The trust received the Secretary of State's support last July to make an application to Monitor (the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts) for authorisation as an NHSFT, on retaining three stars in the 2003–04 NHS performance ratings. The trust is currently working towards Monitor's requirements for authorisation and has been placed in a second group in wave 1A for authorisation from 1 April 2005. Monitor will make a positive decision to authorise Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust as an NHSFT after having satisfied itself about the Trust's preparedness and financial viability for foundation status.

Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will conduct an assessment of the level of consultation undertaken by the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust with its service users on the use of its day treatment centres; [214902]

(2) if he will make a statement on the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust's *(a)* review and re-alignment of services and *(b)* its impact on service users; [214903]

(3) what assessment he has made of *(a)* the crisis resolution service being introduced by the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust and *(b)* whether there are sufficient funds for its development without detriment to existing services; [214905]

(4) what assessment he has made of the effect of the new crisis resolution service adopted by the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust on over-capacity on acute wards. [214910]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The consultation period on Leeds Mental Health Teaching National Health Service Trust's proposals for adult mental health service ran from November 2003 to until the end of March 2004 and included a one-day stakeholder event in March 2004.

Following a Commission for Healthcare Inspection review, it was agreed that Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust would implement a crisis resolution and home treatment service (CRHT) in line with the national service framework for mental health.

£1.4 million of funding has been made available to implement the crisis resolution service.

CRHT has significantly reduced the admission rate and provided home treatment for service users. Between November 2003 and January 2004, the trust admitted 513 patients. During the same period in 2004–05, the trust has admitted 428 patients—a 17 per cent. reduction in patient admissions.

The CRHT team sees 90 per cent. of patients referred to the service within four hours, seven days a week.

The trust believes that the redesign of adult services will deliver positive benefits to service users and carers and that it will not be detrimental to existing services.

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust of purchasing acute beds from outside trust boundaries was in the most recent year for which figures are available; and why it has been necessary to purchase them. [214911]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Leeds Mental Health Teaching National Health Service Trust does not purchase acute beds from outside its boundaries. Such service provision is directly commissioned by the Leeds primary care trusts.

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the bed occupancy rate in the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust in acute *(a)* under-65s and *(b)* over-65s wards is. [215099]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The average bed occupancy at Leeds Mental Health Teaching National Health Service Trust was 79.2 per cent. in 2003–04.

Source:
Department of Health form KH03

Licensing

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral answer of 18 January, *Official Report*, column 679, on alcohol misuse, what advice his Department gave to the *(a)* Home Office and *(b)* Department for Culture, Media and Sport on the policy to extend licensing to allow 24-hour drinking; and if he will make a statement. [214152]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* The Department supported the policy in the Licensing Bill to give more flexible powers to local authorities on licensing hours, in order to address the

increasing problems of binge drinking and drunkenness. This advice was based in part on the positive experience of similar powers in Scotland since 1976.

Long-term Conditions

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he proposes to publish the National Service Framework for long-term conditions including multiple sclerosis; and if he will make a statement. [216085]

Dr. Ladyman: We are making good progress and expect to publish the national service framework (NSF) shortly. The NSF sets the direction of travel for the next 10 years to improve health and social care services for people living with long-term neurological conditions. It addresses key areas to improve care and support across the neurological patient pathway from diagnosis, investigation and initial treatment, through rehabilitation and long-term support, to end of life care. It does not look at specific neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis, rather it identifies the common issues affecting people with long-term neurological conditions and how these may be addressed. The principles in the NSF apply equally to improving quality of life and promoting independent living in anyone living with a long-term condition.

ME Treatment

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on funding for ME treatment in Lancashire. [215514]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Individual primary care trusts are responsible for commissioning health services to meet the needs of their local population, including Mylagic Encephalomyelitis services, from within their general allocations. The specialist commissioning team has successfully bid to develop a specialist chronic fatigue syndrome service covering Lancashire and South Cumbria. This will be implemented from April 2005.

Medical Staff (Pharmaceutical Company Funding)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospital trusts in England are employing *(a)* nurses and *(b)* doctors paid for in part or wholly by pharmaceutical companies. [210211]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not collect this information.

Men's Health Tsar

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will appoint a men's health tsar. [215014]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government's White Paper "Choosing Health" sets out a number of measures for the prevention of ill health in the population. The Department's work in the prevention and treatment of cancer and coronary heart disease will have a significant impact on men's health and the concerted action across Government to tackle root causes of ill-health in housing, education, employment and the environment should also have a positive impact. Therefore, the Department is not considering the appointment of a men's health tsar.

Mental Health

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer from the Minister for Pensions of 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 942W, on benefit rates, if he will request that the Department for Work and Pensions make it its policy to collect figures for the number of people in hospital for more than a year living on the weekly benefit rate of £15.90 who suffer from mental ill-health. [216393]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have no plans to request the Department for Work and Pensions to collect this information.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in the Easington constituency have consulted an NHS mental health doctor in each of the last three years. [214105]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not held centrally.

Midwifery

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of health authorities in England and Wales are experiencing staffing shortages in midwifery. [215954]

Mr. Hutton: The national health survey vacancy survey collects information from NHS organisations on the number and rate of vacancies lasting three months or more. The table shows the rate of vacancies lasting three months or more for midwives by strategic health authority area.

Department of Health Vacancies Survey, March 2004
NHS three-month vacancies by Government office region, strategic health authority area, qualified midwifery staff

		Qualified midwives			
		3 month vacancy March 2004		Staff in post September 2003	
		Rate percentage	Number	Whole-time equivalent	Headcount
England		3.3	619	18,444	23,941
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SHA	4.8	36	709	991
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	14.3	72	444	587
Q03	Essex SHA	4.1	20	493	640
Q04	North West London SHA	7.4	47	634	842
Q05	North Central London SHA	9.1	49	499	638
Q06	North East London SHA	6.4	42	694	871
Q07	South East London SHA	8.7	64	730	988
Q08	South West London SHA	10.2	48	468	642
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	0.0	—	532	651
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley SH	2.7	13	457	554
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	1.9	10	518	647

Department of Health Vacancies Survey, March 2004
NHS three-month vacancies by Government office region, strategic health authority area, qualified midwifery staff

		Qualified midwives			
		3 month vacancy March 2004		*Staff in post September 2003*	
		Rate percentage	*Number*	*Whole-time equivalent*	*Headcount*
Q12	West Yorkshire SHA	1.2	11	877	1,056
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	0.0	—	705	882
Q14	Greater Manchester SHA	0.6	8	1,335	1,629
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	1.7	17	1,008	1,298
Q16	Thames Valley SHA	2.1	15	686	933
Q17	Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	1.1	6	542	727
Q18	Kent and Medway SHA	8.0	43	516	700
Q19	Surrey and Sussex SHA	5.4	45	739	1,013
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA	0.0	—	833	1,131
Q21	South West Peninsula SHA	0.5	3	614	806
Q22	Dorset and Somerset SHA	0.0	—	355	451
Q23	South Yorkshire SHA	0.5	3	553	679
Q24	Trent SHA	0.4	3	819	1,073
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	0.5	2	512	679
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	2.4	13	516	665
Q27	Birmingham and The Black Country SHA	4.0	43	1,078	1,399
Q28	West Midlands South SHA	0.9	5	576	769

Notes:
Three-month vacancy:
1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2004
2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which Trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents)
3. Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post
4. Three month vacancy rates are calculated using staff in post from the Vacancy Survey, March 2004
5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place
6. Figures where sum of staff in post (as at 31 March 2004) and vacancies is less than 10
7. Figures where sum of staff in post (as at 31 March 2004) and vacancies is zero

Staff in post:
1. Staff in post data is from the Non-Medical Workforce Census, September 2003

General:
1. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number
2. Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates
3. Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts
4. Strategic HA figures are based on trusts, and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of health care
5. London Ambulance Service NHS Trust cannot be assigned to a particular Strategic Health Authority

Sources:
Department of Health Vacancies Survey, March 2004
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census, September 2003

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of people in England and Wales training to become midwives. [215955]

Mr. Hutton: The Government have considerably increased the number of training places available for midwives. In 2003–04, 2,226 students entered training to become a midwife, an increase of 35 per cent., since 1996–97.

Furthermore, the Government are implementing a range of measures to recruit more midwives. These include improving pay and conditions, encouraging the national health service to become a better, more flexible and diverse employer, investing in childcare and continuing professional development, attracting returners and running national and international recruitment campaigns.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of midwifery students left their course before completion in each of the last five years. [215956]

Mr. Hutton: Information for England on the percentage of pre-registration midwifery students who have left their university course is shown in the table. Data is not held before the 1994–95 financial year. No data is available for 2001–02. The attrition data for the 2002–03 academic year administered by the Higher Education Statistics Agency is in the process of being analysed.

	Percentage failing to complete courses
1994–95	22.08
1995–96	17.43
1996–97	21.84
1997–98	18.23
1998–99	17.17
1999–2000	14.59
2000–01	6.7

Note:

This data is based on a snapshot in time of a particular cohort(s) and therefore each year there will still be students who have yet to complete their course.

Mixed-sex Wards

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many mixed sex Nightingale wards are still in operation. [214954]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested. National health service trusts report annually only on the total number of Nightingale wards which are in use.

The term "Nightingale" ward is used to describe a particular layout, that is an open-plan area, which has not been subdivided into bays or cubicles, and which offers dormitory-style accommodation for 12 or more patients.

Nightingale wards are not necessarily mixed-sex wards, but their old-fashioned layout offers patients little in the way of privacy. We have set clear standards requiring NHS trusts to provide single-sex accommodation for their patients, irrespective of the layout of the ward those patients occupy.

The elimination of Nightingale wards for older people is one of our key priorities for the NHS. 98 per cent. of all Nightingale wards for older people have been eliminated or will be replaced on completion of hospital developments schemes currently under way.

The elimination of Nightingale wards for other patient groups is being addressed through the hospital building programme currently under way. This will eliminate remaining Nightingale wards incrementally as it progresses.

MRSA

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people contracted the MRSA virus within the East Kent hospitals trust area between January and March 2003; how many of these were children; and what the national average is for each. [210368]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* The Department introduced mandatory reporting of methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemias (blood stream infections) for national health service acute trusts from 1 April 2001. The mandatory scheme does not include information broken down by age groups. The latest data covers the year April 2003 to March 2004. This shows that the overall rate was 0.18 MRSA bloodstream infections per 1,000 bed days.

The number of MRSA bacteraemia reports for the East Kent hospitals trust between April 2003 and March 2004 was 70. The MRSA rate for the trust was 0.15 per 1,000 bed days, which is lower than the national average.

Multiple Myeloma

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were diagnosed with multiple myeloma in each of the last 10 years. [215823]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Dai Havard, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the number of people diagnosed with multiple myeloma in each of the last 10 years. I am replying in his absence. [215823]

The most recent available figures are for the year 2001. The number of newly diagnosed cases of multiple myeloma registered in the 10 years 1992 to 2001 are given in the table below.

Number of newly diagnosed cases of multiple myeloma[1] in England, 1992–2001

	Number of cases
1992	2,635
1993	2,688
1994	2,710
1995	2,820
1996	2,682
1997	2,701
1998	3,001
1999	2,889
2000	3,078
2001	2,859

[1] From 1992 to 1994, International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 203.0–203.1; from 1995 to 2001, International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code C90.

Source:

Office for National Statistics

In more detailed analyses of trends in incidence over time for a particular cancer, ONS use age-standardised rates. These control for differences in the size and age structure of the population and allow unbiased comparison of incidence rates over time. Age-standardised incidence rates (directly standardised to the European standard population) for multiple myeloma in England; for each year from 1992–2001, are given in Table 10 of the Annual Reference Volume, Cancer Statistics: Registrations, Series MB1 No. 32, which is available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/MB1_32/MB1_32.pdf

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the life expectancy is of a patient with multiple myeloma. [215824]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Dai Havard, dated 16 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what is the life expectancy of a patient with multiple myeloma. I am replying in his absence. [215824]

Data on life expectancy for patients with specific types of cancer are not available. Survival data are calculated as the proportion of patients still alive at a given period after diagnosis. The latest

available one- and five-year survival rates for multiple myeloma in England and Wales are for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed during 1996–99 and followed up to 31 December 2001. These figures are given in the attached table.

One- and five-year age-standardised[1] relative survival rates (percentage) for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed with multiple myeloma[2] during 1996–99[3], England and Wales

		Percentage	
	Number of patients[4]	*One-year survival*	*Five-year survival*
Men	5,300	60	23
Women	4,754	62	23

[1] As cancer survival varies with age at diagnosis, rates have been age standardised (directly age standardised to the 1986–90 cancer patients population) to control for changes in the age profile of cancer patients over time.
[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code C90.
[3] Complete five-year follow-up was available only for those diagnosed in 1996. For patients diagnosed in later years the most up-to-date estimates of shorter-term survival were used in this analysis of survival rates.
[4] Eligible patients included in the survival analysis. The criteria for excluding patient records are given in Health Statistics Quarterly 2000; 6: 71–80, for example where the registration was of a second (different) primary cancer: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/HSQ6Book.pdf

Source:
Office for National Statistics.
Available on the National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk = 7899

National Patient Safety Agency

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of recent changes in the National Patient Safety Agency budget on patient safety. [214953]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The effectiveness of the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) is kept under regular review as part of the annual ministerial accountability review process.

As a result of the recent review of all of the Department's arm's length bodies, the NPSA is to take on additional responsibilities from April 2005 and will be funded appropriately to do so in its 2005–06 budget, which is nearing finalisation.

NHS Walk-in Centres

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS walk-in centres there are in England. [215171]

Mr. Hutton: There are 62 operational national health service walk-in centres in England with a further 27 under development.

NHS (Vacancy Rates)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the three-month vacancy rate is for *(a)* consultant psychiatrists, *(b)* psychiatric nurses and *(c)* all medical and dental staff in the NHS, for the latest period for which figures are available. [216160]

Mr. Hutton: The latest three-month vacancy data available is at March 2004.

The tables show the three-month vacancy rates for medical and dental staff, consultants within the psychiatry group and nurses within mental health.

Three month vacancy rate and number for all medical and dental staff and psychiatry consultants in England, March 2004

	3 month vacancy rate (percentage)	*3 month vacancy number*	*Staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
All doctors (excluding doctors in training)	4.3	1,666	37,081	44,957
Psychiatry group	9.6	334	3,155	3,503

Notes:
1. Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents).
2. Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
3. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
4. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.
5. * where the sum of the staff in post and number of vacancies is less then 10.
6. — where the sum of the staff in post and number of vacancies is 0.

Source:
Department of Health Medical and Dental vacancy survey.

Department of Health vacancies survey, March 2004—NHS three month vacancies for each specified nursing area of work three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

	3 month vacancy rate (percentage)	*3 month vacancy number*	*Staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
Community learning disabilities	2.5	81	3,289	3,705
Other Learning disabilities	2.1	94	4,535	5,245
Community psychiatry	1.9	235	12,064	13,73
Other psychiatry	4.7	1,282	27,319	31,555

Notes:

3. Three month Vacancy Rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. Three month vacancies are calculated using staff in post from the vacancy survey March 2004.
5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.
6. '—' zero
7.Staff in post data is from the Non-Medical Workforce Census.
Sources:
Department of Health Vacancies Survey.
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census.

NHS Business Services Authority

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what he expects the financial effects to be of the NHS Business Services Authority taking over the functions of the Dental Practice Board. [204268]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As a result of the Arm's Length Body Review and the proposed merger of the Dental Practice Board with the Prescription Pricing Authority, NHS Pensions Authority and Counter Fraud and Security Management Services to create the NHS Business Services Authority, considerable efficiencies in delivering transactional services will be secured. However no detailed estimates have yet been made.

NHS Finance

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expenditure per weighted head of population was in *(a)* the Guildford and Waverley primary care trust area and *(b)* the Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority area in each year since 1992; and what the expenditure per weighted head of population was in England in each year since 1997. [214182]

Mr. Hutton: The 2003–04 to 2005–06 revenue allocations were the first time funding was made directly from the Department to primary care trusts. The Department announced the latest round of allocation for 2006–07 and 2007–08 on 9 February 2005.

From 1996–97 to 2002–03 allocations were made to health authorities.

Prior to this, allocations were made on a regional basis. These allocations do not contain information down to the Surrey and Sussex area.

Information covering allocations per weighted head of population for the period from 1996–97 to 2007–08 for national health service organisations within the Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority is shown in the table.

Allocations per weighted head of population to HAs and PCTs in Surrey and Sussex SHA area—1996 to 2008

£

	Allocation per weighted head of population						
Health authorities	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
East Surrey	432	448	483	641	703	751	846
East Sussex Brighton and Hove	404	446	469	642	705	758	829
West Surrey	439	450	489	643	706	749	839
West Sussex	406	427	463	624	684	733	821

	Allocation per weighted head of population		
Primary care trusts	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Adur, Arun and Worthing	924	1,011	1,106
Bexhill and Rother	977	1,064	1,157
Brighton and Hove City	918	1,005	1,098
Crawley	900	986	1,078
East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey	1,017	1,109	1,207
East Surrey	977	1,065	1,159
Eastbourne Downs	982	1,069	1,162
Guildford and Waverley	990	1,079	1,174
Hastings and St. Leonards	880	966	1,058
Horsham and Chanctonbury	934	1,017	1,105
Mid-Sussex	960	1,046	1,137
North Surrey	966	1,054	1,147
Sussex Downs and Weald	919	1,003	1,095
Western Sussex	967	1,053	1,145
Woking	989	1,078	1,173

Allocations per weighted head of population for England 1996 to 2008

England	£
1998–99	464
1999–2000	629
2000–01	689
2001–02	738
2002–03	817
2003–04	916
2004–05	1,003
2005–06	1,097

Information on allocations per weighted head of population for England from 1996–97 onwards is available in the Library.

Smoking

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what his latest estimate is of the percentage of people who have used the NHS Stop Smoking Services

(2) how many people have used the NHS Stop Smoking Services in each of the last five years; and what the average cost to the NHS per person is of NHS recommended smoking cessation services. [210137]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department funded an evaluation of the national heath service stop smoking services programme, which was led by a team at Glasgow university.

The results will be published in due course.

The information is shown in the table.

Information about NHS stop smoking services in England, 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	1999–2000[2]	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Number of people setting a quit date[1]	14,600	132,500	227,300	234,900	361,200
Number of successful four week quitters (self report)	5,700	64,500	119,800	124,100	204,900
Cost of NHS stop smoking services (£ million)[3]	5.0	21.5	24.7	24.5	36.2
Cost per person setting a quit date (£)[3]	344	162	109	104	100
Cost per successful four week quitter (£)[3]	872	334	206	197	177
Total net ingredient costs of prescriptions for NRT7 bupropion (£ million)[4]	[5]0.5	16	29	30	37

[1] Total number of people who have used the NHS stop smoking services is not collected centrally, however information is collected on the number of people setting a 'quit date'; some people may use the service but not go onto set a quit date.
[2] In 1999–2000, NHS smoking cessation services were set up in the 26 health action zones (HAZ) in England and services were rolled out across the NHS to the rest of England in 2000–01.
[3] The cost of the NHS stop smoking services and the cost per successful quitter in 1999–2000 and 2000–01 included the cost of giving clients 'free' NRT/NRT (or vouchers); from 2001–02 onwards the cost of the service and the cost per quitter excluded the cost of NRT or Zyban on prescription. Only a few nicotine replacement therapy products were available on prescription until 17 April 2001, when all NRT products became available on NHS prescription. Bupropion (Zyban) became available on NHS prescription from June 2000. Therefore, the costs from 2001–02 onwards are not directly comparable with the costs in previous years.
[4] Net ingredient cost is the basic cost of a drug and does not take account of discounts, dispensing fees or prescription charge income. Note that some prescriptions for NRT/Bupropion are dispensed to people not using the NHS stop smoking services.
[5] This figure only includes the costs of NRT, as bupropion (Zyban) was not available until June 2000.
Sources:
1. Statistics on Smoking Cessation in the Health Action Zones in England, April 1999 to March 2000—http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/02/24/22/04022422.pdf.
2. Statistics on Smoking Cessation in England, April 2000 to March 2001—http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/64/58/04076458.pdf.
3. Statistics on NHS stop smoking services in England, April 2001 to March 2002—http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0225.pdf.
4. Statistics on NHS stop smoking services in England, April 2002 to March 2003—http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/62/33/04076233.pdf.
5. Statistics on NHS stop smoking services in England, April 2003 to March 2004—http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/76/51/04097651.pdf.

Nurses' Uniforms

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what policy guidelines have been issued to NHS trusts since 1997 on the wearing by nurses of hospital uniform while travelling to and from their place of work *(a)* privately and *(b)* by public transport; [214734]

(2) what policy guidelines have been issued to NHS trusts since 1997 on the laundering of nurses' uniforms privately by individuals at home; and if he will make a statement; [214763]

(3) what research has been carried out since 1997 to establish the *(a)* mechanical efficiency and *(b)* hygienic effectiveness, of the washing of nurses' uniforms at home; and if he will make a statement; [214765]

(4) what monitoring is conducted by NHS trusts to ensure nurses' uniforms laundered at home are free from bacterial contamination; and if he will make a statement; [214766]

(5) what policy guidelines are in place for NHS trusts on the laundering of *(a)* bed linen for hospital beds and *(b)* curtains around hospital beds; and if he will make a statement. [214767]

Mr. Hutton: Health Service Guidance (95) 18, published in 1995, provides advice and guidance to NHS organisations on the use of laundry practices. This includes hospital bed linen and curtains around beds. The guidance covers the issue of temperature and disinfection. With regard to nurses' uniforms, dilution in domestic washing machines will effectively disinfect them. Single use aprons and other equipment should be used if contamination is likely and if a uniform is visibly soiled then it should be put through a healthcare laundry intended for such items.

It is for individual national health service trusts to determine their own policy on the laundering of nurses' uniforms and the wearing of those uniforms outdoors. The prevention and control of infection is part of the overall risk management within the healthcare environment and NHS trusts are required to have risk management protocols in place with regard to effective laundry practices. The monitoring of the cleanliness of nurses' uniforms should be part of these protocols.

Patient Charges Review

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the Department's review of patient charges; what the remit of the review is; and when it is expected to report. [208102]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national health service dentistry patient charges working group, chaired by Harry Cayton, was asked to recommend how the system of NHS dentistry charges might be made easier for

patients to understand and simpler for dentists to operate, without increasing the overall proportion of the dentistry budget raised. We are currently considering the group's proposals and expect to publish Regulations, for consultation, in the summer of 2005.

Payment by Results Initiative

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to introduce the payment by results initiative; what assessment he has made of the likely consequences of the initiative for the Royal Free Hospital; and if he will make a statement. [210479]

Mr. Hutton: Payment by results has been in use by national health service organisations, for a small amount of activity, since the beginning of the financial year 2004–05. The planned, gradual implementation path will result in approximately 90 per cent. of hospital activity being covered by payment by results by 2008–09.

Payment by results will offer the Royal Free Hospital, and all other NHS providers, a fair reward for activity undertaken. The way in which the scheme affects the hospital will depend on its efficiency and future activity.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms are in place to ensure that hospitals and other healthcare providers are able to remove themselves from the menus of outlying primary care trusts if their total treatment costs lie above the total tariff revenue they will receive through payment by results. [210827]

Mr. Hutton: None. The use of the national tariff will be mandatory for all commissioners of national health service services.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the optimum number of patients in a primary care trust. [215509]

Mr. Hutton: The new NHS White Paper of 1997 suggested that primary care groups (PCGs), the forerunners of primary care trusts (PCTs),

"may typically serve about 100,000 patients."

However, this was qualified by the acknowledgement that there must be flexibility to reflect local circumstances.

These local circumstances include the advantages that coterminosity between PCTs and local authorities brings, as this facilitates joint-working by the national health service and social services. Geography is also important, as rural PCTs would need to cover a much larger geographical area to serve the same population as urban PCTs. Finally the configuration of hospitals and other health providers results in natural health communities which are not of equal size across the country.

The impact of these local circumstances on size is such that the Department has never given a figure for the optimum number of patients in a PCT. However, PCTs have tended to be larger than PCGs, as a result of their greater functions and the desire to achieve economies of scale.

Pharmaceuticals Expenditure

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expenditure per capita was on pharmaceuticals in each OECD country in each of the last five years. [214361]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The data requested is available in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) publication "OECD Health Data 2004—a Comprehensive Analysis of 30 Countries". A copy is available in the Library. Information can also be accessed through the OECD website at: www.oecd.org.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on postage by the Department in each year since 1997. [215018]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The spend on postage for each year since 1997 is shown in the table.

	Postage
1997–98	1,681,753
1998–99	1,823,559
1999–2000	1,675,084
2000–01	1,714,222
2001–02	1,836,572
2002–03	1,262,092
2003–04	1,116,166
Total	11,109,449

Prescription Charges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the administration cost of prescription charge pre-payment certificates per certificate. [208123]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003–04, patients purchased 1,062,263 prescription pre-payment certificates from the Prescription Pricing Authority. During the period, the cost of administering the sale of these certificates was around £1.5 million. The estimated administrative cost was £1.41 per certificate.

Radiology

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the impact of the setting of targets on *(a)* total time in accident and emergency and *(b)* in-patient waiting times on radiology departments; and if he will make a statement. [213469]

Mr. Hutton: No recent representations have been received.

Research Reports

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of opportunities for research or consulting disseminated by the Department resulted in *(a)* research reports and *(b)* physical deliverables in each year since 2001–02. [207005]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The dissemination policy of the Department's directly funded Policy Research Programme (PRP) is to encourage publication of research findings widely and in different fora so they can inform policy and practice at different levels and in

different ways. All research projects commissioned by the PRP have at least one deliverable in the form of a final report and it is only in exceptional circumstances that a final report would not be made publicly available.

The number of PRP projects completed in the three years from 2001–02, and which resulted in a final report that underwent peer review, was:

	Number
2001–02	128
2002–03	59
2003–04	94

The Department also funds national research and development programmes that provide the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the national health service. All research projects commissioned by these programmes result in a final report. Publication in peer review journals is explicitly encouraged.

The largest of the NHS research and development programmes, the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) programme, publishes in excess of forty reports a year in the HTA Monograph series. Full details can be found at www.ncchta.org.

The new and emerging applications of technology programme has separately generated the following number of new methods, procedures or prototypes.

	Number
2001–02	1
2002–03	4
2003–04	2

The Department has used the LINK collaborative research scheme as a means of sponsoring the pre-commercial or strategic development and assessment of new technology. The MedLINK programme, which ran from 1996 to 2001, supported projects with the potential to lead to new medical devices for prevention, diagnosis, monitoring or treatment of illness or injury. A total of 48 projects received Government support of £15 million. The number of those projects completed in the years in question and where the output included proof of principle prototypes was:

	Number
2001–02	11
2002–03	9
2003–04	7

Residential Care

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were resident in residential care homes in each year from 1991 to 2004. [215114]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is not centrally available on the number of people who were resident in residential homes. The number of places in residential and nursing care homes in England is shown in the table as at 31 March for the years 1991 to 2001.

I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission, and now CSCI, but comparable details are not available.

Number of care home places as at 31 March, 1991–2001, England

Rounded numbers

At 31 March	*All places*	*Residential places*	*Nursing places*[1]
1991	457,800	324,200	133,500
1992	469,100	321,800	147,200
1993	486,500	318,100	168,400
1994	498,000	321,600	176,400
1995	506,800	321,500	185,300
1996	517,500	326,900	190,600
1997	534,400	338,100	196,300
1998	553,500	347,900	205,600
1999	546,200	344,000	202,200
2000	539,200	345,900	193,300
2001	528,000	341,200	186,800

[1] Nursing data includes places in general nursing homes, mental nursing homes and private hospitals and clinics.

Source:

Department of Health forms RAC5, KO36, RA and RH(N).

Roaccutane

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether there is a correlation between the number of prescriptions for Roaccutane and recorded suicides in the last 10 years. [209345]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Isotretinoin (Roaccutane) is a prescription only medicine indicated for the treatment of severe acne (such as nodular or conglobate acne or acne at risk of permanent scarring). Its use is limited to specialists in dermatology (with expertise in the use of systematic retinoids for the treatment of severe acne and a full understanding of the risks of isotretinoin therapy and monitoring requirements).

The safety of isotretinoin has been closely monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, with expert advice from the committee on safety of medicines (CSM), since it was approved in 1983.

The yellow card scheme receives reports of suspected adverse drug reactions suspected to be associated with medicines. To date 22 cases of suicide that have been reported in association with isotretinoin. The first report was received in 1993. There does not appear to be any correlation between the frequency of these cases and isotretinoin usage data, which is estimated to be 30,000 treatment courses per year for the last ten years.

Warnings about the risk of depression and suicidal behaviour were added to the product information for prescribers and patients in 1998. Following a review of the isotretinoin product information by an expert working group of the CSM and within Europe these warnings have recently been strengthened, to include more explicit descriptions of the symptoms and behaviours associated with psychiatric disorders. The latest evidence of psychiatric disorders suspected to be

associated with isotretinoin will be further reviewed as a commitment of the recent European review, with the United Kingdom taking the leading role.

Safer Drinking

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by his Department on encouraging safer drinking in each year since 1997. [215846]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher), on 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1610W.

Salt

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions he has had with food manufacturers concerning salt levels in processed food; what recent progress has been made towards further reducing salt content therein; and if he will make a statement. [214177]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* I have been leading discussions with industry, together with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), to identify and implement a range of proposals to increase opportunities for people to make healthy choices in what they eat. As outlined in the recent White Paper, "Choosing Health", these are aimed at increasing the availability of healthier food including reducing the levels of salt, added sugars and saturated fat in prepared and processed food and drink.

At a stakeholder event on salt in November 2003, I called for industry to submit plans to reduce salt in processed food. To date, discussions have been held with and commitments received to reduce salt from over 60 organisations. Work is continuing with the industry to secure commitments to stepwise reductions, with the aim of reducing average intakes to six grams per person per day by 2010.

Secondment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208625]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Inquiries within the Department have revealed no people currently working on secondment from the private sector.

Seroxat

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he has issued to general practitioners since August 2004 on prescription of Seroxat; and to which parts of the United Kingdom the guidance applies. [214588]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In October 2004, an article was published in the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency/Committee on Safety of Medicines (MHRA/CSM) drug safety bulletin, 'Current Problems in Pharmacovigilance', which summarised key prescribing advice for Seroxat (paroxetine). This bulletin was sent to all doctors and pharmacists in the United Kingdom. On 6 December 2004, a letter was sent to all health professionals in the UK from the Chairman of the CSM announcing the results of the review of the safety of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) including Seroxat and providing prescribing advice for all SSRIs. A copy is available in the Library.

Shipman Inquiry

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hours the Shipman Inquiry sat in public; how many statements were taken by the inquiry; and how many witnesses were called. [215624]

Mr. Hutton: Information about the number of hours the Shipman Inquiry sat in public is not available. However, the Inquiry held 228 days of oral hearings in public, 2,411 witness statements were obtained by the Inquiry, and 400 witnesses gave oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Southend Health Trusts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will adjust the funding allocation to Southend health trusts to take account of differences between numbers of residents reported in the 2001 census and current numbers of residents. [216354]

Mr. Hutton: The 2006–07 and 2007–08 revenue allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs) were announced on 9 February 2005. These allocations included the revisions to the 2001 Census population data and also projected increases in populations. This means we are using the best available population data, which properly takes account of the challenges faced in areas with growing populations.

Supplements

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people have died from the adverse effects of vitamins and supplements in the last five years; [215784]

(2) when the Government expects the European Food Standards Agency to publish its findings regarding dosage levels in the context of the Food Supplements Directive; [215804]

(3) whether the Government supports appropriate labelling as a means of ensuring consumer *(a)* safety and *(b)* choice within the framework of the Food Supplements Directive; [215805]

(4) what assessment his Department has made of whether companies have moved businesses outside the European Union in response to the implementation of the Food Supplements Directive; [215806]

(5) how many vitamins and supplements have been removed from sale by the Food Standards Agency in the past five years due to safety concerns; [215810]

(6) how many representations he has received expressing concern about the Food Supplements Directive; which organisations that have made representations to his Department expressed support for the Government's policy towards the Directive; and

which organisations that have made representations to his Department have informed the Department that they have changed their policy on the Directive since submitting their original representation; [215811]

(7) what research the Government have carried out on the effects of the Food Supplements Directive on small specialist manufacturers and retailers; [215812]

(8) how many dossiers have been submitted for products to be included on the positive list under the Food Supplements Directive; [215813]

(9) what estimate his Department has made of the cost of putting together a dossier for inclusion in the positive list under the Food Supplements Directive; and what plans the Government have to provide financial assistance to small specialist manufacturers in putting together dossiers; [215814]

(10) which of the nutrient sources that are not on the positive list under the Food Supplements Directive his Department assesses as dangerous. [215815]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There is currently no system in the United Kingdom for recording adverse or fatal reactions to food supplements. A very small number of adverse reactions are reported through the general practitioner yellow card system used for medicines and forwarded to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) by the Medicines and Health Care products Regulatory Agency. The FSA is not aware of any vitamin supplements that have been removed from the shelves due to safety concerns. The provision of dossiers for nutrient sources not included in the positive lists will allow the safety of these to be assessed and for any sources considered dangerous to be identified.

The European Food Safety Authority is expected to publish its advice on maximum permitted levels of vitamins and minerals, which can be used in food supplements, in spring 2005.

This Government are fully committed to the view that, in the interest of consumer choice, the law should allow food supplements that are safe and properly labelled to be freely marketed. The Food Supplements Directive (FSD) meets these requirements.

A large number of representations were received during the negotiations on the FSD, during the consultation on the regulations and since the adoption of the directive. Consumers associations, such as *Which?*, support the FSD. Trade associations for the supplements industry supported the FSD at the time of its adoption but have since changed their position.

An assessment of the economic impact of the Food Supplements Regulations was made in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) published with the Regulations and included an assessment of the impact of the FSD on small businesses.

It is not appropriate for the UK Government to provide financial assistance for dossier production by small companies, as this would set a precedent to provide financial assistance for all new legislation. To date, dossiers for nine nutrient sources have been received by the FSA with a view to these being added to the positive lists in the FSD. The FSA is unaware of any company that has moved out of the European Union as a result of the FSD.

Treatment Costs

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of *(a)* a general practitioner consultation and *(b)* an attendance at an accident and emergency department was in the last period for which figures are available. [215135]

Mr. Hutton: The average cost of a general practitioner surgery consultation was £18 in 2003–04. (*Source:* Unit costs of health and social care 2004 by the Personal Social Services Research Unit).

The Department collects unit cost and activity data from all national health service providers in England each financial year. This information is available in the document, "Payment by Results, Core Tools, 2004", a copy of which is available in the Library.

The average cost of a patient attending an accident and emergency department, and being either referred on from the department or discharged, in 2003–04 was £66.

Tsunami

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS counselling and family support services have been made available to the relatives of victims and witnesses of the Indian Ocean tsunami who are resident in the UK. [215638]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All the families bereaved by the tsunami have been allocated a family liaison officer to provide immediate support and help. For others who have been affected by the disaster, psychological therapy, counselling and support services are available in every strategic health authority.

Vaccination

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in each primary care trust have received the *(a)* flu and *(b)* pneumonia vaccine this winter; and what percentage of eligible people this represents in each case. [213088]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Vioxx

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people in the UK were prescribed the painkiller Vioxx in each year since 1999; [211470]

(2) how many people in the UK suffered *(a)* heart attacks and *(b)* fatal heart attacks while prescribed the painkiller Vioxx in each year since 1999; [211471]

(3) how many people in the UK have been prescribed painkillers in the category of Cox-2 inhibitors in each of the last five years. [211472]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of reports of heart attack (myocardial infarction) received in association with rofecoxib (Vioxx) through the yellow card scheme is shown in table 1. It is important to note that doctors are asked to report suspected adverse reactions

regardless of any doubts about a causal association. Therefore, a report of a particular adverse reaction on the database does not necessarily mean that the drug caused it, and other factors such as the patient's underlying condition may have played a part. As with all spontaneous reporting schemes, under-reporting is an inherent feature and reporting may be stimulated by publicity. 12 of these reports were received following the withdrawal of rofecoxib on 30 September 2004.

Table 1

	Number of reports of myocardial infarction (MI)	*Number of reports of MI with a fatal outcome*
1999	6	1
2000	9	4
2001	7	1
2002	5	0
2003	7	0
2004	16	2

Table 2 shows the number of prescription items of cyclo-oxygenase 2 (COX-2) selective inhibitors that have been dispensed in the community in England from 1999 to 2003.

Table 2

Number of prescription items (thousand)

	Rofecoxib (Vioxx)	*Celecoxib (Celebrex)*	*Valdecoxib (Bextra)*	*Etoricoxib (Arcoxia)*
1999	162.6	—	—	—
2000	784.5	109.5	—	—
2001	1,269.8	109.5	—	—
2002	1,780.8	1,374.2	—	86.7
2003	2,128.6	1,957.8	26.5	396.1

Source:
Prescription cost analysis data from the Prescription Pricing Authority.

Volunteer First Aiders

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether attendance by an unqualified volunteer first-aid 'responder' at the scene of an emergency call to the ambulance service is assessed as fulfilling his Department's target response time. [216327]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Guidance is set out in the statistical bulletin 'Ambulance services, England: 2003–04', which states that an emergency response may be by:

an emergency ambulance; or

a rapid response vehicle equipped with a defibrillator to provide treatment at the scene; or

an approved first responder equipped with a defibrillator, despatched by and accountable to the ambulance service.

Although the initial emergency response may be to send a rapid response vehicle or approved first responder, a fully equipped ambulance vehicle (car or ambulance) able to transport the patient in a clinically safe manner is still required to attend the incident within 14 to 19 minutes of the initial call, not within 14 to 19 minutes from arrival of initial responder.

A copy of the statistical bulletin 'Ambulance services, England: 2003–04' is available in the Library. A copy of the 'Data set change control procedure', which details this information will be placed in the Library.

Yorkshire, Wolds and Coast PCT (Office Accommodation)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost was of the acquisition and refurbishment of the Four Winds office accommodation at Driffield for the Yorkshire, Wolds and Coast primary care trust. [215070]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire strategic health authority reports that the rental cost of the Four Winds office accommodation in Driffield to the Yorkshire Wolds and Coast primary care trust is £72,500, plus value added tax, per annum. The accommodation was refurbished at the expense of the landlord.

Monday 21 February 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Air Quality

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the link between trees in urban areas and air quality. [214937]

Alun Michael: Trees provide benefits to urban air pollution, but can also have adverse effects on air quality.

Adverse effects of trees on air quality

Trees can have adverse effects on air quality. They can release biogenic emissions known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which in combination with oxides of nitrogen (NOx), can contribute to the formation of other pollutants, especially ozone and particles. Ozone and particles are known to damage human health when in the lower atmosphere. In addition, trees release pollen, which can cause allergic reactions in sensitive people, and can be associated with hay fever and asthma.

Beneficial effects of trees on air quality

Trees deliver air quality benefits in two ways. Firstly, the cooling effect of their shade can directly reduce evaporative emissions from vehicles and other fuel storage, and by cooling homes and offices, power generation emissions are also lessened. Cooling also reduces the speed at which atmospheric chemical reactions occur.

Secondly, trees can remove various pollutants from the atmosphere via deposition to their leaves and needles. Trees can remove pollutants typically associated with urban air pollution such as ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and ammonia reducing atmospheric concentrations and improving air quality. The pollutants generally collect in the leaves or bark which are then shed as part of the tree's life cycle. Trees also reduce concentrations of harmful particulate matter when leaf surfaces collect airborne particles, that are subsequently washed to the ground when it rains. The trees most suited to removal of particles are those with large leaf areas, or sticky or hairy leaves. Studies indicate that the hairy leaves of lime trees can collect four times as many PM10 particles than plane trees.

In addition, trees can have a positive benefit in terms of global warming by acting as a sink for carbon dioxide, which is the most common greenhouse gas. Trees remove carbon dioxide from the air and release oxygen during photosynthesis. The carbon is stored in the tree and the oxygen is released back into the atmosphere.

A recent report entitled "Trees and Sustainable Urban Air Quality", produced under the Natural Environment Research Council's Urban Regeneration and the Environment (URGENT) programme by the University of Lancaster and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Edinburgh, investigated the role of trees in reducing urban air pollution. The report concluded that trees that emit the least reactive VOCs and have large leaf surface areas have the best effect on air quality. Scots pine, common alder, larch, Norway maple, field maple, ash and silver birch were found to remove the most pollutants without contributing to the formation of new pollutants, whereas oaks, poplars and willows were found to have detrimental effects on air quality downwind.

In general, the report concludes that the effects on air quality of large scale planting of most tree species in cities would be positive and for example, by doubling the number of trees in the West Midlands, the concentration of small particles could be reduced by 25 per cent., avoiding 140 deaths that are currently caused by airborne particles each year in the West Midlands.

Catering Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215048]

Alun Michael: All expenditure of official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

The following table shows the expenditure in fiscal years since the Department was formed in 2001, up to 31 December 2004 in the current year. Figures for Defra's predecessor Departments could be provided only by incurring disproportionate cost. Further analysis of hospitality which includes entertainment lunches and working lunches would also incur disproportionate cost.

	£000
2001–02	239
2002–03	450
2003–04	428
2004–05 to 31 January 2004	360

Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the costs of cleaning the Department and its predecessors were in each year since 1997. [213832]

Alun Michael: Defra came into being in June 2001 and comparison with its predecessor is not possible. Since 2001, the figures for costs incurred were:

	£
2001–02	3,379,000
2002–03	3,861,000
2003–04	4,187,000
2004–05	4,161,000

Countryside Access

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much

has been spent to date on implementing the right to roam as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. [217345]

Alun Michael: The Government have funded the Countryside Agency, National Park Authorities and the Planning Inspectorate to implement Part I of the Act throughout the whole of England by the end of 2005.

To date, the Countryside Agency has spent £38.83 million, consisting of £0.75 million in 1999–2000; £0.92 million in 2000–01; £5.17 million in 2001–02; £8.30 million in 2002–03; £13.25 million in 2003–04 and £10.44 million to date in 2004–05. National Park Authorities have been allocated an additional £4.725 million, consisting of £0.875 million in 2002–03; £2.0 million in 2003–04 and £1.85 million in 2004–05. Defra has also funded the Planning Inspectorate to deal with appeals against the inclusion of land on provisional maps and restriction appeals of £0.11 million in 2001–02; £0.84 million in 2002–03 and £1.20 million in 2003–04. The Planning Inspectorate has spent £1.23 million in the current financial year. Local authorities have been funded to establish local access forums under Part V of the Act.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what grants her Department makes available to villages in Chorley constituency. [216198]

Alun Michael: Villagers in Chorley constituency can benefit from:

Funding under the England Rural Development Programme. Within this Programme, the Rural Enterprise Scheme in particular incorporates measures such as support for basic services for the rural community and renovation and development of villages, which might be of particular interest (further information is available at www.defra.gov.uk/erdp.default.htm).

Various measures (administered with the Countryside Agency) to support parish councils, e.g. parish plans, the Quality Parish Investment Fund, the Clerk's Training Bursary Fund, where various Parish Councils within the Chorley constituency have received funding (e.g. Ulnes Walton for an IT project and Croston, Wrightington, Heapy and Appley Bridge for parish plans).

Defra's programme with the voluntary and community sector which supports infrastructure bodies, social and community enterprise and a collaboration with the Department of Work and Pensions promoting benefits uptake among the elderly.

Support under the Rural Stress Action Plan.

Other grants supporting Defra's objectives from English Nature, the Countryside Agency, the Forestry Commission and the Regional Development Agency (in this case the North West Regional Development Agency) may also be relevant to villagers in the Chorley constituency.

As announced in the Rural Strategy 2004, Defra is streamlining and devolving the funding support it provides.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997; [210324]

(2) if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effect on the constituency of policies pursued by her Department at the Council of Ministers; and if she will make a statement. [215721]

Alun Michael: The Department does not hold statistical information for Welsh constituencies. This is a matter for the devolved Administration.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on the control and reduction of pollution caused by the discharge of hydrocarbons and other dangerous substances at sea met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214795]

Mr. McNulty: I have been asked to reply.

The Management Committee on Marine Pollution (MCMP) has replaced the Committee referred to by the hon. Member. The MCMP met once during each of the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies (in September 2003, March 2004 and September 2004) in Brussels. The United Kingdom was represented at each of these meetings by the Counter Pollution Response Branch of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above Presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) on how many occasions her Department's Ministers used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years; [213702]

(2) how much money her Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213714]

Alun Michael: Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course. Advice on Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service.

Street Cleaning

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidelines she has issued on the optimum intervals for *(a)* street sweeping and *(b)* gulley emptying. [216887]

Alun Michael: The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse, published in June 1999, sets out the recommended cleansing standards according to different categories of land. The code is currently being reviewed and we will consult on the draft code later this year.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

First Aid

Mr. Steen: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will issue first aid equipment including treatment for burns to all areas where constant boiling water cisterns have replaced kettles on the Commons estate. [216244]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The installation of instant boiling water dispensers to replace kettles gives a number of safety benefits that reduce the risk of scalds and burns, including elimination of steam hazard, no overturning of kettles, no cords or flexes, no hot surfaces, reduced risk of spillage, and the controlled dispensing of boiling water.

The dispensers also offer energy savings, improved hygiene and improved electrical safety.

First aiders and first aid equipment are readily available in all buildings. The Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Service advice is that the most effective treatment for a scald or burn is immediately to place the affected area under cool running water for as long as it takes for the pain to subside. All dispensers are located close to a supply of cool running water. Arrangements are being made to provide first aid instructions for scalds and burns.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Public Sector IT Projects

26. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission what assessment he has made of the resources available to National Audit Office staff to enable them to facilitate greater parliamentary scrutiny of public sector IT projects. [217014]

Mr. Alan Williams: The National Audit Office already examines IT programmes and projects as part of the annual programme of value for money studies. For example last year its report, "Improving IT Procurement", examined the impact of the Office of Government Commerce's initiatives on departments and suppliers in the delivery of major IT-enabled projects. The cost implications of the National Audit Office's work are reflected in the resource bids submitted by the Comptroller and Auditor General, the head of the National Audit Office, for consideration by the Public Accounts Commission. The Commission will be examining the NAO's bid for 2005–06 at its meeting on 22 February.

PRIME MINISTER

BAE Systems

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Prime Minister what meetings he has had with *(a)* board members and *(b)* staff of BAE Systems since 1 January 2004. [216823]

The Prime Minister: My officials and I have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals. Representatives from BAE Systems attended a business breakfast in Downing street on 10 February 2004.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Office's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215684]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. All Government Departments work closely together to ensure the coordination of policy and in collaboration with each other to improve delivery of improved public services. Since 1997, the Cabinet Office has played a major role in achieving Government objectives. The Cabinet Office Departmental Report 2004 describes how the work of management units within the Cabinet Office contributes to the achievement of the Department's objectives, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Departmental Structures

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister whether he plans to change departmental structures, with particular reference to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. [217198]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so. The allocation of responsibilities across Government is kept under close review and changes to the machinery of government are made as and when necessary.

G8 Presidency

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Prime Minister what his priorities are for the Presidency of the G8. [215879]

The Prime Minister: The two main priorities for the UK Presidency of the G8 are Africa and climate change.

We shall also take forward the Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative from the US Presidency in 2004, and continue G8 work on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation.

Government Whips

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Prime Minister whether all Members of the Government Whips Office receive ministerial salaries. [216659]

The Prime Minister: A full list of paid and unpaid Government Ministers including Government Whips is available from the Library of the House.

IBM

Mr. Gray: To ask the Prime Minister what the purpose was of his meeting at No. 10 on 2 December 1999 with Mr. Louis Gerstner Junior of the IBM Corporation of New York; which Department of Government suggested that he receive Mr. Gerstner; on what date it was first sought to arrange such a meeting; and which *(a)* departments of Government and *(b)* advisers were present at the meeting. [215746]

The Prime Minister: The meeting of 2 December 1999 with Mr. Louis Gerstner Junior of the IBM Corporation is a matter of public record. My officials and I have meetings and discussions with a wide range of organisations and individuals. All meetings are conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Iran

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with President Bush regarding military options should Iran continue to develop its nuclear weapons programme; and if he will make a statement. [215997]

The Prime Minister: I regularly have discussions on a wide range of issues with President Bush, including on Iran? President Bush is fully aware of our policy on Iran, and made clear in his State of the Union Address on 2 February that the United States would continue to work for a diplomatic solution.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the leading figures referred to by his official press spokesperson on 8 December 2004, other than those representing Her Majesty's Government or the Interim Iraqi Government, who dispute the estimate of civilian deaths in Iraq published in the Lancet. [215962]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Straw) on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 92–5WS.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister whether the advice from the Attorney General on the legality of the war in Iraq published in the *Official Report* on 17 March 2003 was a summary of the advice received. [216365]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Stone (Mr. Cash) on 22 May 2003, *Official Report*, columns 914–15W.

Kyoto Protocol

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the long-term prospect of the US signing up to the Kyoto Protocol. [215880]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave to the right hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) and to my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Dr. Gibson) during my evidence to the Liaison Committee on 8 February.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of whether the UK will meet its Kyoto targets by 2010. [215881]

The Prime Minister: Current projections suggest that UK greenhouse gas emissions will be around 20 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010, which is well below our Kyoto target of 12.5 per cent. below 1990 levels.

I also refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave to the right hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) and to the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Ainsworth) during my evidence to the Liaison Committee on 8 February.

Miscarriages of Justice

Mr. Chope: To ask the Prime Minister what criteria he applies when deciding whether to issue public apologies to the victims of miscarriages of justice. [217289]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the comments made by my Official Spokesman on Wednesday 2 February, a transcript of which is available on the No. 10 website.

Prince of Wales

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister whether he was consulted on the date for the proposed marriage between HRH The Prince of Wales and Mrs. Camilla Parker-Bowles; and if he will make a statement. [217194]

The Prime Minister: I was not consulted on the date.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213256]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office is currently finalising its internal budget allocation for 2005–06 and the Departmental Unallocated Provision (DUP) will not be determined until that process is complete. Similarly the DUP for 2006–07 and 2007–08 will not be determined until the internal budget allocation process is complete for the respective years.

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent on official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214955]

Mr. Miliband: It is not possible to provide the information requested as it is not held centrally and cannot be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Regulatory Impact Unit

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost of staffing and running the Regulatory Impact Unit was on the last year for which figures are available. [217262]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my predecessor (Ruth Kelly) gave to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

WALES

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215226]

Mr. Touhig: In line with guidance issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, the Wales Office has considered publication of information disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act.

Any information released by the Wales Office in response to Freedom of Information requests will also be published on the Wales Office website.

Job Relocation

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the First Minister of the National Assembly for Wales on the relocation of jobs from England to Wales. [216050]

Mr. Touhig: My right hon. Friend and I are working closely with ministerial colleagues in the Assembly to ensure that Wales benefits from any relocation of public sector jobs from London and the South East. To this end, I welcome the decision last September by the Office for National Statistics to make Newport its principal headquarters and move 600 jobs there.

I am actively pursuing plans by other Departments and will be following up as appropriate. On 10 February, the First Minister and I met several senior officials from London based Departments involved with the relocation exercise to highlight what Wales has to offer.

MRSA

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Government concerning the release of MRSA figures for hospitals in Wales. [217120]

Mr. Touhig: I regularly meet the Assembly First Minister and Health Minister to discuss issues surrounding health care associated infections, in particular MRSA, which we take very seriously.

The Assembly Health Minister, Dr. Brian Gibbons has announced a new set of proposals which will enable patients to access trust based statistics on each individual hospital in Wales.

TRANSPORT

A3

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which existing road schemes in addition to the A3 at Hindhead have been downgraded from national to regional significance; and what the peak traffic volumes of each were in the last period for which figures are available. [209895]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government's consultation paper—"Devolving decision making: A consultation on regional funding allocations"—issued on 2 December 2004 sets out which routes are categorised as of the greatest strategic national and international importance and which are categorised as of primarily regional importance. The following table sets out the latest available peak daily traffic flow for each scheme in the targeted programme of improvements on routes categorised as of primarily regional importance.

Trunk road schemes in the targeted programme of improvements on regional routes—Peak daily traffic flow—2004

	Government office region	Two-way peak daily traffic flow (2004)	Traffic count location
Schemes planned to start construction by April 2008			
A1 Peterborough–Blyth	East Midlands	65,800	A1 Burghley Park, NB and SB
A421 Bedford to M1 Junction 13	East	33,900	A421 Stewartby EB and WB
A1 Attleborough Bypass improvement	East	46,100	A11 Wymondham, NB and SB
A19/A184 Testos Roundabout	North East	61,400	A19, A1290-A184, South of Testos Roundabout; NB and SB
A590 High and Low Newton Bypass	North West	22,800	A592-A5074 Low Newton EB and WB
A66 Temple Sowerby	North West	24,200	A6-A685 Whinfell Forest, East of Penrith EB and WB
A57/A628 Mottram-Hollingworth-Tintwistle	North West	42,600	A6018-A628 Mottram Moor Tameside EB and WB
A595 Parton-Lillyhall Improvement	North West	22,100	B5295-A597, Commonend, Distington, Workington NB and SB
A2 Bean-Cobham Widening Phase 2	South East	134,000	A2 between A227 and B262 EB and WB
A2/A282 Dartford Improvement	South East	183,300	A282 Dartford Crossing NB and SB
A27 Southerham-Beddingham Improvement	South East	44,300	A27 Beddingham Level Crossing EB and WB
A30/A382 Merrymeet Junction	South West	61,100	A30 Tedburn St. Mary EB and WB
A30 Bodmin Indian Queens	South West	45,700	A30 Bodmin Bypass EB and WB
M5 J17 to J18A Northbound Climbing Lane (HallenHiU)	South West	*66,000	M5 J18A to 17 NB * one-way flow traffic i.e northbound
M5 J19 to J20 Northbound Climbing Lane (Tickenham Hill)	South West	*66,800	M5 J20 to J19 NB * one-way flow traffic i.e. northbound
M5 J19 to J20 Southbound Climbing Lane (Naish Hill)	South West	*69,600	M5 J19 to J20 SB * one-way flow traffic i.e. southbound
A38 Dobwalls Bypass	South West	30,800	A38 Dobwalls (A390-B3284) EB and WB

Trunk road schemes in the targeted programme of improvements on regional routes—Peak daily traffic flow—2004

	Government office region	*Two-way peak daily traffic flow (2004)*	*Traffic count location*
A419 Blunsdon	South West	26,900	Blunsdon St (B401 9-A431 1) NB and SB
A419 Commonhead Junction	South West		Refer to A419 Blunsdon above.
A45/A46 Tollbar End	West Midlands	68,500	A45, Bagington, East of A46 EB and WB
A66 Scotch Corner to Carkin Moor Dualling	Yorkshire and The Humber	26,000	A1-A167 West of A1 EB and WB
A66 Greta Bridge to Stephen Bank Dualling	Yorkshire and The Humber	28,300	A67-A685 West of Bowes EB and WB
Schemes to be progressed for future construction			
A46 Newark-Widmerpool Improvement	East Midlands	35,500	A46 Newark Relief Road, east of sewage works EB and WB
A453 widening (M1 J24 to A52 Nottingham)	East Midlands	27,800	A453, Barton Lodge, NB and WB
A505 Dunstable Northern Bypass (aka M1-A5 Link Road)	East	N/A	New link road
A66 Long Newton GS J	North East	36,500	A1 150-A135, west of Long Newton EB and WB
A19/A1067 Seaton Burn	North East	32,800	A1068-A1171 Arcott Hall EB and WB
A1 Morpeth to Felton Dualling	North East	36,400	A197-A192, Morpeth NB and SB
A1 Adderstone to Belford Dualling	North East	13,800	A1068-A1167, Belford Bypass NB and SB
A3 Hindhead Improvement	South East	37,000	A3, north of Hindhead NB and SB
Schemes to be progressed subject to regional priorities			
A428 Caxton Common to Hardwick Improvement	East	33,400	A428 North of Hardwick, EB and WB
A47 Blofield to North Burlingham	East	34,600	A47 Acle, EB and WB
A11 Fiveways to Thetford Improvement	East	32,900	A11 Thetford Bypass North NB and SB
A69 Haydon Bridge Bypass	North East	20,900	B6319-A6079, Hexham EB and WB
A23 Handcross to Warninglid Widening	South East	86,500	A23 Slaugham (B2110-B2115) NB and SB
A21 Tonbridge Bypass to Pembury Dualling	South East	36,500	A21 , Kippings Cross to Pembury, NB and SB
A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst Bypass	South East	30,000	A21 , Lamberhurst Quarter to Pembury, NB and SB
A30 Garland Cross to Chiverton Cross	South West	40,800	A30 Garland Cross (A3076-A3058) EB and WB
A30 Temple to Higher Carblake Improvement	South West	41,100	A30 north of Bodmin EB and WB
A3 03 Stonehenge	South West	47,500	A303 east of Countess Roundabout EB and WB
A483 Pant-Llanymynech Bypass	West Midlands	16,300	A483 Oswestry Bypass (B5069-A5) NB and SB
A64 Rillington Bypass	Yorkshire and The Humber	21,400	B1248-B1258, Rillington Village EB and WB

Bridgwater Station

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with Wessex Trains with regard to parking facilities at Bridgwater station. [217410]

Mr. McNulty: None. The provision of car parking facilities at stations is a matter for individual train operating companies.

British Transport Police (Westminster Station)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the strategy of the British Transport Police is for responding to calls for assistance from Westminster tube station; and if he will make a statement. [216445]

Mr. McNulty: Westminster London Underground station is one of the more heavily policed stations in London due to its significant location. Both BTP and the Metropolitan police regularly police the station. This includes community support officers on daily security patrols in Whitehall.

The BTP at Stockwell have a dedicated priority policing team. These officers are responsible for policing Westminster tube station. In addition there is a 24-hour response team operating from Tottenham Court Road BTP station with patrol cars that both attend calls for assistance and also carry out patrols at stations.

Since 1 January this year there have been a total of 12 calls recorded by BTP regarding a variety of offences including disorder, criminal damage and drunkenness with an average police response time of 10 minutes. London Underground has direct telephone links with the BTP force control room.

As Westminster tube station is within the Government security zone area it is subject to additional police deployments and counter terrorist measures, carried out in close partnership with London Underground.

Bus Routes (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on funding for new bus routes in Lancashire. [216209]

Charlotte Atkins: Local authorities obtain the majority of their funding for local bus service support from the Government's revenue support grant (RSG). Decisions on the amount of RSG that is used for bus services are a matter for each individual authority. Lancashire county council's RSG settlement for 2005–06 is £779.54 million, an overall increase in grant of 5.3 per cent. over the current year.

Local authorities have since 1998 also received significant Government support for rural bus services in the form of rural bus subsidy grant (RBSG). Lancashire have been allocated a total of £6.67 million in RBSG over the period 1998–99 to 2004–05. Their RBSG allocation for 2005–06 is £1.286 million. Lancashire

have also been awarded a total of £5.9 million for 11 projects in our rural and urban bus challenge competitions between 1998 and 2003.

In addition the Department's local transport plan funding supports capital expenditure on local transport, including new infrastructure used by bus services.

Correspondence

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Rochford and Southend East dated 29 September 2004, regarding Mr. R. Boyd of EDPA, Reference MC/CA/014501/04. [216592]

Charlotte Atkins: I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 21 October 2004.

Cycle Helmets

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the wearing by young people of cycle helmets; and if he will make a statement. [216088]

Mr. Jamieson: We have received representations from a range of organisations and individuals who support the promotion and compulsion of cycle helmets for children and similar representations from those who believe they should be voluntary.

Research has found that cycle helmets can be effective in reducing the severity of head injury for users of all ages, though particularly for children. Our policy is to persuade cyclists to protect themselves by wearing helmets.

Our position on compulsion has been that at current wearing rates it would cause enforcement difficulties and could have an effect on cycling levels. But the Government will keep its policies in this as in all areas under review in the light of discussion in Parliament and elsewhere.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215617]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Blackpool, South constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to Blackpool borough council since 1997 is shown in the table below[1]. It has been Blackpool borough council to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

£ million

Blackpool—Nature of funding	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Capital maintenance	0.132	0.268	0.468	0.952	0.991	0.744	0.867
Integrated block	0.251	0.594	0.700	2.000	2.384	2.632	1.600
Targeted bus grants[2]	0	0	0	0.81	0.87	0	0
Total	0.383	0.862	1.168	3.762	4.245	3.376	2.467

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.
[2] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Havant constituency, the effects on Havant of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215984]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Havant constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the number of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to Hampshire county council since 1997 is shown in the following table[1]. It has been for Hampshire to determine how that allocation has spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

Hampshire

£ million

Nature of funding	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Capital maintenance	3.369	2.980	4.388	9.870	10.524	13.156	15.221
Integrated block	2.923	3.985	5.432	13.5	13.204	14.393	15.783

Hampshire

£ million

Nature of funding	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Major schemes	2.663	0	0	0	0	5.142	0
Targeted bus grants[2]	0.903	1.06	1.88	1.60	2.04	2.10	1.37
Total	9.858	8.025	11.7	24.97	25.768	34.791	32.374

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.
[2] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding

In addition, since 1997 the Havant constituency has benefited from investment in new rail rolling stock.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Huddersfield constituency, the effects on Huddersfield of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216870]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Huddersfield constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16-years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–07 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to the Metropolitan borough of Kirklees since 1997 is shown in the following table[1]. It has been for the Metropolitan borough of Kirklees to determine how that allocation has spent, in line with the local transport plan for West Yorkshire and the local priorities.

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996. Huddersfield also benefited from a share of the integrated block funding allocated to the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority.

Metropolitan borough of Kirklees—Nature of funding

£ million

	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Capital maintenance	1.374	3.752	6.227	6.163	6.405	6.646	8.398
Integrated block	1.418	1.468		4.350	3.746	3.529	3.554
Major schemes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Targeted bus grants[1]	0.92	0.76	1.47	2.38	2.05	2.77	0.98
Total	3.712	5.98	7.697	12.89	12.20	12.94	12.93

[1] Includes rural bus subsidy grant and rural bus challenge funding.

The constituency of Huddersfield is served by the TransPennine franchise which began operations in February 2004. It offers direct links from Huddersfield to destinations including Liverpool, Manchester, and Newcastle. It is also served by the new Northern franchise providing links to destinations throughout the north of England.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past twenty years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Maidenhead constituency, the effects on Maidenhead of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216025]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Maidenhead constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to the Royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead since 1997 is shown in the table[1]. It has been for the borough council to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with its local transport plan and its priorities.

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.

£ million

Royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Capital maintenance	0.29	0.74	0.75	1.025	1.096	1.37	1.50
Integrated block	0.10	0.65	0.83	1.700	1.690	1.70	1.84
Major schemes	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Targeted bus grants[1]	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.490	0.074	0.075	0.095
Total	0.441	1.441	1.631	3.215	2.860	3.145	3.435

[1] Includes rural bus subsidy grant and rural bus challenge funding.

In addition, since 1997 the Maidenhead constituency, which lies within the Thames area franchise, has benefited from investment in new rail rolling stock.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Witney constituency, the effects on Witney of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215983]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Witney constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the number of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to Oxfordshire county council since 1997 is shown in the following table[1]. It has been for Oxfordshire county council to determine how that allocation has spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

Oxfordshire county council

£ million

Nature of funding	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Capital maintenance	2.038	3.078	5.793	8.045	8.013	10.016	11.017
Integrated block	1.962	3.686	4.764	10.500	10.600	9.911	12.940
Major schemes	1.510	0	0	0	0	0	0
Targeted bus grants[2]	0.93	1.93	0.93	1.18	1.35	1.79	1.42
Total	6.44	8.694	11.487	19.725	19.963	21.717	25.377

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.
[2] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding

In addition, since 1997 the Witney constituency, which lies within the Thames area franchise has benefited from investment in new rail rolling stock.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Slovak Republic Joint Transport Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214778]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Czech Republic Joint Transport Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214779]

(3) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee on the carriage of goods and passengers by inland waterway (EC-Czech Republic-Republic of Poland-Slovak Republic) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214780]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU, the Advisory Committee on the control and reduction of pollution caused by the discharge of hydrocarbons and other dangerous substances at sea met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215408]

Mr. McNulty: The Management Committee on Marine Pollution (MCMP) has replaced the Committee referred to by the hon. Member. The MCMP met once during each of the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies (in September 2003, March 2004 and September 2004) in Brussels. The United Kingdom was represented at each of these meetings by the Counter Pollution Response Branch of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Poland Joint Transport Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215419]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Romania Joint Transport Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215420]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for granting Community financial aid in the field of trans-European transport networks, (ii) Committee for granting Community financial aid in the field of trans-European telecommunications networks met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if he will make a statement. [216221]

Mr. McNulty: The trans-European transport network Financial Assistance Committee (FAC) referred to by the hon. Member met four times during the course of the three Presidencies (on 1 July 2003, 24 October 2003, 10 June 2004 and 21 and 22 October 2004). The meetings took place in Brussels and on each occasion the United Kingdom was represented by an official from the European Division of the Department for Transport. The FAC is responsible for the implementation of Council regulation 2236/95 and associated budgetary allocations. Responsibility for the trans-European Telecommunications network rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Technical Adaptation Committee on the minimum safety and health requirements for improved medical treatment on board vessels met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [216340]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Advisory Committee on the management of the research programme for management and storage of radioactive waste and management of the Community plan of action in the field of radioactive waste and (ii) Advisory Committee on measures to be taken in the event of a crisis in the market in the carriage of goods by road and for laying down the conditions under which non-resident carriers may operate national road haulage services within a member state met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if he will make a statement. [216723]

Mr. McNulty: The matters with which this Committee deals are not the responsibility of the Department for Transport.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee for the application of legislation on the conditions under which non-resident carriers may operate national road passenger transport services within a member state met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [217248]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on the reciprocal recognition of national boat masters' certificates for the carriage of goods and passengers by inland water met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217249]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Joint Transport Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215925]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Bulgaria Joint Transport Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215926]

(3) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Hungary Joint Transport Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215927]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Consultative European Energy and Transport Forum met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214306]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EEC-Slovenia Joint Transport Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214307]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Free Public Transport

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the cost of providing free public transport *(a)* in each local transport authority area and *(b)* in England for (i) disabled people, (ii) all people aged over 60 years and (iii) all people under 19 in full-time education (A) in rural areas and (B) elsewhere. [217360]

Charlotte Atkins: Local authorities in England currently spend around £500 million per year on concessionary fares schemes.

It is estimated that an extension of current concessionary fares schemes to provide free local public transport for people over 60 and disabled people within their local authority area would cost an additional £200 million per year (approximately £18 million for disabled people and £182 million for the over 60s). This includes local bus journeys and, where the local authority chooses to fund wider concessions, journeys on trains, underground, light rail and ferries within the local areas. The additional cost would rise to around £250 million per year (£25 million for disabled people and £225 million for the over 60s) if all local journeys on the national rail system were included.

An England-wide scheme allowing free travel for all older and disabled people on all bus journeys would cost around £260 million per year more than the current system (approximately £24 million for disabled people and £236 million for the over 60s). The additional cost would rise to £500 million per year if all national rail journeys were included (£50 million for disabled people and £450 million for the over 60s). Breakdown by cost for each local authority or for rural and other areas is not available.

To provide free local bus travel for all under 19-year-olds would require additional funding of £520 million per year. Extending this to an England-wide scheme allowing free bus travel would cost around £580 million per year. Costs have not been estimated for free travel restricted to those in full-time education; however it is estimated that a free travel scheme applying to educational trips only would cost an additional £290 million per year. No estimates have been made to include journeys on all forms of public transport. Breakdown by area is not available.

Hengistbury Head

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ensure that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency make their watch section at Hengistbury Head available to members of National Coastwatch. [217290]

Mr. Jamieson: The Maritime and Coastguard Agency's facility at Hengistbury Head is an unmanned remote radio site housing radiocommunications equipment. Access for the National Coastwatch Institution has been carefully considered and cannot be granted because of the need to protect the security and integrity of the existing and future radiocommunications equipment, and the health safety and cost implications of partitioning the site. In addition the underlying terms of the property lease do not allow sub-letting to third parties.

Home Zones

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Home Zones there are in England; and how many of them were established with the aid of funding from his Department. [216758]

Charlotte Atkins: Between 2001–02 and 2003–04 local transport authorities have reported to the Department that they introduced 65 home zones in England (outside London), as part of their transport capital programmes, which are supported financially by the Department.

The Department is supporting 59 homes zones through a specific grant, 19 having been completed by December 2004 with site works under way for 40 more. Other home zones are supported through the funding provided to local authorities in the general local transport capital settlement.

Mobile Phones

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 3 February 2005, to the hon. Member for North Devon (Nick Harvey), *Official Report*, column 1034W, on mobile phones, if he will make a statement on the latest survey. [216482]

Mr. Jamieson: Details of the results of the latest survey in September 2004 are available on-line at www.trl.co.uk/abstracts/LF2094.pdf The next survey will be carried out in April 2005 and the results will be published in due course.

Network Rail

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his written ministerial statement of 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 93–96WS on rail spending, what the cumulative level of borrowing for Network Rail was at 31 March 2004; and what the projected cumulative level of borrowing is for *(a)* 31 March 2005 and *(b)* 31 March 2009. [217333]

Mr. McNulty: Network Rail's debt as of 31 March 2004 was £12.9 billion[1].

Network Rail's debt at 31 March 2005 is currently forecast to be approximately £16 billion[2].

Network Rail's debt at 31 March 2009 is currently forecast to be approximately £19.9 billionn[3].

Network Rail's actual borrowing requirements are subject to continual review. They are determined by the company, based upon its revenues and expenditure requirements, within the context of the Regulatory Settlement. The company will update its projections in its 2005 Business Plan to be published on 31 March 2005.

Sources:

[1] Network Rail Annual Report and Accounts 2003–04

[2] Latest forecast from Network Rail provided to the Office of Rail Regulation and Strategic Rail Authority.

[3] Estimated debt at 31 March 2005, plus new borrowing requirements identified in the statement issued by the Secretary of State for Transport on 10 February 2005.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the projected level of new borrowing by Network Rail is in each of the next four years. [217402]

Mr. McNulty: I would refer the right hon. Gentleman to my written ministerial statement on Thursday 10 February 2005, which contains the required information.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether Network Rail is free to negotiate contracts exclusively for the installation of ATMs for which there is a charge in stations. [217404]

Mr. McNulty: The negotiation of contracts for the installation of automatic till machines (ATMs) is a commercial matter for Network Rail, the train operating companies who lease all but 17 of the stations on the national rail network and the companies wishing to install the machines at the stations.

Northern Way

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the recommendation of the Select Committee on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in its fourth report of session 2004–05, that the 10 year plan should be looked at again to ensure adequate support to the Northern Way; and if he will make a statement. [216096]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department is already providing significant levels of funding for transport schemes across the three Northern Way regions. We are now consulting on proposals for regional funding allocations announced in the 2004 Future of Transport White Paper. These will provide an important opportunity for regions to influence the Government's spending decisions, to ensure that transport is fully integrated into long-term planning for sustainable economic growth. The Northern Way have identified a wide range of infrastructure improvements to support growth. The challenge now is to develop an evidence based approach which will help to identify strategic priorities within available resources. Department for Transport officials will continue to engage with the Northern Way as they take this analysis forward.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213608]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport has no residential properties used by Ministers or officials.

Powered Wheelchairs/Scooters

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress he has made in his review of powered wheelchairs and scooters. [216919]

Charlotte Atkins: The first part of the review into the use of powered wheelchairs and powered scooters on the highway has been a research project to gather data and to find out the views of a wide range of stakeholders about the current laws. That work is now complete and draft reports have been submitted to the Department. The next stage will be to consider the findings of the research to determine whether any changes are required to the current laws and guidance.

Powershift

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the Powershift energy efficient vehicle programme; and what new initiatives he plans on more environmentally benign transport. [217167]

Mr. Jamieson: Following a consultation last year, the Department for Transport has announced that changes are being made to all the TransportEnergy grant programmes, including Powershift, after the end of this financial year. The Government plans to move to a technology neutral approach to incentivise the

cleanest cars regardless of the technology or fuel type. The Government will also be adjusting the programmes to ensure they comply with European rules on state aid.

The State Aid rules limit the amount of grant that member states can offer for environmental initiatives. In some cases this will mean that future grant levels will need to be reduced to ensure the grants allocated do not exceed permitted levels. However, overall funding for the grant programmes remains at planned levels, enabling more grants to be allocated to more interested parties.

The Department will honour grant offer letters under the PowerShift programme until 31 March 2005. The timescale for introducing the new programmes will be dependent on the process of reviewing and clearing them with the European Commission. My officials will be working hard to ensure that this process is completed as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Details of the new programmes have yet to be finalised. However, it is intended that Powershift will be replaced by a Low Carbon Vehicle programme that will award grants for cars on the basis of CO_2 performance. The Government also intends to seek European Commission approval of a Low Carbon Bus Programme to support demonstration trials of small fleets of low carbon buses.

Rail Fares

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with Wessex Trains with regard to recent fare increases. [217409]

Mr. McNulty: None. The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has responsibility for regulating fares on the national rail network. Fares are regulated as prescribed in franchise agreements between the SRA and the train operating companies.

Rail Freight

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Strategic Rail Authority on the publication of the Freight Assessments Need South East report. [216788]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1035W given to the hon. Member for Portsmouth South, (Mr. Hancock).

The Strategic Rail Authority has made assessments of the demand for freight on the railways in a series of market studies, referred to in the answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 958W. Although they are UK market studies, much of the analysis is route specific, allowing for regional impacts to be assessed.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much freight was moved, by tonne kilometres, on the UK railways, in each year since 1990. [217211]

Mr. Darling: The information requested is in the table. This has been taken from the 'National Rail Trends Yearbook 2003–04', published by the Strategic Rail Authority.

	Billion net tonne kms
1990	16.7
1991	16.0
1992	15.3
1993	15.5
1994	13.8
1995	13.0
1996	13.3
1997	15.1
1998	16.9
1999	17.3
2000	18.2
2001	18.1
2002	19.4
2003	18.7
2004	18.9

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the number of Railfreight interchanges which will be required in the UK. [217266]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1036W, given to the hon. Member for Heywood and Middleton (Jim Dobbin).

Rail Services

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with train operating companies about the frequency of the services to and from Ashchurch station near Tewkesbury; and if he will make a statement. [216453]

Mr. McNulty: None. Train operators are contractually required to operate a minimum level of service as prescribed in their franchise agreements with the Strategic Rail Authority. The current frequency of service to Ashchurch complies with Central Trains' and Wessex Trains' contractual requirements.

Railway Noise

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will discuss with Network Rail the modification of train horns which have been installed to meet the now obsolete specification for minimum noise standards in order to reduce the impact of train horn noise on trackside residents. [216661]

Mr. McNulty: The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) is responsible for specifying the requirements for when and where train horns must be used and Network Rail is responsible for deciding how train operators comply with the standards set by the RSSB.

The RSSB has now lowered the minimum permissible sound level for train horns by eight decibels. This will permit train operators to modify and make adjustments to the volume of train horns where they consider it. South East Trains and Southern Trains have begun to install modified train horns on their fleets.

Railway Stations (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on funding for *(a)* new and *(b)* reopening railway stations in Lancashire; [216210]

(2) if he will make a statement on the new bus and improved railway station at Chorley; and how much central government money was used to fund the project. [216211]

Mr. McNulty: Funding of £137,000 was provided under the Strategic Rail Authority's Rail Passenger Partnership (RPP) scheme and a further £283,000 was provided from the Department's capital allocation grant to Lancashire county council, to support refurbishment works at Chorley station.

There are currently no plans to support funding for new, or the re-opening of, stations in Lancashire.

Regional Transport Boards

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the expenditure on regional transport boards was in 2003–04; which areas each covers; and how many staff each employs. [217361]

Charlotte Atkins: There were no regional transport boards in 2003–04. Two experimental transport boards were established by the South East and Yorkshire and Humberside regions in 2004–05. The costs and staffing resources were effectively absorbed by the relevant organisations.

Road Humps

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next expects to update guidelines on the use of road humps. [216330]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department hope to publish a Local Transport Note (LTN) on the design and effectiveness of traffic calming measures later this year. This document will draw together existing research and guidance on a range of traffic calming features, including road humps. There are no current plans to specifically update guidelines on the use of road humps.

Road Safety

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents have been recorded in the most recent 12 months for which data are available involving a vehicle turning left across a bus or cycle lane into a private access. [216639]

Mr. Jamieson: There were six such recorded injury road accidents in 2003, the last year for which data are available. Of these accidents, five were recorded as slight and the other was recorded as serious.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he has issued regarding priority when motorists are required to manoeuvre across a bus or cycle lane to turn left from a highway into a private access. [216640]

Mr. Jamieson: Rules 158 and 159 of The Highway Code give advice on turning left, as follows:

158. Use your mirrors and give a left-turn signal well before you turn left. Do not overtake just before you turn left and watch out for traffic coming up on your left before you make the turn, especially if driving a large vehicle. Cyclists and motorcyclists in particular may be hidden from your view, and

159. When turning

keep as close to the left as is safe and practical

give way to any vehicles using a bus lane, cycle lane or tramway from either direction.

Speed Cameras (M25)

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speeding offences have been identified by temporary speed cameras between junctions 12 and 15 of the M25 since the current road works began; how many *(a)* fixed penalty notices, *(b)* prosecutions and *(c)* fines have resulted from those offences; what the value is of the fines imposed; and what percentage of those sums has been paid. [215141]

Mr. Jamieson: The Metropolitan police advise that between 7 February 2004 and 1 February 2005, 17,183 fixed penalty notices and 400 summonses have been issued following speeding being recorded by the temporary speed cameras between junctions 12 and 15 of the M25. The total of fixed penalty fines imposed is £1,030,980, of which fines totalling £865,980 have so far been paid—84 per cent. of the total. Recently issued fixed penalty notices will not yet have been paid. Fines imposed following summonses are determined individually by magistrates.

Street Works

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has evaluated on the effects of utility street works on traffic congestion levels; and if he will revise the Government's published estimate of the contribution of utility company street works to congestion in the light of that research. [217405]

Charlotte Atkins: Last year the Department received a report from its consultants, Halcrow, which estimated the annual cost of congestion due to utility street works as over £4 billion. Earlier this month the Department received another report, commissioned by the National Joint Utilities Group, which looks at the disruption due to utility works. Both reports point to the need to improve the ways in which these works are managed so as to reduce the disruption they cause. We are currently consulting on a several such measures, including permits schemes, fixed penalty notices for certain offences, more advanced notice about proposed works and restrictions on further works where roads have been recently dug up.

Taxis

Mr. Geoffrey Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1040W, on taxis, how his Department would define purpose built taxis if the Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness for London Taxicabs change to allow converted or adapted MPV vehicles to be licensed as taxis in London. [214716]

Charlotte Atkins: I recognise that the term "purpose built taxi" is often used to describe the type of cab which meets the requirements of the existing Metropolitan

Conditions of Fitness (MCF). However the term is not defined in legislation. Nor is it one that the Department is required to define formally.

The review by Transport for London of the MCF is continuing.

Traffic Management Act

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what new responsibilities the Traffic Management Act 2004 places on local authorities. [216263]

Charlotte Atkins: The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a new network management duty on local traffic authorities to secure the expeditious movement of traffic of their network and facilitate it on the network of others, as far as may be reasonably practicable and with regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives. Guidance on carrying out this duty was published in November last year and the duty came into force on 4 January 2005. This is the main new responsibility for authorities under the Act.

Provisions in other parts of the Act will help ensure that the way in which authorities carry out their highway works is brought into line with the standard that utility companies are already expected to meet, and will help improve the way in which authorities manage their road networks. In order to enhance Transport for London's co-ordination role in London, the Act provides that a London borough proposing to carry out schemes or road works that affect the Strategic Road Network must notify Transport for London.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated expenditure on the regional control centres established under the Traffic Management Act 2004 is. [216264]

Mr. Jamieson: The total expenditure on setting up the seven Regional Control Centres buildings including technology costs but excluding on-road services and staff costs, is estimated to be £63.7 million.

The annual running cost for the seven Regional Control Centres is estimated to be in the region of £9.3 million, excluding on-road services and staff costs.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment the Government has made of the impact of the Traffic Management Act 2004 on the costs of local authorities. [216265]

Charlotte Atkins: The Government considers that the Traffic Management Act 2004, overall, should be cost neutral for local authorities, taking account of the opportunities to recover some costs through the provisions of the Act, and the scope to use existing resources in new ways.

TREASURY

1992 Treasury Rules

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the payments under the 1992 Treasury Rules were invoked for *(a)* Gunwharf, Portsmouth, *(b)* Royal Clarence Yard, Gosport, *(c)* Peninsular Barracks, Winchester and *(d)* Ashford Barracks, Kent; and whether the Rules have ever been invoked more than once on the same site. [214283]

Mr. Caplin: I have been asked to reply. Clawback payments to the Ministry of Defence were invoked in connection with Gunwharf—more than once—and Royal Clarence Yard. However, there is no clawback clause in the contract for either Peninsula or Ashford Barracks as in each case the purchasers paid full market value at the time of disposal.

Airline Cabin Crew

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Inland Revenue withdrew the flat rate expenses allowance for airline cabin crew; what criteria were used in making this decision; and if he will make a statement. [216455]

Dawn Primarolo: Flat rate expense allowances are agreed with individual employers to reflect individual circumstances. The hon. Member's question concerns a particular airline. The Inland Revenue is in discussion with the airline concerned to agree a flat rate expense allowance that reflects the appropriate level of expenses in line with the qualifying conditions set in tax law.

Alcohol-related Deaths (Leicester)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many deaths within Leicester, South alcohol was found to be the primary cause in each year since 1997. [216387]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Parmjit Singh Gill, dated 21 February 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking in how many deaths within Leicester, South Parliamentary Constituency, alcohol was found to be the primary cause in each year since 1997. (216387)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. The attached table shows the numbers of deaths among residents of Leicester, South Parliamentary Constituency where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 1997 to 2003.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] for Leicester, South parliamentary constituency[2] 1997 to 2003[3]

	Number of deaths
1997	10
1998	9
1999	10
2000	17
2001	10
2002	12
2003	16

[1] For the years 1997–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed:
291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol
For the years 2001–2003 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol
The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:
Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 17, pp 5–14.
[2] Usual residents of this area.
[3] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Aviation Fuel

David Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment has been made of the merits of introducing a tax on aviation fuel. [216298]

Mr. Timms: None.

Capital Allowances

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to change the system of capital allowances for plant and machinery. [217174]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government's proposals for modernisation of the taxation of capital assets—including capital allowances—are set out in a Technical Note on Corporation Tax reform, published by the Inland Revenue in December 2004. This is available at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/pbr2004/sup_ct-reform-tech-note.pdf

In light of this, any changes to the system of capital allowances for plant and machinery will be considered by the Chancellor as part of the normal Budget cycle.

Carers

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of carers who are over the age of 65 years. [217039]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Mark Oaten, dated 21 February 2005:

The National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales has been asked to reply to your recent question asking what estimate has been made of the number of carers who are over the age of 65 years. I am replying in his absence. (217039)

I refer you to the answer given in the Official Report of 31 January 2005 columns 590W to 591W, which includes the latest available information.

Child Trust Fund Payments

Angela Eagle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in each ward of Wallasey constituency contain children who qualify for child trust fund payments. [217313]

Mr. Timms: I refer My hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the child trust fund.

Climate Change Levy

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was received in 2003–04 from those companies paying the climate change levy at 20 per cent. of the full rate. [216816]

Dawn Primarolo: It is not possible to determine the revenue the Exchequer received in 2003–04 from those companies paying the climate change levy at 20 per cent. of the full rate.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who the ministerial design champion for his Department is. [215655]

Mr. Boateng: I am the ministerial design champion for the Treasury.

Labour Statistics

Andy Burnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many job vacancies there were in Leigh in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004; and if he will make a statement on the levels of long-term (i) adult and (ii) youth employment in Leigh over the last 15 y[illegible]. [214587]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Andy Burnham, dated 21 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about job vacancies and unemployment. I am replying in his absence. (214587)

Statistics on vacancies in total are only available from the ONS Vacancy Survey, which provides information at national level only. For local areas, figures for vacancies held by the Jobcentre Plus administrative system are available for periods up to April 2001. However, due to changes to that system, more recent figures are available only for newly notified vacancies, and not on a comparable basis.

There were 223 unfilled vacancies registered at Jobcentres in Leigh on average during 1997. The latest comparable figure, the average for the 12 months to April 2001, was 270. These figures represent only those vacancies notified to Jobcentres, not all vacancies in an area.

Table 1 gives estimates of the numbers of long-term unemployed people, both youth and adult, who were resident in Leigh Parliamentary Constituency, for each twelve month period ending February from 1999 to 2004, the most recent available period. Information on length of time unemployed is not available for earlier periods.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of young people aged 18 to 24 years old and adults (aged 25 and over) resident in the Leigh constituency claiming JSA benefits for over 12 months or more in each year from 1989 to 2004.

Table 1: People resident in Leigh parliamentary constituency unemployed for over 12 months

Thousand

12 months ending February	*Youth (aged 16 to 24)*	*Adult (aged 25 and over)*
1999	[1]—	1,000
2000	[1]—	1,000
2001	[1]—	1,000
2002	[1]—	[1]—
2003	[1]—	[1]—
2004	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Estimates not shown as they are potentially disclosive.

Note:
These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Leigh constituency claiming for 12 months or more

Annual averages	*Youth claimants (aged 18 to 24)* [1]	*Adult claimants (aged 25 and over)* [1]
1989	251	735
1990	157	555
1991	198	588
1992	331	871
1993	361	1,045
1994	274	944
1995	177	785
1996	140	690
1997	85	495
1998	40	290
1999	10	295
2000	10	260
2001	5	210
2002	5	180
2003	5	170
2004	10	145

[1] Computerised claims only.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus administrative system

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the levels of *(a)* adult and *(b)* youth employment in Morecambe and Lunesdale were in each of the last eight years; and if he will make a statement. [216777]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Ms Geraldine Smith, dated 21 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about adult and youth employment. I am replying in his absence. (216777)

The attached table gives estimates of the number of youths and adults in employment, who were resident in the Morecambe & Lunesdale Parliamentary Constituency, for the twelve month periods ending November each year from 1997 to 2004.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Employed youths and adults resident in Morecambe and Lunesdale parliamentary constituency

12 months ending February	*Youths (aged 16–24)*	*Adults (aged 25 and over)*
1997	4,000	29,000
1998	4,000	32,000
1999	3,000	32,000
2000	5,000	33,000
2001	7,000	31,000
2002	4,000	31,000
2003	7,000	33,000
2004	8,000	32,000

Note:
These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Customs Section of the Joint Committee (EEC-Norway) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217257]

Dawn Primarolo: The UK was not involved with these meetings, which are the responsibility of the European Commission. Consequently the information requested is not available.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Customs Section of the Joint Committee (EEC-Iceland) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217258]

Dawn Primarolo: The UK was not involved with these meetings, which are the responsibility of the European Commission. Consequently the information requested is not available.

Euro

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the eventual phasing out of national designs on euro notes and coins is planned; and what *(a)* volume and *(b)* value of euro notes and coins has been repatriated since the inception of the euro. [217386]

Mr. Timms: The informal ECOFIN Council of Verona agreed in April 1996 that euro coins should have a distinctive national obverse side, the designs for which were decided by each member state. Arrangements concerning the technical specifications of euro coins were formally set out in Council Regulation (EC) No. 975/98 of 3 May 1998. Arrangements concerning the transfer of euro notes and coins are the responsibility of the European Central Bank and can be found on their website: www.ecb.int

Football Testimonials

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to end tax-free testimonials for professional footballers; and if he will make a statement. [216745]

Dawn Primarolo: The proceeds from footballers' testimonial events may already be chargeable to tax under present law. Whether they are or not depends upon the circumstances of each individual case. We have no current plans to change this. However, we keep all aspects of the tax system, including this one, under review.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost was of the recent release of documents relating to the United Kingdom's exit from the ERM in 1992 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [217136]

Mr. Timms: No Treasury Minister or special adviser had any involvement in the release of these documents. I understand that the documents were obtained within the relevant cost limit.

Health Treatment (Charitable Donations)

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of exempting charitable donations for health treatment from income calculations in relation to tax credit entitlements. [216328]

Mr. Timms: All charitable donations which qualify for Gift Aid, whatever their purpose, should be deducted from the calculation of income when claiming the child and working tax credits. Information is provided in the guidance notes that accompany the tax credits claim form and annual declaration. There is also a working sheet available on request from the Inland Revenue Tax Credits Helpline to help claimants make such deductions when working out their income for tax credit purposes.

Home Repossessions (North Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many home repossessions there have been in North Durham in each year since 1990. [217129]

Keith Hill: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) on 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1294W.

Departmental Policies (Huddersfield)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, the effects on Huddersfield of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216875]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented the economic performance of the Huddersfield constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen

by 53 per cent., long-term unemployment has fallen by 90 per cent., and long-term youth unemployment by 91 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./

Inheritance Tax

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his most recent estimate is of the total value of gifts made in a year which become exempt from inheritance tax because they have been made at least seven years before death; and what estimate he has made of how many people make such gifts in a year. [216682]

Dawn Primarolo: Information to make reliable estimates is not available.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the impact on the inheritance tax yield of changing the rate at which inheritance tax is chargeable to *(a)* zero per cent. for sums between £0 to £300,000, *(b)* 40 per cent. for sums between £300,000 to £600,000 and *(c)* 50 per cent. for sums over £600,000. [217169]

Mr. Timms: The proposed regime would produce additional yield of about £30 million in a full year.

Insulation Material

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implications for the environment of the differential rates of VAT applied to insulation material when bought privately and when installed. [216335]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government are committed to improving household energy efficiency, as part of their programme to meet the Energy White Paper targets and see the use of economic instruments as an effective way to implement environmental policy.

The Government apply a reduced rate of VAT for the contractual installation of energy-saving materials in certain circumstances and have a long-standing commitment to pursue an amendment to the EU sixth VAT directive to permit a reduced rate of VAT for the purchase of energy-saving materials for DIY installation.

Evaluation of policy initiatives to protect the environment, including tax measures, is being carried out as part of the climate change programme review. This review is due to report its findings in the summer.

Ivory

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what weight of ivory and how many ivory products were seized by HM Customs and Excise since March 2004. [216082]

Dawn Primarolo: Details of ivory seizures, including weight where available, made by HM Customs and Excise in the first half of the fiscal year 2004–05 will appear in the combined Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise spring report, due to be published in May 2005. A copy will be placed in the Library of the House.

Landfill Tax

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was generated by the landfill tax in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2002–03. [217396]

Dawn Primarolo: Landfill tax receipts are published by Customs and Excise in the Landfill Tax Bulletin, a copy of which can be found on the UK Trade Information website at www.uktradeinfo.com.

Landfill tax receipts for the financial year (net of landfill tax credit scheme payments) are as follows:

	£ million
2002–03	541
2003–04	607

National Insurance Contributions

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate how many people who pay national insurance contributions would not do so if the threshold for payment were to be raised to £10,000 per annum, in the first year following the raising of the threshold. [215785]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of people who are currently projected to pay national insurance contributions in the UK, who would not do so if the primary threshold and lower profits limit were raised to £10,000 per annum in the year 2005–06 is estimated to be 4 million. The estimate is based upon the "Report by the Government Actuary on the drafts of the Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order 2005 and the Social Security (Contributions) (Re-rating and National Insurance Funds Payments) Order 2005".

Office for National Statistics

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated expenditure by the Office for National Statistics on producing and compiling statistics relating to England at Government Office for Region level was in the last period for which figures are available. [216035]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Mr. Colin Mowl, to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 21 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent parliamentary Question on what the estimated expenditure by the Office for National Statistics on producing and compiling statistics relating to England at Government Office for Region level was in the last period for which figures are available. (216035)

For the reasons stated in the answer that appeared in the Official Report, number 125, column 312, it is not possible to provide the costs you seek to identify.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the influence of public spending increases on the state of the economy. [216069]

Mr. Boateng: The Treasury's latest projections for public expenditure and the Treasury's latest economic forecast are set out in the 2004 pre-Budget report, which is available in the Library of the House. Updated projections will be provided with the Budget.

Royal Marriage

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the costs to public funds which will arise from the proposed marriage between His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Camilla Parker Bowles; whether rules exist in respect of public expenditure on such matters; and if he will make a statement. [217193]

Mr. Timms: Since the wedding will be a private event, I have made no such estimate.

Government Departments manage their own budgets in line with their statutory responsibilities, objectives and priorities.

Stamp Duty

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the reduction in stamp duty yield from residential property which would result from raising the threshold at which 1 per cent. stamp duty starts from £60,000 to £150,000. [216683]

Dawn Primarolo: The estimated revenue cost, in 2005–06, of restructuring stamp duty on residential property sales by raising the threshold from £60,000 to £150,000 is £480 million. This does not include any allowance for behavioural changes.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the cost of reliefs from stamp duty for transfers in designated disadvantaged wards was accounted for by *(a)* residential transfers and *(b)* non-residential transfers in the most recent year for which figures are available. [216681]

Dawn Primarolo: In 2003–04 the proportion of disadvantaged areas relief claimed in respect of residential transfers was estimated at 15 per cent. of the total relief claimed, and the amount claimed in respect of non-residential transfers was estimated at 85 per cent.

Tax Credits

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many families in Morecambe and Lunesdale have received *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit; [216769]

(2) what the average monetary value is of *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit awards. [216770]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits (broken down by families with and without children) in each constituency appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics, Geographical analyses." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Information on average awards is not available.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reasons the Tax Credit Office does not reimburse members of the general public for overpayments until the end of the financial year. [216430]

Mr. Timms: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 (COP26) 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?' sets out the Department's approach to handling tax credits overpayments.

It is only after the end of the year, once all the information about income and circumstances is available, that the Revenue will compare tax credit entitlement with what they have paid. They will then finalise the award and send claimants a finalisation notice. If there is an underpayment a lump sum payment is then made. Alternatively, if the finalisation notice shows an overpayment for the year, it will wherever possible be recovered from a continuing award.

When a person's circumstances change during the year the Revenue will adjust the payments for the remainder of the year with the aim of paying the right amount of tax credits for the year as a whole.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer under what circumstances individuals who have made overpayments to the Tax Credit Office due to errors by the office are eligible to claim financial hardship payments. [216431]

Mr. Timms: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

Additional tax credits payments may be made by the Inland Revenue to prevent hardship where payments are reduced following the adjustment of an award.

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of families who will benefit from the extension of the subsidy in the child care element of the working tax credit in 2006 announced in the pre-Budget report in December 2004; and what he estimates the average gain per family per year will be. [217130]

Mr. Timms: Assuming that the number of beneficiaries and average child care costs remains at December 2004 levels, around 330 thousand families will benefit from the increase in the percentage of child care costs covered in the child care element of tax credits. The average (mean) gain is assumed to be £400 per year.

Angela Eagle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each ward of Wallasey constituency claim working tax credit. [217312]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits (broken down by families with and without children) in each constituency appears in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics, Geographical analyses, December 2004" This can be found on the Inland

Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Estimates for smaller areas are not available.

VAT

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many VAT registered businesses there were on average in the area of *(a)* Selby district council and *(b)* City of York council in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2004. [216321]

Dawn Primarolo: Customs and Excise do not collect data on the number of VAT registered businesses by geographical area. Information on VAT registered businesses by area is available via the Small Business Service website www.sbs.gov.uk. The following table shows the number of enterprises registered for VAT at the start of the year for the unitary authorities and local authority districts within the Yorkshire and the Humber Government office region.

Number of VAT registered enterprises at the start of 1997 and 2004

Area type	*Area*	*1997*	*2004*
Region	Yorkshire and the Humber GOR	121,975	129,645
UA	East Riding of Yorkshire	9,705	10,115
UA	Kingston upon Hull city of	4,455	4,505
UA	North East Lincolnshire	3,300	3,435
UA	North Lincolnshire	3,985	4,235
UA	York	4,055	4,670
County	North Yorkshire county	23,115	24,775
LA	Craven	2,670	2,845
LA	Hambleton	3,995	4,155
LA	Harrogate	6,025	6,715
LA	Richmondshire	2,025	2,095
LA	Ryedale	2,860	3,010
LA	Scarborough	3,200	3,270
LA	Selby	2,340	2,690
County	South Yorkshire metropolitan county	24,170	25,910
LA	Barnsley	3,900	4,365
LA	Doncaster	4,940	5,580
LA	Rotherham	4,270	4,690
LA	Sheffield	11,055	11,275
County	West Yorkshire metropolitan county	49,190	52,005
LA	Bradford	10,270	10,780
LA	Calderdale	5,495	5,890
LA	Kirklees	9,475	10,400
LA	Leeds	18,105	18,230
LA	Wakefield	5,845	6,705

Source:
Small Business Service www.sbs.gov.uk

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his policy, in cases where the Inland Revenue is persuaded that a VAT registration is unnecessary and mistaken, that *(a)* penalties for non-payment and *(b)* backdated tax claims should be withdrawn; and if he will make a statement. [216535]

Mr. Timms: Where a person makes taxable supplies and is registered for VAT voluntarily, the registration cannot be cancelled retrospectively. The person is liable to account for VAT on taxable supplies made and may be liable to penalties during the period of the registration.

Where Customs and Excise register a person for VAT and they subsequently discover that the person was neither required nor entitled to be registered, they will remove the person from the register and withdraw any assessments made for arrears of tax or penalty. Customs are, however, able to recover from that person any amount he has charged to customers as VAT and he may be liable to a penalty on this amount.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Licensing Act

12. **Mr. Walter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in implementing the Licensing Act 2003. [216959]

Tessa Jowell: I am pleased to announce that 7 February marked the start of the transition from the old licensing regimes to the arrangements under the 2003 Act. Applicants have six months to convert existing licences and until November to secure new licences. The necessary regulations have been made and the first two personal licence qualifications under the Act have been accredited. The old licensing laws will end in November and be superseded by a licensing regime which is fit for the 21st century and will benefit the whole community.

13. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's advice to local authorities is on assessing the local cumulative impact of licensing applications made under the Licensing Act 2003. [216960]

Mr. Caborn: On 7 July last year, we published our guidance to licensing authorities and this is available in the House Library and also on our website www.culture.gov.uk. Our advice on assessing the local cumulative impact of licensing applications made under the 2003 Act can be found in sections 3.13–3.28 of the guidance.

17. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the financial implications of the Licensing Act 2003 for sports clubs. [216964]

Mr. Caborn: In setting the fee levels and the allocation of premises to a band based on its non-domestic rateable value we have considered the impact of the approach on clubs, including sports clubs. We do not consider that the financial implications on such clubs will be significant.

14. **Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment her Department has made of the impact of licence fee levels on amateur and voluntary sports clubs. [216961]

Mr. Caborn: In setting the fee levels and the allocation of premises to a band based on its non-domestic rateable value we have considered the impact of the approach on clubs, including sports clubs. We do not consider that the impact on such clubs will be significant.

Faith Communities (Built Heritage)

18. **Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement

on her Department's policies towards financial support for the protection of the built heritage of faith communities. [216965]

Estelle Morris: My Department has in place a comprehensive package of financial support for the repair and maintenance of historic ecclesiastical buildings. The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme repays the equivalent of the VAT paid on repairs to listed churches and other places of worship. English Heritage operates schemes for the funding of repair and maintenance of historic churches and cathedrals.

Alcohol Licensing (Bridgwater)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many alcohol licences are currently issued to premises in the Bridgwater constituency. [217411]

Mr. Caborn: We do not have a record of the number of alcohol licences currently issued in the Bridgwater constituency.

However, I can provide statistics for the petty sessional areas of Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane and West Somerset, which include Bridgwater. As of June 2004 there were 799 on-licensed premises and 263 off-licence premises—a total of 1,062 licences.

DCMS deposited the source publication for these figures, "Statistical Bulletin Liquor Licensing (England and Wales, July 2003-June 2004)", on 27 October 2004 in the House Libraries. This document is available on the DCMS website at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/research/statistics_outputs/liquor_licensing_statistics.htm

Children's Sport

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many children participated in *(a)* boxing, *(b)* rugby, *(c)* football, *(d)* netball and *(e)* hockey in the last period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [216948]

Mr. Caborn: The results of the largest and most comprehensive survey of school sport in England—published on 29 April 2004—showed that within School Sport Partnership schools; 97 per cent. offer football, 84 per cent. offer netball, 77 per cent. offer hockey, 67 per cent. offer rugby union, 12 per cent. rugby league and around 1 per cent. offer boxing.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many schoolchildren there are in the Bridgwater constituency; and what percentage participate in two hours of quality physical sport or activity each week. [217412]

Mr. Caborn: There were 12,611 pupils aged 5–19 attending schools in the Bridgwater constituency as of January 2004 (the latest figures available).

The constituency level information sought is not held centrally in the format requested. However, the 2003–04 PE, School Sport and Club Links survey showed that overall, 62 per cent. of pupils in schools within a School Sport Partnership (at the time of the survey, 30 per cent. of all schools in England) spend at least two hours in a typical week on high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum.

Within the constituency of Bridgwater there is one School Sport Partnership, comprising 31 schools. All schools, both within Bridgwater as well as nationally, will be part of a School Sport Partnership by September 2006.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the Blyth Valley constituency, the effects of the Department's policies on the Blyth Valley since 1997. [216541]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Blyth Valley since 2 May 1997.

In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. A school sport partnership involving four Primary Link teachers is based at St. Benet Biscop in Blyth Valley. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Blyth Valley have benefited from six Sport England Lottery grants totalling £493,758.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England, North East grants increased from £5.7 million to £12.2 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in regularly funded organisations in the North East will be £11.3 million. Blyth Valley has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals, including the Northern Cultural Skills Partnership and the Northern Disability Arts Forum.

From September 2005, schools in Blyth Valley will be included in the third phase of the Creative Partnerships programme which began in 2002. Creative Partnerships aims to give schoolchildren and their teachers the opportunity to explore their creativity by working on sustained projects with creative organisations and individuals, including artists, theatre companies, dance studios, museums, orchestras, film-makers and historic buildings. Funding of £65 million was allocated for the period 2002–05 to develop Creative Partnerships, and the programme will receive at least a further £86 million in 2005–08.

Young people in Blyth Valley have also benefited from the setting up of the Northumberland Youth Music Action Zone, known as CoMusica, in 2000. CoMusica has received a total of £866,500 and 1,450 young people from across Northumberland have taken part in its local music projects and events.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts

and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Blyth Valley will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high-quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity in Northumberland. The UK Film Council has, through Northern Film and Media, awarded £45,000 to a number of projects by writers based in the Blyth Valley.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Blyth Valley with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 4,135.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on new year's eve to 11 am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licences and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licences for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Blyth Valley, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Blyth Valley has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including One North East. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Blyth Valley. English Heritage has awarded grants worth £147,940 to buildings or organisations in Blyth Valley since 2 May 1997, including Seaton Delavel Hall.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Blyth Valley are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million Lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England. Information from the National Lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Blyth Valley has benefited from over 330 awards totalling over £6.3 million. Of these, 22 awards worth over £1.7 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund, which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, the effects on Huddersfield of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216874]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Huddersfield since 2 May 1997.

In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. There is one school sport partnership involving two school sport co-ordinators and nine primary link teachers in Huddersfield. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Huddersfield have benefited from 19 Sport England lottery grants totalling £12,395,679, including two awards worth £249,603 in total, from the £108 million investment in innovative sports facilities through the Active England programme.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England, Yorkshire and the Humber grants increased from £6.7 million to £21.3 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England, Yorkshire and the Humber investment in regularly funded organisations will be £23.4 million. Huddersfield has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals, including the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and the Lawrence Batley Theatre.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Huddersfield will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high-quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity in the Huddersfield area. A number of projects have received funding through Screen Yorkshire.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Huddersfield with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 5,095.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on new year's eve to 11 am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licences and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licences for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Huddersfield, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Huddersfield has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including Yorkshire Forward. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Yorkshire.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £245,000 to buildings and organisations in Huddersfield since 2 May 1997.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Huddersfield constituency are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community value of public libraries. Kirklees council has recognised this value and has undertaken initiatives such as the 'Bibliotherapy Project' where 'Bibliotherapists' work in the community alongside health professionals in local areas of social need to 'prescribe' books and promote the benefits of reading for relaxation, reducing stress, anxiety and depression. DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund 2000–01 awarded £45,000 to this project, which benefited people in Huddersfield.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Huddersfield has benefited from over 342 awards totalling over £26.5 million. Of these, 55 awards worth over £8.9 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund, which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to Loughborough constituency, the effects of her Department's policies on Loughborough since 1997. [217083]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Loughborough since 2 May 1997.

In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. There is one school sport partnership in Loughborough based at Burleigh community college involving four School Sport Co-ordinators, 18 Primary Link teachers and one partnership Development Manager. Burleigh community college has also been awarded a Sport England grant of £272,027 to support the School Sport Co-ordinator programme. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and

refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Loughborough have benefited from 10 Sport England community capital lottery grants totalling £11,662,082, two awards worth £685,074 in total from the £108 million investment in innovative sports facilities through the Active England programme. The English Institute of Sport based in Loughborough has received a further seven lottery grants from Sport England totalling £29,563,079.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–5. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England, East Midlands grants increased from £4.3 million to £8.9 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in regularly funded organisations in the East Midlands will be £9.3 million. Loughborough has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals, including Charnwood Arts and the Eastern orchestral Board.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Loughborough will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high-quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Loughborough with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–4 was 4,585.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11pm on new year's eve to 11am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licences and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licences for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Loughborough, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Loughborough has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England; and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including the East Midlands Development Agency. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Loughborough.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £79,700 to Loughborough since 2 May 1997.

In common with all of those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Loughborough are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the museums, libraries and archives council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Loughborough has benefited from over 230 awards totalling over £49.5 million. Of these, 21 awards, worth over £2.8 million, were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Digital Broadcasting

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which constituencies in England are not able to receive digital reception. [216569]

Estelle Morris: The vast majority of households in England can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital TV services via either digital satellite, digital terrestrial or cable.

However at least a quarter of households cannot currently receive the digital terrestrial television (DTT) service; this figure cannot be increased before switchover. We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency but we are arranging for DTT coverage maps to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Freeview also provides a comprehensive postcode

database (www.freeview.co.uk <http://www.freeview.co.uk>) that gives availability of digital terrestrial television throughout the UK.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will estimate the percentage of the population in the Bridgwater constituency which does not have access to digital television. [217399]

Estelle Morris: The vast majority of households in Bridgwater can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital television services via digital satellite. However, according to Ofcom, digital terrestrial coverage in and around the Bridgwater area is patchy; this cannot be improved, before switchover, due to topography and technical constraints on the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) transmissions.

We do not have a breakdown of coverage by constituency but we are arranging for DTT coverage maps to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Freeview also provides a comprehensive postcode database (www.freeview.co.uk <http://www.freeview.co.uk>) that gives availability of digital terrestrial television throughout the UK.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) when digital reception will be available in *(a)* the constituency of Solihull and *(b)* postcode area B92; [216346]

(2) for what reasons digital reception is not available in Solihull. [216347]

Estelle Morris: The vast majority of households in Solihull can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital television services via either digital satellite, digital terrestrial or cable. However, according to Ofcom, digital terrestrial coverage in and around the Solihull area is patchy; this cannot be improved before switchover, due to the technical constraints on Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) transmissions from the Sutton Coldfield transmitter.

No firm dates for Switchover have been set, but Ofcom have suggested an indicative date of 2010 for the Central ITV region.

The Government will confirm the timetable once all the remaining issues relating to digital switchover are resolved and we are satisfied that the interests of consumers, especially the most vulnerable, are well protected.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will ensure that people in the constituency of Solihull will be able to receive analogue reception up to the point of their being able to benefit from digital reception. [216348]

Estelle Morris: This process will begin by switching off one analogue channel, which will immediately be made available on a digital multiplex, also carrying other digital services. Then at a later date the other analogue services will be switched off and immediately replaced by the remaining digital services.

Film Industry

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support the Government are offering the UK film industry. [216963]

Estelle Morris: The Government are committed to creating a sustainable, stable and successful film industry. The UK Film Council, our strategic body for film, allocates Lottery money for film making, and works with Government support to promote the widest possible enjoyment and understanding of cinema throughout the UK. The Government itself continues to make available generous and appropriately-targeted tax relief for film makers, and is working to create the best possible framework for increased and improved co-productions between UK film makers and their counterparts abroad.

Gaelic Language

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's policy is on the use of the Gaelic language; and what plans her Department has to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme. [217092]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS does not have a Gaelic language scheme. However, our good practice policy is to ensure that Gaelic versions are available on request.

Licensing

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) when licensing authorities were informed that Government-approved forms for the new licensing regulations were available; [216750]

(2) in what formats the new licensing forms were made available on the departmental website; and for what reasons the Word format was only available to those who had already bought the right to the US font style called Bliss; [216751]

(3) when the Department put the new licensing forms to comply with the new licensing regulations on the departmental website; [216752]

(4) whether the Bliss font style that was available in Word format for the new forms for licensing applications was made freely available on the departmental website; [216753]

(5) what the official start date was for the new licensing forms to be used. [216782]

Mr. Caborn: 7 February marked the start of the transition from the old licensing regimes to the arrangements under the 2003 Act. There was no requirement to apply on the first appointed day; applicants have six months to convert existing licences and until November to secure new licences before the new regime comes into force. New forms were placed on our website www.culture.gov.uk on 4 February at which point we also informed LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services) so that they could inform local authorities. However, near final versions of the forms have been available for several weeks and applicants have been able to use these to plan their applications. Both versions of the application form were made available on our website as pdf files. They were

not made available on our website in Microsoft Word format using the Bliss font, although we hope to be in a position to provide them in Word format using the Arial font soon.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many public house licences were withdrawn in 2004 due to the sale of alcohol to *(a)* individuals below the minimum legal age and *(b)* inebriated individuals. [216608]

Mr. Caborn: We do not have information about the reasons for licence revocations and are therefore unable to provide the breakdown of figures in the categories that the hon. Gentleman has requested, but we can provide the overall figure for public house justices' on-licence revocations in the 12 months ending 30 June 2004.

The overall number of public house justices' on-licence revocations in England and Wales was 186 in 2004. These statistics are collected on a triennial basis and are for the year to 30 June.

DCMS deposited the source publication for these figures, "Statistical Bulletin Liquor Licensing (England and Wales, July 2003-June 2004)", on 27 October 2004 in the House Libraries. This document is available on the DCMS website at; http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/research/statistics_outputs/liquor_licensing_statistics.htm.

National Lottery

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received proposing that lottery tickets should indicate that grants may be restricted to exclude applications from areas deemed to be affluent. [216038]

Estelle Morris: None. Lottery distributors do not exclude applications from geographic areas on the grounds of affluence. Lottery tickets do indicate that further information about the National Lottery is available at www.national-lottery.co.uk <http://www.national-lottery.co.uk> and this includes details of how to apply for a Lottery grant and the many awards which have been made since the Lottery was established in 1994. Lottery distributors, the Lottery operator and the National Lottery Promotions Unit are also working together to increase public awareness of Lottery funding.

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for what reason lottery funding is denied to specific geographic areas in the UK on the grounds of perceived affluence. [216039]

Estelle Morris: Lottery funding is not denied to specific geographic areas in the UK on the grounds of perceived affluence. Policy directions issued to distributors by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport require them to take into account "the need to ensure that all parts of England have access to lottery funding". There is extremely strong competition for lottery funding and some distributors' awards give priority to areas or people who are at risk of social exclusion.

Overseas Visitors

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many overseas visitors to the UK there were in each quarter of the last five years. [217126]

Mr. Caborn: According to data published by the Office for National Statistics, the number of visits to the UK by overseas residents in each quarter of the last five years was as follows:

	Total (Thousand)
2000	
Q1	4,993
Q2	6,733
Q3	7,943
Q4	5,540
2001	
Q1	4,863
Q2	6,279
Q3	7,100
Q4	4,593
2002	
Q1	4,525
Q2	6,375
Q3	7,555
Q4	5,724
2003	
Q1	4,944
Q2	6,073
Q3	7,534
Q4	6,165
2004	
Q1	5,495
Q2	7,014
Q3	8,433
Q4	6,600

Playing Fields (Bridgwater)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many playing fields that were in use in 1997 in the Bridgwater constituency are no longer used for that purpose. [217395]

Mr. Caborn: According to information provided by Sedgemoor district council, the following playing fields that were in use in Bridgwater in 1997 are no longer in use today—none of which have been sold for development:

Pitches Lost	*Location*	*Reasons*
2 football pitches	Bath Road	Sold to Bridgwater college. The land is being used to create an artificial turf pitch and other field sport use.
1 football pitch	Victoria Park	Lack of use. One pitch was re-orientated to improve the quality of the remaining pitch. The land accommodating the second pitch reverted back to informal recreational open space within the park.
3 football pitches	Bristol Road	Lack of use. Pitches were also of poor quality and were prone to frequent flooding.

Public Buildings

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the ministerial group on better public buildings last met; what assessment she has made of the work of the group; and if she will make a statement. [215656]

Mr. Caborn: Since its launch in October 2000 the Better Public Buildings initiative has achieved much by better embedding design quality at the heart of Government construction programmes. Most Government Departments have produced action plans which outline their commitment to architectural design standards. The Ministerial Design Champions Group last met on 20 January 2003 at HM Treasury. The Ministerial Group is supported by a group of senior officials from all relevant Departments and the officials group last met in March 2004.

Officials and Ministers are considering new proposals for the future structure of the Better Public Buildings initiative.

Sports Clubs (Bridgwater)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many amateur sports clubs there are in the Bridgwater constituency. [217400]

Mr. Caborn: The DCMS does not hold the information requested. The hon. Member may wish to direct his query to the local authority for Bridgwater.

Sports Facilities

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what Government funding is available towards the building of *(a)* full all-weather pitches, *(b)* running tracks and *(c)* sports stadiums for football and rugby. [216570]

Mr. Caborn: By 2006, Government will have committed over £1 billion to developing new or refurbished public sports facilities. This funding is being channelled through New Opportunities for PE and Sport, the Community Club Development Programme, Space for Sport and the Arts, Active England and the Football Foundation.

Building Schools for the Future will also invest £5.1 billion in new school facilities, including open and accessible multi-sport and physical activity facilities.

The national governing bodies for Rugby and Football and the Football Foundation provide advice on the funding available to build new football or rugby stadia.

Television Licences

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many letters Television Licensing have issued in each of the last 10 years threatening legal proceedings; how many of these have led to prosecutions; and how many prosecutions have been successful. [216594]

Estelle Morris: The BBC has statutory responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system and TV Licensing carries out the day-to-day administration under contract to the Corporation. I have therefore asked the BBC's Head of Revenue Management to write to the hon. Member direct, placing a copy of the letter in the Libraries of both Houses.

Based on the currently available information, the number of people in England, Scotland and Wales[1] proceeded against for offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts[2] in each of the last 10 years was:

[1] Figures for Northern Ireland are not available.

[2] On the principal offence basis.

	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*
1993	205,661	179,253
1994	195,644	169,681
1995	137,818	120,482
1996	193,899	170,500
1997	95,730	79,898
1998	98,044	77,982
1999	69,395	[1]56,402
2000	123,153	[2]107,702
2001	97,877	85,098
2002	111,671	976,061
2003	110,170	[3]95,596

[1] Scottish figures based on incomplete data

[2] Some figures based on a sample of data covering one full week in each quarter for 2000. Estimates based on the sample are included and considered sufficiently robust.

[3] 2003 figures for Scotland are not available.

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in Leicester, South are receiving a free television licence for over-75s. [216941]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, which administers free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agent for the BBC, is not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Leicester, South constituency in 2003–04 was 4,660, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Angela Eagle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people in each ward of Wallasey constituency *(a)* are entitled to free television licences and *(b)* have claimed free television licences. [217117]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, which administers free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agent for the BBC, is not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Wallasey constituency in 2003–04 was 5,445, according to Department for Work and Pensions records. Winter fuel payment data at ward level relate to census wards rather than electoral wards and consequently do not correspond precisely to constituency boundaries.

Visitor Attractions

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support her Department is giving to visitor attractions in England. [216952]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS provides a range of support. For example, visitor attractions benefit from VisitBritain's overseas and domestic marketing effort, to which DCMS contributed £45.9 million in 2003–04. Many attractions benefit from grant in aid to museums, galleries, the heritage sector and RDAs. In addition, DCMS works closely with this sector to support improvements in productivity, particularly through initiatives aimed at raising skills and quality levels as well as the standard of data.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Animal Experiments

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what incentives are available for the researching of alternatives to experimental testing on animals. [202829]

Ms Hewitt: The Medical Research Council and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences fund the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NCSRs). NCSRs has made £500,000 available for research on all 3Rs in the 2005–06 period.

Business Rates

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on its business rates proposals in relation to green generation of electricity. [217084]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have discussed this matter with my right hon. Friend the Minister for Local and Regional Government (ODPM) (Mr. Raynsford). My predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for East Ham (Mr. Timms) also wrote to the Minister for Local and Regional Government on the issue. There have also been a number of discussions at official level between our respective Departments and the renewables industry.

Departmental Buildings

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* capital and *(b)* running costs of providing supplementary heating was in her Department's buildings in London in each of the last three years. [215149]

Ms Hewitt: Over the last three years the Department has purchased a small number of stand-alone radiators at a total cost of £1,700 for emergency use only.

The running costs cannot be identified as use of each unit is not individually logged or metered.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the ministerial design champion for her Department is. [215651]

Ms Hewitt: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Science and Innovation leads on design for the Department.

ECGD (Anti-corruption Procedures)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 27 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1242W, on the Export Credits Guarantee Department, if she will place in the Library the Government's written responses to the written and verbal representations made by *(a)* Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) customers and *(b)* organisations representing ECGD's customers in respect of ECGD's anti-bribery and corruption procedures. [210121]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Documents relating to discussions between ECGD, the CBI and industry on the Department's new anti-bribery and corruption procedures introduced on 1 May 2004 and the revised procedures that came into force have been placed in the Libraries of the House and are available on the ECGD website (www.ecgd.gov.uk/_)

ECGD will shortly be launching a public consultation on these procedures.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations were made by BAES, Rolls-Royce and Airbus to the Export Credit Guarantees Department about its anti-corruption procedures; and if she will place written submissions in the Library; [203068]

(2) if she will place in the Library representations made by *(a)* BAES, *(b)* Rolls-Royce and *(c)* Airbus at meetings held with her Department since January to discuss the anti-corruption procedures brought into force by the Export Credits Guarantee Department on 1 May; [200600]

(3) if she will place in the Library minutes from the meetings since January in which *(a)* her officials and *(b)* Export Credits Guarantee Department staff have met organisations to discuss anti-corruption procedures brought in by the Export Credits Guarantee Department; [200601]

(4) which companies have made representations to her Department regarding the anti-corruption procedures brought into force by the Export Credits Guarantee Department on 1 May; and if she will place these representations in the Library. [201178]

Mr. Alexander: Documents relating to discussions between ECGD, the CBI and industry on the Department's new anti-bribery and corruption procedures introduced on 1 May 2004 and the revised procedures that came into force have been placed in the Libraries of the House and are available on the ECGD web site (www.ecgd.gov.uk/_)

ECGD will shortly be launching a public consultation on these procedures.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will place in the Library a copy of the Export Credits Guarantee Department's anti-bribery and corruption provisions that applied to Airbus prior to 1 May. [201181]

Mr. Alexander: Copies of ECGD anti-bribery and corruption procedures that applied to all companies prior to 1 May 2004 have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

EU Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the likely costs to local authorities of complying with the EU Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [216031]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Local authorities have no specific obligations under the EU Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) although their established role in relation to domestic waste collection means they will inevitably be involved. Under current proposals, local authorities will have the opportunity to register civic amenity sites for free collection and recycling of separately collected WEEE by producers.

Non-domestic Rates

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department has carried out analysis of the impact of the non-domestic property rating system on the development of a competitive telecommunications market. [206983]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In response to recommendations made by the Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG) the Department appointed a contractor to carry out an independent review of the rating system as it applies to telecommunications. The BSG published an interim status report on their website in December 2004.

Nuclear Industry

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her policy on state aid case C 39/2004 (ex N613/2003), 2004/C 315/05 of OJ C315 volume 47 of 21 December 2004, on public financing of nuclear decontamination; what representations she has received from the nuclear industry; what representations she has made on the issue to the European Commission; and what impact the case will have on the establishment of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. [215242]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We notified the European Commission of our intention to support the creation of the NDA in December 2003. The Commission announced a formal investigation into state aid to the NDA on 1 December 2004. This announcement confirmed that the transitional arrangements under which the NDA will start work on 1 April 2005 do not involve state aid. We are working closely with the Commission and formally responded to them on 31 January 2005. We will make further responses to the Commission as required. We are in ongoing consultation with BNFL.

Oil and Gas Exploration

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many licences have been issued for oil and gas exploration in UK territorial waters off the coast of Northern Ireland. [216669]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Since offshore licensing began in the 1960s, three production licences (which cover exploration activity) have been issued over acreage in quadrants 111, 124, 125 or 126, which lie just off Northern Ireland.

Licence number	*Blocks covered*	*Issued*	*Surrendered*	*Operator*
P869	111/03, 111/04, 111/08	1993	1999	BG International Limited
P870	111/10, 111/15	1993	1997	BG International Limited
P871	111/25, 111/29, 111/30	1993	1997	Elf Exploration UK plc

Parliamentary Questions

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will answer the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Gordon, with reference numbers *(a)* 206155, tabled on 21 December 2004, *(b)* 206131, tabled on 20 December 2004, *(c)* 202945, tabled on 6 December 2004, *(d)* 203088, tabled on 6 December 2004, *(e)* 201181, tabled on 30 November 2004, *(f)* 201178, tabled on 30 November 2004, *(g)* 200600, tabled on 29 November 2004 and *(h)* 200601, tabled on 29 November 2004. [212057]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 31 January 2005]*: I answered question 206155 on 13 January 2005, 206131 and 202945 on 3 February 2005 and I am answering the remaining questions today.

Wind Turbines

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research her Department *(a)* has commissioned and *(b)* plans to commission on (i) impulsive noise and noise modulation effects arising from groups of wind turbines and (ii) general noise from wind turbines. [209185]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: There are four main studies on the impact of noise from wind turbines that have been commissioned and examined by my Department. These are:

The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms, published 1996,

Noise emission from wind turbines, published 1999,

Aerodynamic noise reduction for variable speed turbines, published 2000, and

Assessment of the Effects of Noise and Vibration from Offshore Wind Farms on Marine Wildlife, published 2001.

Two other studies that have been commissioned and are both due to report in Spring 2005 are:

Study into the Effects of Wind Farms on the Eskdalemuir Seismic Array (Joint study with MOD and BWEA), and

The measurement and assessment of low frequency noise from three UK wind farms.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces (Commonwealth Personnel)

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces from Commonwealth countries have requested British nationality in the last six months; in which branches and units of each service they were serving; and if he will make a statement. [216703]

Mr. Caplin: Applications for British citizenship are a matter for individual service personnel to apply direct to the Home Office. Although some applications are brought to the Department's attention, the armed forces have no firm knowledge of the numbers of personnel of Commonwealth origin who have applied to the Home Office for British nationality, as this is a personal matter.

Armed Forces Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what housing standards are applied in the management of current and former Ministry of Defence housing provided for members of the armed forces. [214538]

Mr. Caplin: Joint Services Publications (JSP) 315 is the Services Accommodation Code, which lays down the general housing standards, set by the Ministry of Defence (with the agreement of HM Treasury) for the provision of accommodation for the armed forces. Within this publication, scale 21 relates to the standards for Service Families Accommodation for officers and scale 22 relates to standards for other ranks.

BAE Warton

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for servicing of aircraft at BAE Warton. [215505]

Mr. Ingram: At present nine Harrier aircraft are being modified at Warton together with 10 Typhoon aircraft which are undergoing routine operational maintenance under the terms of the initial support contract. All of this work will be completed by the end of 2005. Currently, no further aircraft are scheduled for servicing at the Warton site.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who the ministerial design champion for his Department is. [215644]

Mr. Caplin: I am the Department's ministerial design champion.

Falklands Anniversary

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the 25th anniversary of the Falklands conflict; and whether he has set up a group to organise a veterans' visit. [216233]

Mr. Caplin: Ministry of Defence officials have been considering how best to mark the 25th anniversary of the Falklands conflict in 2007 for some time, in consultation with the South Atlantic Medal Association (82). A number of proposals are being considered but no group has yet been established to develop plans for veterans' visits.

Fire Control and Retargeting Systems

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment his Department has made of the functions of the Mk98 Mod 5 Fire Control System and the SLBM Retargeting System; when this assessment was last *(a)* reviewed and *(b)* changed; and if he will make a statement; [214238]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the total cost of acquiring the *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software for (i) the Mk98 Mod 5 Fire Control System and (ii) modifications to the Trident system under the SLBM Retargeting System; and if he will make a statement; [214239]

(3) what assessment his Department has made of the date of entry into service of the Mk98 Mod 5 Fire Control System for Trident; when this assessment was last *(a)* reviewed and *(b)* changed; and if he will make a statement. [214240]

Mr. Hoon: The Mk98 Fire Control System draws together all the information needed to calculate the flight data required by a Trident missile prior to launch. The Mk98 Mod 2 Fire Control System was installed on the Vanguard class of submarines at build. The Mk98 Mod 5 programme was undertaken to update hardware to overcome obsolescence and is now complete. Initial Operating Capability was achieved in September 2002 and all SSBNs had been modified by February 2003. The update programme, for hardware only, cost $39.810 million (including the costs of fitting) and $6.987 million for initial spares.

Information on the costs of the related software modifications is not held separately from that relating to other software costs in this area. All aspects of deterrent capability are kept under continuous review. The United Kingdom has no requirement for a SLBM Retargeting System on Trident submarines, and has no plans to acquire that capability.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) only a selection of the information disclosed in response to freedom of information requests since January. [215194]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence website hosts the MOD Publication Scheme (as required by s.19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000). Since early January 2005, the website has also included a FOI "Reading Room". This was specifically set up to publish information released in response to requests which is considered to be of wider public interest. We are keeping the Reading Room under review with the possibility of adding new Classes of Information to the Publication Scheme if appropriate. We do not plan to publish all information released in response to requests because some is not of general interest.

Information on the website will be available to the Library of the House, and there seems no advantage, and potentially significant cost, in supplying hard copies. We therefore have no plans to do so.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people have been treated at the Ministry of Defence hospital in Gibraltar in each of the last five years. [216554]

Mr. Caplin: The numbers of attendances at the Ministry of Defence hospital in Gibraltar (the Royal Naval Hospital) in the last three years have been:

Attendances at the Ministry of Defence hospital in Gibraltar

	Number
2004	7,301
2003	7,261
2002	6,103

Statistics are not readily available for the previous two years and collecting them would incur disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with the Gibraltar Government on joint administration of the Gibraltar hospital; and if he will make a statement. [216881]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has not held any formal discussions with the Government of Gibraltar on joint administration of the Gibraltar hospital.

Gulf War-related Illnesses

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 354, on Gulf War-related illnesses, if he will provide further details on the funding for the research programme on Gulf veterans' illnesses; which institutions are undertaking the research; and how the funding to carry out the research will be allotted. [215710]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence receives independent advice on its programme of research into whether the health of Gulf veterans has been adversely affected by their service in the 1990–91 Gulf conflict from the Medical Research Council (MRC). We will consider funding any proposal for research which has been formally considered and approved by the MRC.

Studies which we have already funded (in whole or part) are:

Study	*Institution*
Epidemiological study of Mortality/Morbidity	University of Manchester
Epidemiological study of Reproductive Health	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Vaccines Interactions Research Programme	Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (with independent academic support) and National Institute for Biological Standards and Control
Systematic literature review of research	University of Wales/University of Bristol
Neuromuscular symptoms in Gulf veterans	Kings College
Testing for Squalene in vaccines	Independent Laboratory
Paraoxonase work	Manchester Royal Infirmary and Kings College
Anthropological study into "Gulf War Syndrome"	PhD student at University College London
Longitudinal study of changing health in Gulf veterans	Kings College
Cancer Study	University of Manchester

We have also co-operated with epidemiological and clinical studies of UK veterans sponsored by the US Department of Defense and conducted by Kings College. Moreover, a number of research papers on the health of those veterans attending the Gulf veterans' Medical Assessment Programme have been published. In addition, further research into Gulf veterans' illnesses recommended by MRC following their review of the subject in 2003 is in various stages of progression.

Iraq

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what obstacles have been encountered in training and equipping British soldiers in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [214723]

Mr. Ingram: We have identified and responded to a number of lessons with regard to training and equipping of British Soldiers in Iraq. These are detailed in our comprehensive report 'Operations in Iraq—Lessons for the Future', which is available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the United States Pentagon about the cause of the Hercules crash in Iraq. [217157]

Mr. Hoon: The investigation team has spoken to in-theatre personnel, including US military personnel as appropriate, in order to help them ascertain the cause of the crash.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list overseas trips he and his departmental Ministers have made on official business or using official transport, since 1997, broken down by date. [211870]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* Since 1999, the Government publishes, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House.

All ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 376W, on ministerial visits, whether on any occasion the flight returned to the United Kingdom with unused passenger capacity. [216512]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1631W. On the June 2004 return military flight from Basra to the United Kingdom all vacant seats on the aircraft were made available to Ministry of Defence personnel.

MRSA

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many cases of MRSA have been recorded in Ministry of Defence hospitals since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [216398]

Mr. Caplin: The majority of secondary care for armed forces personnel is now provided at Ministry of Defence Hospital Units (MDHUs) which are based within NHS Trust hospitals around the UK. MRSA numbers are now monitored by the Infection Control Teams of each NHS Trust under the direction of a Consultant Microbiologist, not the MOD. The Department therefore does not hold these records. Royal hospital Haslar is currently an exception to this.

Since April 2001 it has been run in partnership with Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust. The number of cases of MRSA at Royal hospital Haslar are only available from the year 2000. Due to reasons of medical confidentiality, numbers are not broken down below five.

Royal hospital Haslar:

	Number of cases
2000	[1]5
2001	22
2002	66
2003	34
2004	26
2005	5

[1] Less than five cases.

The Ministry of Defence currently has two military hospitals at its permanent overseas bases in Cyprus and Gibraltar. Records for these bases are only held for the last five years and less than five cases of MRSA have been recorded. Those cases recorded have been transferred in from other hospitals and no new cases of MRSA have been identified in either hospital in this period.

Nepal

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will withdraw the minute, dated 20 January, concerning the gifting of non-lethal military equipment to the Government of Nepal; [217326]

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will reconsider his decision to gift military equipment to Nepal in response to the actions by the King of Nepal since the departmental minute was tabled on 20 January. [217071]

Mr. Ingram: In light of the recent events in Nepal, the Government have decided to withdraw the minute relating to the gift of military equipment pending a full review of our policy with regard to the provision of military assistance and equipment to Nepal. We are naturally extremely concerned about these events and we are currently consulting with our international partners on a co-ordinated response. I will write to my right hon. and hon. Friends when this review has developed.

New Aircraft Carrier

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the physical integrator for the new aircraft carrier project; [213997]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the ability of Kellogg Brown and Root to perform the role of physical integrator for the new aircraft carrier project. [213996]

Mr. Hoon: I refer my hon. Friend to the Written Statement I made to the House on 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 74–75WS, and my letter of 7 February 2005.

New Recruits

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what mechanisms his Department uses to promote the importance of physical fitness to new recruits in training. [215174]

Mr. Caplin: All potential applicants and new recruits are given pre-joining fitness booklets and/or shown videos which include information and advice on how to prepare for the pre-selection fitness test that they must pass.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211678]

Mr. Caplin: Details of the Ministry of Defence's expenditure on advertising and publicity are included in the annual Departmental Performance Reports, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. For 1996–97 the information is shown on page 49, Cm 3781 and for 1997–98 the information is shown on page 49, Cm 4170.

Expenditure on advertising, and advertising and publicity, is now included in figures for publicity and recruiting, and a detailed breakdown is not available. For 2003–04, costs of publicity and recruitment were £53.6 million. We have no estimate for publicity and recruitment expenditure for the current year; expenditure in future years has not yet been decided.

RAF Lossiemouth

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* RAF personnel and *(b)* civilian personnel were relocated each month from RAF

Lossiemouth from September 2004 to February 2005, including where they were relocated to and what tasks they had previously been assigned to at RAF Lossiemouth; and if he will make a statement. [217275]

Mr. Caplin: None.

Russia

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* technical and *(b)* tactical advances offered to the armed forces of Russia by the Bulava (SS-N-30) missile; and if he will make a statement. [216715]

Mr. Hoon: Bulava is reported to be a new solid propellant submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) which has been under development in Russia for several years and has a reported maximum range of approx 8000km. When it enters service, probably in a new class of submarine, it will supplement and eventually replace older SLBMs, thus enabling Russia to maintain its sea-based strategic nuclear capability. Although not expected to provide Russia with a greater capability in terms of range, Bulava is likely to incorporate more modern materials and technology than currently deployed systems.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the Russian Kh-555 conventional missile and *(b)* what (i) technical and (ii) tactical advances this missile offers over the Kh-55 Granat missile; and if he will make a statement. [216716]

Mr. Hoon: The Kh-555 is Russia's new conventionally armed air-launched cruise missile and is based on the Kh-55 nuclear-armed cruise missile that was developed during the cold war. Both missiles are expected to be carried by Tu-95 Bear and Tu-160 Blackjack bombers.

The Kh-555 has been in development for a number of years. The nuclear warhead is replaced by a 500 kg class conventional warhead. These changes are likely to reduce the range of the Kh-555 to 2,500–3,000 km compared to the Kh-55 range of 3,000–3,500 km.

When fully integrated into operational units, the Kh-555 will provide Russia with the ability to strike high-priority targets with precision from long ranges.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Russia's supersonic anti-ship cruise missile capabilities; and if he will make a statement. [216717]

Mr. Hoon: The Ministry of Defence maintains a continuous assessment of Russia's supersonic anti-ship missile capability. Russia has a credible supersonic anti-ship missile capability to engage surface warships at long range (greater than 100 km). A number of these systems are very old, as are the ships that carry them, and they are expected to be phased out over the next decade. New more capable systems are being developed.

Scottish Regiments

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) where the Royal Regiment of Scotland will have its *(a)* headquarters and *(b)* museum; [212108]

(2) what plans he has for the current Scottish Regimental Headquarters and museums. [212109]

Mr. Caplin: The future location of the regimental headquarters of the Royal Regiment of Scotland is yet to be determined.

There is likely to be a study on how the Scottish museums can best represent the antecedent regiments and the new regiment. It is too early to provide definitive advice on the future arrangements for these museums.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216530]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence is fully committed to taking forward the findings and delivery plan stemming from the joint Cabinet Office, Department for Work and Pensions and Health and Safety Executive initiative 'Managing Absence in the Public Sector'.

We are undertaking a thorough review of our approach to managing absence and the requirement for occupational health advice. In the meantime, a new e-enabled sick absence reporting process is to be implemented from April 2005. As well as improving the accuracy of sick absence reporting, this reinforces the responsibilities for all involved in the absence process. We have robust procedures for the management of short-term absence to tackle poor attendance. A lifestyle screening programme is available to all civilian staff, which monitors major health risk factors and provides advice on how risks can be reduced.

Staff Identity Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215087]

Mr. Caplin: In the Ministry of Defence, all service personnel are issued with a service identity card, which is used to access all but the most sensitive areas. MOD civilians are not routinely issued with identity cards but are instead provided with a site-specific security pass. The present cost of producing either type of pass is approximately £4 per card. Information on how many passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, records are available for 2003 and I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 371W, to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten).

Suez Canal Zone Medal

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the application for a Suez Canal Zone Medal of Mr. Samuel Hill of Whitburn, West Lothian, referred to in the letter of 27 April 2004 from the Parliamentary

Under-Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans to the hon. Member for Linlithgow, reference 1670/04/A, will be processed. [216912]

Mr. Caplin: Mr. Hill's Service Records were received by the Canal Zone Section at the Army Medal Office this week and a check of his eligibility for the medal carried out. I can confirm that he qualified for the General Service Medal 1918–62 with the clasp Canal Zone and arrangements have been made to have his Service details engraved on a new medal which will be despatched to him shortly.

Trident

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he expects the UK to make a decision on a replacement for the Trident nuclear weapons system in the next Parliament. [209882]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 3.11 of the 2003 Defence White Paper (Cm 6041-I).

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average cost per year of maintenance for one Trident nuclear submarine has been since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [216714]

Mr. Hoon: The data required to answer the question is not held centrally or in a standard format and it will take time to prepare a substantive response. I will therefore write to the hon. Member in due course and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Clergy (Employment Rights)

23. **Mr. Edwards:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners, what progress is being made in granting employment rights to clergy. [217010]

Sir Stuart Bell: Last Tuesday the General Synod debated the group's second report and welcomed the recommendation that employment rights under section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999 be granted to all clergy. The report was commended to the wider Church for comment and an implementation group will be set up to bring forward legislation.

Hunting Act

Paul Flynn: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners, what action the Church Commissioners have taken to ensure that their tenants comply with the Hunting Act 2004. [217011]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners expect their tenants to obey the law and would not condone any breach of the hunting ban. Any such breach would be a matter for the police.

York Minster

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners, what estimate the commissioners have made of the cost of restoring the fabric and maintaining the structures of York Cathedral; and if he will make a statement. [217008]

Sir Stuart Bell: York Minster has recently identified the need for major repair work on the East Front. The Cathedrals Fabric Commission is involved in discussion with the Chapter and has encouraged it to look at all the options. Any estimates of costs would be a matter for the Chapter.

I should add by way of the statement requested by my hon. Friend that in 2003 the Commissioners provided £2.5 million in grants to cathedrals and spent £3.8 million on cathedral clergy stipends. In the case of York Minster, it receives no other financial support from the Commissioners, whose grants are targeted on the least well resourced.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Bullying

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on steps taken by local education authorities to stop bullying in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools. [216308]

Derek Twigg: There is much effective practice in preventing and addressing bullying in many LEAs around the country and the 'Make The Difference' conference programme has allowed this work to be shared and celebrated. The conferences offered LEAs as well as schools an opportunity to learn at first hand from the very successful. Many LEAs were represented at the nine regional conferences, either as speakers, workshop leaders or delegates, and evaluations tell us that attendees left feeling inspired and motivated.

The Anti Bullying Alliance (ABA) has been funded to sustain the momentum created by those conferences and each of their regional leads is working with the LEAs in its region to promote best practice and develop innovative and practical approaches to tackle bullying at strategic level. Anti bullying work has a high profile within the Key Stage 3 behaviour and attendance (B and A) strand and within the primary behaviour and attendance pilot, and there are KS3 Behaviour and Attendance Consultants in every LEA working directly with schools to tackle a range of behaviour issues including bullying.

Many LEAs provide guidance on anti bullying to their schools to supplement and localise the guidance issued by the DfES nationally, and advice to parents on what to do if they are worried their child is being bullied.

We know that LEAs around the country are at various stages of addressing this agenda. A number are well advanced and have been successfully working in this area for a number of years and other LEAs have recently appointed dedicated anti bullying officers or are considering doing so, but some have yet to tackle the problem in a structured and systematic way. We will continue to work through the national strategies and the ABA to encourage these LEAs to move forward on this agenda.

Capita SIMS System

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the accuracy of the 2005 Pupil Level Annual School Census returns derived from Capita SIMS systems in schools. [215723]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: As we are still in the process of collecting the Annual School Census data, we have not yet made an assessment of the accuracy of any of the data derived from any of the management information systems available to schools.

However, this process will start shortly and data derived from the Capita SIMS system will be subject to the same rigorous quality assessment as those from all other school management information systems.

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary schools have reported problems with Capita SIMS.net systems. [215724]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We have received reports from around 500 schools (normally via their local education authority) regarding software issues from December 2004 to date. While this is higher than in the same period last year, we have been able to resolve the vast majority.

We are continuing to monitor the situation and are working closely with Capita to keep problems to a minimum.

Child Abuse

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her targets are for reduction in child abuse deaths over the next 10 years. [213113]

Margaret Hodge: The Government does not have specific targets to reduce the numbers of child abuse deaths. We do want all children to stay safe and to reduce the number of avoidable child deaths. That is why following the Laming Inquiry that reported on the terrible death of Victoria Climbié we have introduced a major programme of action called "Every Child Matters: Change for Children". This includes the introduction of: a duty on key local services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to make sure that local agencies and services are doing this effectively; Local Screening Teams to investigate all unexpected child deaths; better sharing of information, with new systems for all local agencies to share concerns that they have about a particular child; and a new inspection framework. Agencies' involvement in LSCBs and the work of LSCBs themselves will be assessed regularly by the relevant inspectorates.

We have provided £90 million in 2004–05 and 2005–06 as a Specific Formula Grant to support councils in improving their services to safeguard children.

Child Care Places

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the change has been in the number of child care places in North Durham since 2001. [214671]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested. The available information on child care places and nursery education places is shown in the tables.

The available information on child care places for Durham local authority area is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Number [1,2] of registered child care places for children under eight years of age by type of care Durham local authority area—position at 31 March each year 2003 and 2004

Type of care	*2003*	*2004*
Full day care	2,300	2,800
Sessional day care	1,400	1,400
Childminders	3,100	3,400
Out of school day care	1,700	1,900
Creche day care	500	500

[1] Rounded to the nearest 100 places.
[2] Data Source: Ofsted

Table 2: Number [1,2] of day care places for children under eight years of age by type of provider Durham local authority area—position at 31 March each year 2001 to 2002

Type of provider	*2001*	*2002*
Day nurseries	1,500	n/a
Playgroups and pre-schools	2,200	n/a
Childminders	3,900	n/a
Out of school clubs	1,600	n/a
Holiday schemes[3]	7,900	n/a

n/a = Not available.
[1] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 places.
[2] Data Source: Children's Day Care Facilities Survey.
[3] From 1999, places were counted once for each school holiday. Before 1999, places were counted once each year.

The figures for child care places for 2003 and 2004 are not directly comparable with the day care figures for 1997–2001. The figures for 2003 and 2004 were derived from the Ofsted database of registered child care providers. The figures for 1997–2001 were derived from the Children's Day Care Facilities Survey, which was discontinued in 2001. There are no figures for 2002.

With the introduction of the National Day Care Standards and the transfer of responsibilities for registration and inspection of child care providers from local authority Social Service Departments to Ofsted in September 2001, childcare places were classified according to the type of day care provided: full day care, sessional day care, childminder, out of school day care or creche day care. Ofsted have produced figures based on this classification on a quarterly basis from March 2003. Their latest figures were published on 19 January 2005 in their report "Registered Childcare Providers and Places, 31 December 2004", which is available on their website, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications.

Up until March 2001, child care providers were classified according to the type of provider: day nurseries, playgroups and pre-schools, childminders, out of school clubs and holiday schemes. Figures based on this classification were published in a series of statistical bulletins, which are available from the Department's website, www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics.

The available information on nursery education places for Durham local authority area is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Number[1] of free nursery education places taken up by 3 and 4-year-olds Durham local authority area—maintained schools and private, voluntary and independent providers of early years education

Position in January each year 2001–04	Number
2001	[2]9,900
2002	[2]10,200
2003	[3]10,000
2004	9,600

[1] Rounded to the nearest 100 places.
[2] *Sources:*
Annual schools census and nursery education grant data collection exercise
[3] Annual schools census, nursery education grant data collection exercise and early years census.

Children Act

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the Children Act 2004 amends the inspection regimes facing local government. [216266]

Margaret Hodge: To ensure a shared approach across inspection, the Children Act 2004 allows for the creation of a Framework for the inspection of Children's Services and for inspectorates to carry out joint area reviews (JARs) of all children's services provided in an area.

The new inspection arrangements will capture how well services are delivered and how well they work together to improve children and young people's wellbeing. Through the common approach provided by the Framework, joint area reviews will provide a picture of what it is to be a child in the local authority area being reviewed. JARs will replace a number of existing separate inspections for children and young people at local authority level, including LEA inspections, Connexions service inspections and inspections of children's social care. Together, inspectorates will judge the way in which all services for education, health, social care and youth justice, both individually and collectively, contribute to improving outcomes.

Ofsted, in partnership with other related inspectorates and commissions, are currently consulting on new arrangements for Children's Services inspection.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what new responsibilities the Children Act 2004 places on local authorities. [216267]

Margaret Hodge: The Children Act 2004 places a number of new statutory duties on those persons and bodies responsible for children's services, including local authorities. These new duties will help improve outcomes for all children and young people, by maximising opportunity and minimising risk.

The new duties are set out in enclosures 1 and 3 of 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children'. This can be downloaded from www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_content/documents/Every%20Child%20Matinserts.pdf

Children in Care

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children are in *(a)* children's homes and *(b)* foster care, broken down by ethnic group. [213755]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows the number of children looked after at 31 March 2004 by placement and ethnicity.

Children looked after at 31 March 2004 in a children's home or a foster placement by ethnicity[1, 3, 4]

Number

		Placement	
England	All children	Foster	Children's homes[2]
All children	61,100	41,600	7,000
White	48,800	33,200	5,500
Mixed	4,800	3,300	500
Asian or Asian British	1,500	990	130
Black or Black British	4,900	3,400	700
Other ethnic groups	1,200	770	180

[1] Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements.
[2] Includes secure units, homes and hostels subject to children's homes regulations, and homes and hostels not subject to children's homes regulations, but excludes residential schools.
[3] Figures taken from the SSDA903 return.
[4] Figures over 1,000 have been rounded to the nearest 100. All other figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Children looked after in England (including adoptions and care leavers), 2003–04.

Children's Fund Partnership

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the outcome was of *(a)* the Redbridge Children's Fund partnership and *(b)* the Waltham Forest Children's Fund partnership submitting a budget and preventive plan to the regional team demonstrating how funding for 2005 to 2008 would be spent; whether the funding for this period has now been agreed; what main activities will be undertaken; what the likely funding will be; and if she will make a statement. [215169]

Margaret Hodge: Redbridge Children's Fund Partnership has had its plan, including its funding plan, approved for three years and will be drawing down a total of £1.7 millioin. This resource will support a number of local projects, including—for example—the Children's Participation Project run by the Redbridge council for Voluntary Services and the Youth Crime Prevention Team. The Partnership has yet to make firm decisions on the other services it will commission beyond July 2005.

Waltham Forest Children's Fund Partnership has had its plan approved for one year, and will be submitting an updated plan for 2006–08 later this year. Subject to this plan being satisfactory, it will be able to access funding totalling £2.5 million over the three year period 2005–08. This resource will support a number of local projects, including, for example:

the 5–13 Early Intervention team;

the Youth Inclusion and Support Panel;

work with Somali families;

work with young victims of crime and bullying.

The partnership will be finalising the range of services it will support for 2005–06 and beyond between now and April.

Chorley High Schools

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils are attending Chorley high schools; and how many pupils attended each such school in each of the last five years. [216562]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The available information on pupils attending Chorley secondary schools is shown in the following table.

Maintained secondary schools: number on roll—Chorley parliamentary constituency

Position in January each year / *School name*	*2004*	*2003*	*2002*	*2001*	*2000*
Chorley Southlands high school	1,023	1,003	993	978	958
Parklands high school	1,107	1,085	1,061	1,049	1,043
Albany Science College	608	835	840	812	814
Rivington and Blackrod high school	1,913	1,889	1,845	1,823	1,799
Bishop Rawstome Church of England language college	925	926	926	889	867
St. Michael's Church of England high school	1,111	1,100	1,090	1,056	1,045
Holy Cross Catholic high school, a sports and science college	829	806	791	775	763
Total all secondary schools	7,716	7,644	7,546	7,382	7,289

Note:
Figures as reported by schools via the Annual Schools Census

Class Sizes

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Greater London have been taught in classes of more than *(a)* 25 and *(b)* 30 in each year since 1997, broken down by local education authority. [214557]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The requested information has been placed in the House of Commons Libraries.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter dated 29 July 2004 sent to her predecessor by the hon. Member for Brent, East regarding Ms Margaret Thomas. [215625]

Derek Twigg: The Department has no record of having received correspondence from the hon. Member regarding Ms Margaret Thomas. The Department's officials requested and received a copy of the correspondence on 8 February, and I expect to be able to reply by 1 March 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter dated 30 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Wright Robinson Sports College. [215705]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State replied to my right hon. Friend's letter of 30 December on 08 February.

Data Collection

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what statistical data is collected from schools by *(a)* local education authorities and *(b)* her Department on a termly basis. [216422]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department collects information on absent and excluded pupils on a termly basis from schools, via local education authorities.

Until last autumn term 2004, the Department also invited a sample of head teachers, teachers, support staff and governors to provide attitudinal information as part of a termly stakeholder tracking survey, but future plans are to move to carrying this out twice a year.

We have no comprehensive information about data collected by individual local education authorities.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of her Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215747]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Blackpool, South constituency lies within Blackpool local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents achievement for pupils attending schools in Blackpool, South are given in the following tables:

Key stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Blackpool, South constituency

Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above	*1997*	*2001*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Blackpool, South—English[1]	57	70	73	16
Blackpool, South—Maths[1]	55	70	70	15
National Average—English[2]	63	75	78	15
National Average—Maths[2]	61	71	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Blackpool, South constituency.

[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Blackpool, South constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2001*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Blackpool, South—5+A*-C	30.4	34.0	31.9	1.5
Blackpool, South—5+A*-G	79.1	83.6	86.7	7.6
Blackpool, South—1+A*-G	88.5	92.5	96.6	8.1
National average—5+A*-C	45.1	50.0	53.7	8.6
National average—5+A*-G	87.0	88.9	88.8	1.8
National average—1+A*-G	92.3	94.5	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged-15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The Primary and Key Stage 3 National Strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas, are continuing to deliver better results,

Further information by constituency is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/lnyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offer comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and cover five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government Office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post-16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The "In Your Area" website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post-16.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to Chorley constituency, the effect of her Department's actions and policies on Chorley since 1997. [216311]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Chorley constituency lies within Lancashire local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents achievement for pupils attending schools in Chorley are given in the following tables:

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Chorley constituency—percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above

	1997	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997/2004*
Chorley—English[1]	71	82	11
Chorley—Maths[1]	73	78	5
National Average—English[2]	63	78	15
National Average—Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Chorley constituency

[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools)

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Chorley constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997/2004*
Chorley—5 + A*-C	53.7	60.9	7.2
Chorley—5 + A*-G	91.6	90.5	-1.1
National Average—5+ A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National Average—5+ A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

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The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post-16, Higher Education and Adult Education

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The "In Your Area" website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post-16.

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effects of her Department's policies since 2 May 1997 on the constituents of Ilford, North. [215204]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Ilford, North constituency lies within Redbridge local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents Achievement for pupils attending schools in Ilford, North are given in the following tables.

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Ilford, North constituency.

	Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above		
	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997–2004
Ilford, North—English[1]	68	80	12
Ilford, North—Maths	63	77	14
National Average—English[1]	63	78	15
National Average—Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Ilford, North constituency.
[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Ilford, North constituency

	Percentage of 15 year olds gaining		
	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997–2004
Ilford, North—5 + A*-C	48.5	62.6	14.1
Ilford, North—5 + A*-G	88.1	93.1	8.0
Ilford, North—1 + A*-G	96.0	97.5	1.5
National Average—5 + A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National Average—5 + A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8
National Average—1 + A*-G	92.3	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.
[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Further information by constituency is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offer comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and cover five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government Office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post-16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The "In Your Area" website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post-16.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Maidenhead constituency, the effects on Maidenhead of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216029]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Maidenhead constituency lies within Windsor and Maidenhead local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents achievement for pupils attending schools in Maidenhead are given in the following tables.

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Maidenhead constituency

	Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above		
	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997–2004
Maidenhead—English[1]	73	88	15
Maidenhead—maths[1]	73	85	12
National average—English[2]	63	78	15
National average—maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Maidenhead constituency.
[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Maidenhead constituency.

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997–2004
Maidenhead—5 + A*-C	58.3	60.1	1.8
Maidenhead—5 + A*-G	95.6	93.9	-1.7
National average—5 + A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National average—5 + A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.
[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The Primary and Key Stage 3 National Strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas, are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offer comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and cover five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government Office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE / GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post-16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more

information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The "In Your Area" website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post-16.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of her Department's policies and activities since 2 May 1997. [214975]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Pendle constituency lies within Lancashire local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents Achievement for pupils attending schools in Pendle are given in the following tables:

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Pendle constituency

	Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above		
	1997	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Pendle—English[1]	61	75	14
Pendle—Maths[1]	60	72	12
National Average—English[2]	63	78	15
National Average—Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Pendle constituency.

[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Pendle constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Pendle—5 + A*-C	37.1	40.4	3.3
Pendle—5 + A*-G	83.5	86.8	3.3
Pendle—1 + A*-G	91.5	93.5	2.0
National Average—5 + A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National Average—5 + A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8
National Average—1 + A*-G	92.3	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Further information by constituency is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offer comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and cover five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government Office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post-16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The "In Your Area" website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post-16.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Reading, West constituency, the effects on Reading, West of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215832]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Reading, West constituency lies within Reading local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalent achievement for pupils attending schools in Reading, West are given in the following tables:

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Reading, West constituency—Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above

	1997	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Reading, West			
English[1]	56	75	19
Maths[1]	52	69	17
National Average			
English[2]	63	78	15
Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Reading, West constituency.

[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools)

GCSE and equivalent achievement of 15-year-old pupils[1] attending schools in the Reading, West constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Reading West			
5 + A*-C	37.4	44.5	7.1
5 + A*-G	83.8	86.5	2.7
1 + A*-G	90.0	93.7	3.7
National Average			
5 + A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
5 + A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8
1 + A*-G	92.3	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The Primary and Key Stage 3 national strategies, together with the measures we have taken to

help schools in the toughest areas, are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offer comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and cover five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government Office region. England figures are also provided. The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including literacy and numeracy at age 11, literacy and numeracy at age 14, GCSE / GNVQ results, pupils with special educational needs, school initiatives, school workforce, school funding and resources, children's social services, early years, class sizes, post-16, higher education and adult education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The "In Your Area" website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about adult education, school funding, school initiatives, school performance, school workforce and post-16.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Tatton constituency, the effects on Tatton of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215976]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Tatton constituency lies within Cheshire local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents achievement for pupils attending schools in Tatton are given in the following tables:

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Tatton constituency—Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above

	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2004
Tatton—English[1]	73	85	12
Tatton—Maths[1]	72	83	11
National Average—English[2]	63	78	15
National Average—Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Tatton constituency
[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools)

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Tatton constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2004
Tatton—5 + A*-C	50.2	59.6	9.4
Tatton—5 + A*-G	89.0	91.5	2.5
Tatton—1 + A*-G	93.9	95.7	1.8

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Tatton constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2004
National Average—5 + A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National Average—5 + A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8
National Average—1 + A*-G	92.3	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.
[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The primary and key stage 3 national strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas, are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

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The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE / GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post-16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The "In Your Area" website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post-16.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Witney constituency, the effects on Witney of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216019]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Witney constituency lies within Oxfordshire local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents achievement for pupils attending schools in Witney are given in the following tables.

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Witney constituency.

	Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above		Percentage point
	1997	2004	improvement 1997–2004
Witney—English[1]	71	80	9
Witney—maths[1]	66	79	13
National average—English[2]	63	78	15
National average—maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Witney constituency.

[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Witney constituency.

	Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining		Percentage point
	1997	2004	improvement 1997–2004
Witney—5 + A*-C	53.3	60.3	7.0
Witney—5 + A*-G	91.9	93.6	1.7
National average—5 + A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National average—5 + A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8

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Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who the ministerial design champion for her Department is. [215646]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I have responsibility for school buildings and as part of that brief I am the design champion for the Department for Education and Skills.

Education Funding

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much capital funding has been invested in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in Dudley, North in each year since 1996–97; and if she will make a statement. [215788]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Capital funding allocated to Dudley local education authority and to schools in each year since 1996–97 is detailed in the following table. Information is not held centrally on investment in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in Dudley, North. Investment in primary schools and secondary schools is determined by the local authority in accordance with its asset management plan.

	£000
1996–97	2,972
1997–98	1,206
1998–99	36,108
1999–2000	6,764
2000–01	11,100
2001–02	33,425
2002–03	12,371
2003–04	13,415
2004–05	15,703

Note:
The years 1998–99 and 2001–02 include Private Finance Initiative allocations of £29,550,000 and £22,000,000 respectively.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding was allocated by the Higher Education Funding Council to institutions in each region of England in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and how much will be allocated to each region in 2005–06. [216377]

Dr. Howells: The information on recurrent funding for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 academic years is shown in the table. Funding for 2005–06 has not yet been allocated. This will be announced by the Funding Council in March and finalised before the start of the academic year. The details will be published on the HEFCE website www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs.

£

Region	2003–04	2004–05
Eastern	331,955,091	346,910,892
East Midlands	374,804,576	395,594,592
London	1,089,681,410	1,151,336,052
North East	255,911,200	274,637,443
North West	580,977,274	614,173,467
South East	761,680,303	802,284,781
South West	356,913,892	384,473,659
West Midlands	397,899,016	419,512,542
Yorkshire and Humberside	490,045,241	519,620,441

Source:
HEFCE recurrent grants final allocations 2003–04 and 2004–05. Higher education institutions may also receive funding for capital and for special initiatives from HEFCE.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding from the New Deal for Schools has passed to schools in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley; and if she will list the schools which received funding. [215470]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much central government education funding was allocated on average to each *(a)* three to 10-year-old and *(b)* 11 to 15-year-old in Lancashire in each year since 1997. [216054]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Total funding includes funding via Education Formula Spending/Standard Spending Assessment and grants allocated at an LEA level. It excludes the pensions transfer to EPS and the Learning and Skills Council, and is in real terms. Education Formula Spending is part of the wider local government finance system and is supported by council tax as well as central government grant. The following table shows the per pupil figures for Lancashire.

Average funding per pupil (£)—Lancashire

	Real terms, excluding pensions transfer to EPS and LSC in 2003-04 and 2004-05	
	Primary (3 to 10-year-olds)	*Secondary (11 to 15-year-olds)*
1997-98	2,240	3,120
1998-99	2,350	3,170
1999-2000	2,510	3,290
2000-01	2,750	3,560
2001-02	2,900	3,710
2002-03	2,950	3,790
2003-04	3,100	3,810
2004-05	3,220	4,010

Notes:

Price Base: Real terms at 2003-04 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 30 September 2004

Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC.

Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3-10 and 11-15 and exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level.

The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3-year-old maintained pupils and estimated 3 to 4-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.

Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Status: 2003-04 and 2004-05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent on teaching of *(a)* science, *(b)* history, *(c)* mathematics, *(d)* religious education and *(e)* physical education in Lancashire in each year since 1997. [216055]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department does not collect this information.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the extent to which her Department's policies are meeting the needs of ethnic minorities. [205720]

Derek Twigg: My Department is fully committed to equality and diversity and to meeting our obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act. We recognise that through evaluating our policies and processes thoroughly, we go a long way to achieving this.

Like many public bodies, we have an obligation to publish a Race Equality Scheme every three years. This requires us to examine all our policies and functions to identify those that are most likely to impact adversely on black and minority ethnic people, prioritise their significance and develop action plans to address the problem. The Department updates its action plan within the scheme annually in the light of the latest evidence.

We are currently working on the Department's new scheme, to be published by the end of May 2005, in accordance with the statutory requirements. In doing so, each programme in the Department has assessed its functions and policies framed around the Department's five year strategy, for their contribution to race equality. A full Department-wide examination of our policies will continue to be made every three years and the results will be published and available on the Department's website.

In addition the Department is committed to the process of Race Impact Assessment, an example of which can be seen in our published assessments within the higher education sector.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on vocational training met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [216285]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The EU Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) met *(a)* once during the Italian presidency (26–27 November 2003), *(b)* once during the Irish presidency (23–24 June 2004), and *(c)* once during the Dutch presidency (25–26 November 2004). All of these meetings took place in Brussels. In each case an official from the DfES attended. Officials from the TUC and CBI represent the UK trade unions and employers. The ACVT is a tripartite committee of Government, employer and trade union representatives. It was set up by Council Decision 63/266/EEC dated 2 April 1963 which laid down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy across the EU. This decision was superseded by Council Decision 2004/223/EC dated 26 February 2004 which laid down new rules to take account of enlargement of the EU. For further information, please refer to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 (April 2004), Cm6310 (September 2004) and Cm6450 (February 2005), which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Expenditure per Pupil

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much central Government funding was spent on average per child in England in the latest period for which figures are available. [216045]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department does not collect information on overall Government funding spent on children. However, the funding per pupil in England in year 2004–05 was £4,020.

Notes:

1. Price Base: Cash.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education EPS settlements and include the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3 to 19 and exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the EPS settlement calculations.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.
6. Status: 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding central government provided per head for each East Devon pupil in 2003; and how much is provided per pupil for 2005. [216046]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is produced according to local authority areas rather than districts within an area. The total funding per pupil aged 3–19 in Devon was £3,530. Figures for 2005–06 are not yet available. This figure includes funding via Education Formula Spending/Standard Spending Assessment and Grants. It includes the pensions transfer and is in cash terms. Education Formula Spending is part of the wider local government finance system and is supported by council tax as well as central Government grant.

Notes:

1. Price Base: Cash
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education EFS settlements and include the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged 3–19 and exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the EFS settlement calculations.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.
6. Status: 2003–04 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Failing Schools

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills by what criteria a school is judged to be a failing school. [216861]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: A school is judged to require special measures following an Ofsted inspection which concludes that it is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The factors inspectors must consider in reaching a judgement that a school requires special measures are set out in the Ofsted "Handbooks for Inspecting Schools" available on the Ofsted website.

Faith-based Schools

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many private faith-based schools there were, broken down by faith, in each year between 1997 to 2004. [216686]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The figures in the following table show the number of independent faith based schools there were in each year from 1997 to 2003 based on schools inspection criteria.

	Jewish	*Muslim*	*Evangelical Christian*
1997	53	54	53
1998	52	61	55
1999	53	65	63
2000	52	71	67
2001	55	73	68
2002	59	77	70
2003	56	75	76

In 2004 we asked all independent schools for the first time to indicate their religious ethos, if any, and the results are given as follows:

	Number
Buddhist	1
Church of England	284
Hindu	1
Jewish	[1]37
Methodist	14
Muslim	111
Other Christian	355
Roman Catholic	122
Sikh	1

[1] We recognise 50 Jewish schools for inspection purposes

Free Nursery Places (Birmingham)

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Birmingham have benefited from free nursery places since the policy was introduced, broken down by constituency. [214037]

Margaret Hodge: All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Birmingham local education authority area and parliamentary constituencies within Birmingham since 1997 is shown in the tables.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-old—Birmingham local education authority area—position in January each year

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 4-year-olds*
1997	7,400	n/a	7,400	n/a	n/a	[4]12,500
1998	7,500	n/a	7,500	n/a	n/a	[5]13,300
1999	7,400	n/a	7,400	n/a	n/a	[4]14,200
2000	7,300	[6]3,300	10,600	n/a	n/a	[4]14,000
2001	7,200	[6]3,800	11,000	n/a	n/a	[5]14,000
2002	6,800	[6]4,500	11,300	12,600	[7]1,500	14,000
2003	6,700	[6]4,600	11,300	12,200	[7]1,600	13,800
2004	6,700	[5]4,200	10,900	12,000	[7]1,600	13,600

n/a = not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds by parliamentary constituency—Birmingham local education authority area—position in January 2004

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
Constituency	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[3]*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[4]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[5]*	*Total 4-year-olds*
Birmingham, Edgbaston	310	620	940	670	330	1,000
Birmingham, Erdington	630	380	1,000	1,000	160	1,200
Birmingham, Hall Green	400	250	640	760	90	850
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	680	220	900	1,200	70	1,200
Birmingham, Ladywood	1,300	450	1,700	1,800	140	2,000
Birmingham, Northfield	420	350	770	850	110	960
Birmingham, Perry Barr	640	300	930	1,100	100	1,200
Birmingham, Selly Oak	460	330	780	830	100	930
Birmingham, Sparkbrook and Small Heath	1,200	540	1,700	2,000	210	2,200
Birmingham, Yardley	460	250	710	890	70	960
Sutton Coldfield	270	490	760	870	180	1,000
Birmingham (postcode unknown)[6]	0	50	50	0	[7]	[7]
Birmingham LEA total	6,700	4,200	10,900	12,000	1,600	13,600

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[6] Matching providers to constituencies makes use of the provider postcode as returned in the Early Years Census data collection exercise.

[7] Negligible.

Further Education

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the funding gap is between school sixth forms and further education colleges in the London North Learning and Skills Council area; and if she will make a statement. [216679]

Dr. Howells: The Department does not have information on what the funding gap is between school sixth forms and further education colleges in the London North Learning and Skills Council area specifically.

However, the main measure the Department has used

to identify the funding gap is the difference in Learning and Skills Council (LSC) national funding rates for an AS/A2 qualification.

In 2002/03 the difference between the AS/A2 base rates was 10.5 per cent. Increased funding to support our Success for All strategy enabled the LSC to deliver a 4.5 per cent. increase in funding rates in 2003/04 for all colleges that agreed development plans. In the same year school sixth form funding rates increased by 3 per cent.—resulting in a narrowing of the funding gap to 9 per cent.

FE colleges that delivered against their plans receive a further 5 per cent. increase in funding rates for 2004/05 compared with a 4 per cent. increase for schools—a further narrowing of the gap to 8 per cent. We expect a similar step in funding rates in 2005/06 reducing the gap to 7 per cent.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to reduce the funding gap between school sixth forms and further education colleges in the London North Learning and Skills Council area. [217118]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Government recognise that there are differences in the funding allocated to further education colleges and school sixth forms nationally and has taken action to address this. For the academic year 2003/04, base funding rates per qualification increased by 3 per cent. for school sixth forms and by 4.5 per cent. for further education colleges on a broadly comparable basis. In 2004/05, funding rates for colleges meeting their targets increased by 5 per cent., while those for school sixth forms rose by 4 per cent. This trend will continue in the 2005/06 academic year.

GCSE Results (North Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the GCSE results were for students in North Durham in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* the latest period for which figures are available. [214195]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The table shows the results of 15-year-old pupils in GCSE and equivalent examinations for North Durham in 1997,2001 and 2004:

Percentage

Percentage achieving:	*1997*	*2001*	*2004*
5 or more grades A*-C	34.7	44.9	47.2
5 or more grades A*-G	86.8	88.8	89.1
Any passes	91.7	93.4	94.1

Notes:

1. As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

2. For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

Increased Flexibility Programme

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the Increased Flexibility Programme. [215740]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department engaged the National Foundation for Educational Research to evaluate the Increased Flexibility Programme. A number of evaluation reports have been published, including the report of the evaluation of the first year in February 2004 and the report of the evaluation of the second year in January 2005. The evaluations have covered the experience of implementation and the impact on:

progress towards qualifications;

social skills;

employability skills;

behaviour and attitudes;

attendance;

plans for progression;

partnership working.

A final report of the evaluation is due to be published in August 2005 and will include findings on achievements of young people in the first cohort, and their post-16 participation.

Independent Schools (Pre-registration)

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pre-registration independent schools which did not comply fully with regulations 2e and 2d on the first visit complied on the second visit; and how many were non-compliant with regulations 2e and 2d, broken down by faith. [210853]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table gives the figures requested for those schools that have already had two inspections after the new regulations came into force.

Regulation number/visit	*Number of schools not meeting the Regulation*	*Faith (if any)*
2(d)		
First	1	Christian Brethren
	2	Evangelical Christian
	16	Muslim
	7	None
	26	Total
Second	0	Christian Brethren
	2	Evangelical Christian
	7	Muslim
	3	None
	12	Total
2(e)		
First	2	Christian Brethren
	1	Evangelical Christian
	16	Muslim
	5	None
	24	Total
Second	1	Christian Brethren
	1	Evangelical Christian
	9	Muslim
	3	None
	14	Total

International Students

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1701W to the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman), on international students, if she will list the organisations and individuals from which representations have been received. [215460

Dr. Howells: The following table shows details of the representations received by my Department as at 10 February 2005 on the proposed charges for visa extension applications made by international students.

Representations to the Department for Education and Skills on Home Office proposals to increase charges for leave to remain applications as at 10 February 2005

Correspondent	*On behalf of:*	*Organisation*
Edward Garnier MP	Sir Marrack Goulding	Warden, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford
Professor Michael Stirling	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Birmingham
Signed cards from 132 students	—	Universities of Newcastle and Northumbria
Chileya Kasuba and Emma Wodfield (accompanied by 231 signed cards from members of University of Portsmouth SU)	—	Student Support Officer and President, Portsmouth Students Union
Baroness Diana Warwick	—	Chief Executive, Universities UK
Wes Streeting	—	Chair, Aldwych Group and President, Cambridge University Students' Union
John Randall MP	Wes Streeting	President, Cambridge University Students' Union
Anne McIntosh MP	Wes Streeting	President, Cambridge University Students' Union
Tim Boswell MP	John Wrathmell	Universities UK
Tony Worthington MP	Steve Cockburn	President, Edinburgh University Students' Association
David Chidgey MP	Professor Bill Wakeham	Vice-Chancellor, University of Southampton
Michael Martin MP	Steve Cockburn	President, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Chris Grayling MP	—	Shadow Minister for Education
David Rendel MP	—	Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on Higher Education
Gisela Stuart MP	Moataz Attallah	International student
Dr Rudi Vis MP	Mr. David Simons	Principal, Golders Green College
A F Richard	—	Vice Chancellor, University of Cambridge
Graham Allen MP	—	On behalf of Nottingham universities
Dr. John Brennan	—	Chief Executive, Association of Colleges
Professor Sir Andrew Haines	—	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
Professor John Craven	—	Vice Chancellor, University of Portsmouth
Brian Lang	—	Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of St. Andrews
Professor Robert Pearce	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Wales Lampeter
Professor Graham Upton	—	Vice-Chancellor, Oxford Brookes University
Professor Tim Wilson	—	Vice-Chancellor University of Hertfordshire
Professor Wakeham	—	Vice-Chancellor University of Southampton
Professor Gregson	—	Vice-Chancellor Queens University Belfast
Professor Gordon Marshall	—	Vice Chancellor, University of Reading
Professor Alan Pearman	—	Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Leeds
Eugene Critchlow	—	Academic Registrar, De Montfort University
Melvyn Cornish	—	University Secretary, University of Edinburgh
Professor David Tidmarsh	—	Vice Chancellor, Anglia Polytechnic University
Professor Geoff Whitty	—	Director, Institute of Education, University of London
Professor Joan K Stringer	—	Principal and Vice Chancellor Napier University
Dr. David Grant	—	Director of Strategic Development, Cardiff University
Professor Ray Cocks	—	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Keele University
Sir Howard Davies	—	Director, LSE
Dr. Ian Johnson	—	Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Glasgow Caledonian University
Brian Summers	—	Registrar and Secretary, University of E. Anglia
Professor Chris Taylor	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Bradford
Professor C Duncan Rice	—	Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of Aberdeen
Sir David Wallace	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Loughborough
Professor John S Brookes	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
Professor Paul W Wellings	—	Vice-Chancellor, Lancaster University
Alfred Morris	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of the West of England
Sir Muir Russell	—	Principal, University of Glasgow
Elizabeth Lister	—	Director, Recruitment and Admissions Service, Heriot-Watt University
Professor Patrick Dowling	—	Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Surrey
Professor J Drummond Bone	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Liverpool
Professor Stephen Hill	—	Principal, University of Holloway, London
Professor Tim Wilson	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Hertfordshire
Professor Brenda Gourley	—	Vice-Chancellor, The Open University
Professor William Stevely	—	Principal and Vice-Chancellor, the Robert Gordon University
Dr. David J Halton	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Glamorgan
Sir David Watson	—	Vice-Chancellor, University of Brighton
Professor Anthony P Cohen	—	Professor and Vice Patron, Queen Margaret University College
Professor Adrian Smith	—	Principal, Queen Mary University of London
Clare Short MP	James Anthony	University of Birmingham Guild of Students

Representations to the Department for Education and Skills on Home Office proposals to increase charges for leave to remain applications as at 10 February 2005

Correspondent	*On behalf of:*	*Organisation*
Nick Palmer MP	Chris Weekes	Vice Principal, Broxtowe College
Jon Owen Jones MP	Louise Casella	Director of Strategic Development, Cardiff University
Professor Robert G Burgess	—	Vice Chancellor, University of Leicester
Professor ADR Dickson	—	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Northumbria University
Kat Fletcher	—	National President, NUS
Christabel Silva	—	National Chair, Council for International Students

Hillingdon LEA

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the members of the School Organising Committee for the London borough of Hillingdon local education authority. [216436]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold information on the members of Hillingdon or any other School Organisation Committee (SOC). SOCs are committees set up by, but independent of, the local authority. Regulations require that all SOCs are constituted with five groups with representatives drawn from the LEA, local school governors, the Roman Catholic Diocese, the Church of England Diocese and the local Learning and Skills Council. SOCs may also include an optional sixth group to represent other local community interests.

Looked-after Children

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* looked-after children and *(b)* former looked-after children who received custodial sentences in each year between 1997 and 2004; [212082]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* looked-after children and *(b)* former looked-after children who received custodial sentences in each year between 1997 and 2004. [212086]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested on sentencing is not collected centrally. However, the following tables show the numbers of looked-after children who were in a young offenders institution or prison at 31 March, and the number of 19-year-old former care leavers in custody on their 19th birthday.

Children looked after at 31 March in a young offenders institution or prison

Number

	Year ending 31 March						
England	*1997*[2]	*1998*[3]	*1999*[3]	*2000*[3]	*2001*[4]	*2002*[4]	*2003*[4]
Number of children looked after[1]	51,200	53,300	55,500	58,100	58,900	59,700	60,800
Number of children looked after in a young offenders institution	150	170	180	170	150	120	100

[1] Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short term placements.
[2] Figures derived from the SSDA903 return.
[3] Figures taken from the CLA100 return.
[4] Figures derived from the CLA100 return and the SSDA903 return.
Note:
1. Figures over 1,000 have been rounded to the nearest 100. All other figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Children looked after by local authorities, year ending 31 March 2003.

Former care leavers at age 19 who were looked after on 1 April aged 16 in custody, 2002–04[1, 6, 7]

Number

	Year ending 31 March		
England	*2002*[2]	*2003*[3]	*2004*[4]
All young people[5]	4,700	4,900	5,100
In custody	110	120	120

[1] Figures exclude children who were looked after on 1 April aged 16 under an agreed series of short term placements
[2] Looked after on 1 April 1999
[3] Looked after on 1 April 2000.
[4] Looked after on 1 April 2001.
[5] Figures include former care leavers with whom the local authority is not in touch.
[6] Figures taken from the OC3 return.
[7] Figures over 1,000 have been rounded to the nearest 100. All other figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Children looked after in England (including adoptions and care leavers), 2003–04.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of cared-for children who become involved in prostitution. [212088]

Margaret Hodge: The data requested is not collected or held centrally.

Morecambe and Lunesdale (Funding)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much Government funding has been spent on education in Morecambe and Lunesdale in each of the last 10 years. [216781]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas, rather than districts within an LEA. Morecambe and Lunesdale form part of Lancashire LEA. The information is contained within the following table.

Combined LEA and school based expenditure[1,2]	Cash terms (£)
1994–95	583,765,000
1995–96	570,257,000
1996–97	577,176,000
1997–98[3]	586,427,000
1998–99[4]	492,850,000
1999–2000	508,395,000
2000–01	532,819,000
2001–02	588,951,000
2002–03	595,937,000
2003–04	703,296,000

[1] The combined LEA and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LEA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA).

[2] Upto and including 1998–99 financial data are taken from Revenue Outturn spending returns submitted to the ODPM. From 1999–00 onwards financial data are taken from Section 52 Outturn Statements submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. 2003–04 data remains provisional and is subject to change by the LEA.

[3] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of moneys from local government to central government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99.

[4] Local government reorganisation (LGR) took place on the 1 April 1998 where pre-LGR Lancashire LEA was split into Lancashire LEA, Blackburn with Darwin LEA and Blackpool LEA. As a result, up to 1997–98 data are for pre-LGR Lancashire LEA and from 1998–99 data are for post-LGR Lancashire LEA. This break in consistency is shown by the dotted line.

Notes:

1. Financial data are collected at local authority level and not constituency level and as such the figures provided are for Lancashire LEA.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 1,000 as reported by Lancashire LEA at 14 February 2005.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers for schools in Morecambe and Lunesdale since 1997. [216784]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold information on funding for ICT at constituency level. However, Morecambe and Lunesdale is in Lancashire LEA and allocations for this authority since 1998 are detailed in "Funding for ICT in Schools in England" which is available in the House Library.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what expenditure there has been on schools in Morecambe and Lunesdale since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [216787]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows capital resources allocated to Lancashire local education authority and its schools since 1997. Decisions on how resources should be invested in schools are taken by the local education authority in accordance with its locally prepared asset management plan. The information on how capital allocations are split between constituencies is not held centrally.

	Lancashire
1997–98	13,288
1998–99	19,457
1999–2000	23,407
2000–01	42,200
2001–02	36,021
2002–03	55,453
2003–04	62,607
2004–05	44,234

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many residents of Morecambe and Lunesdale have undertaken apprenticeships since 1997. [216806]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Figures for Morecambe and Lunesdale cannot be provided as information at parliamentary constituency level is not available. The following table shows the number of starts on Apprenticeships in (i) the Lancashire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area between April 2001 and the end of July 2004; and (ii) in the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) for the area LAWTEC (Lancashire West) between April 1997 and March 2001.

Time period[1]	TEC/LSC	Advanced apprenticeship	Apprenticeship at level 2
April 1997 to March 1998	LAWTEC	1,800	
April 1998 to March 1999	LAWTEC	1,600	100
April 1999 to March 2000	LAWTEC	1,900	1,800
April 2000 to March 2001	LAWTEC	1,800	2,100
April 2001 to July 2002	Lancashire LSC	1,900	4,100
August 2002 to July 2003	Lancashire LSC	1,700	3,600
August 2003 to July 2004	Lancashire LSC	1,400	3,900

[1] TECs reported the figures in financial years. LSC reports figures in academic years. The first LSC 'year' was 16 months in order to bring the financial year figures into line with academic years.

Source:
TEC Management Information
LSC Individualised Learner Record

Northumberland Education Authority

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the per pupil funding allocation to the Northumberland education authority was in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* the latest year for which figures are available. [216078]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The latest year for which figures are available is 2004–05. The following table sets out the total funding (in real terms) per 3–19 pupil for Northumberland for 1997–98, 2001–02 and 2004–05.

	Total funding £ pp
1997–98	2,720
2001–02	3,330
2004–05	3,700

Notes:

1. Price Base: Real terms at 2003–04 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 30 September 2004.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged 3–19 and exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC three-year-old maintained pupils and estimated three to four-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.
6. Status: 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Popular Schools

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how a school's popularity will be determined in order to allocate additional money to popular state schools due to a rising enrolment demand; and what is expected to be the total cost of such additional funding. [217140]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Guidance on the DfES website, titled Decision Makers Guidance Section 1, sets out a number of indicators to be considered when deciding whether a school should be classified as successful and popular. These include the school's performance, the numbers of applications for places, and any other relevant evidence prepared by schools.

The cost of such additional funding is decided on a case by case basis.

Pupil Referral Units

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average cost of providing a pupil with education in a referral unit was in Lancashire in each year since 2000. [216309]

Derek Twigg: We do not hold the information requested, although we do hold planned net expenditure on Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) places in Lancashire.

The number of pupils shown in the following table is for pupils attending PRUs who are not registered at a maintained mainstream or special school. This underestimates PRU activity, and therefore overestimates the unit cost, as it does not include the number of pupils attending a PRU, but registered in another school. The figures do not include cross-border pupils who live in Lancashire but attend a PRU in a bordering authority, for which Lancashire LEA pays. This payments included in the planned expenditure, but the number of pupils involved is not known.

The average cost of a pupil attending a PRU in England is £10,000.

	Planned net expenditure on PRUs (£)		Pupils attending PRUs	
	Lancashire	England	Lancashire	England
2000–01	4,054,057	100,309,321	70	9,019
2001–02	4,245,559	108,466,872	131	9,734
2002–03	9,761,772	134,740,764	149	11,322
2003–04	9,948,486	177,444,103	297	12,694
2004–05	10,219,390	198,460,713	n/a	n/a

n/a = denotes figures not available.

Note:

1. The planned net expenditure on PRUs includes all planned expenditure on the provision of education at PRUs as defined in section 19 of the 1996 Act. Figures for 2001–02 onwards include all School Standards Grant income and expenditure in relation to PRUs.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what training is required for a teacher to teach in a pupil referral unit; what the cost of the training is; and if she will make a statement. [216862]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Teachers in pupil referral units are the same as any other teachers and therefore receive the same initial teacher training as teachers in other schools.

There are a number of different routes into teaching. According to research, undertaken by JM Consulting Ltd. for my Department, the average annual cost of initial teacher training per full-time equivalent student was £5,973 in 2002/03. The research was based on a review of the costs of initial teacher training at 15 higher education institutions chosen to represent a broad range of types of institution and types of provision (primary, secondary, undergraduate and postgraduate).

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers are teaching in pupil referral units in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each local education authority; and how many have received specific training to teach in such units. [216863]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the full-time equivalent number of regular teachers in pupil referral units for each Government Office region and local education authority in January 2004, the latest information available.

All teachers with qualified teacher status are trained to teach in pupil referral units.

Full-time equivalent regular teachers in pupil referral units

	Regular qualified teachers	Total regular teachers
Darlington		
Hartlepool	10	10
Middlesbrough	0	0
Redcar and Cleveland	10	20
Stockton on Tees	10	20
Durham	20	20
Northumberland	10	10
Gateshead	20	20
Newcastle upon Tyne	10	10
North Tyneside	10	10
South Tyneside	30	30
Sunderland	20	20
North East	140	160
Blackburn with Darwen	20	20
Blackpool	10	10
Halton	0	0
Warrington	10	10
Cheshire	0	0

Full-time equivalent regular teachers in pupil referral units

	Regular qualified teachers	*Total regular teachers*
Cumbria	20	20
Bolton	[1]	[1]
Bury	20	20
Manchester	10	10
Oldham	0	0
Rochdale	30	30
Salford	30	30
Stockport	30	30
Tameside	20	20
Trafford	0	0
Wigan	10	10
Lancashire	60	60
Knowsley	10	10
Liverpool	30	30
St Helens	10	10
Sefton	20	20
Wirral	10	20
North West	360	370
East Riding of Yorkshire	10	10
City of Kingston Upon Hull	30	40
North East Lincolnshire	20	20
North Lincolnshire	10	10
York	10	10
North Yorkshire	20	20
Barnsley	0	0
Doncaster	20	20
Rotherham	[1]	[1]
Sheffield	0	0
Bradford	30	30
Calderdale	0	0
Kirklees	10	10
Leeds	20	20
Wakefield	20	20
Yorkshire and the Humber	220	230
Derby	30	30
Leicester	20	20
Nottingham	30	30
Rutland	0	0
Derbyshire	60	60
Leicestershire	0	0
Lincolnshire	10	10
Northamptonshire	20	30
Nottinghamshire	50	50
East Midlands	220	220
Herefordshire	10	10
Stoke on Trent	10	10
Telford and Wrekin	10	10
Shropshire	0	0
Staffordshire	20	20
Warwickshire	60	60
Birmingham	130	130
Coventry	0	0
Dudley	10	10
Sandwell	30	30
Solihull	[1]	[1]
Walsall	20	20
Wolverhampton	40	40
Worcestershire	50	50
West Midlands	400	400
Luton	10	10
Peterborough	10	10
Southend on Sea	[1]	10
Thurrock	10	10
Bedfordshire	20	20
Cambridgeshire	40	80
Essex	40	40
Hertfordshire	70	70
Norfolk	50	50
Suffolk	40	40
East of England	270	330
Camden	10	20
City of London	0	0
Hackney	10	20
Hammersmith and Fulham	40	40

Full-time equivalent regular teachers in pupil referral units

	Regular qualified teachers	*Total regular teachers*
Haringey	20	20
Islington	20	30
Kensington and Chelsea	20	20
Lambeth	10	20
Lewisham	30	30
Newham	30	30
Southwark	40	40
Tower Hamlets	50	50
Wandsworth	30	30
City of Westminster	[1]	[1]
Barking and Dagenham	10	10
Barnet	10	10
Bexley	20	20
Brent	20	20
Bromley	10	10
Croydon	30	50
Ealing	20	30
Enfield	20	20
Greenwich	20	20
Harrow	0	0
Havering	10	10
Hillingdon	[1]	10
Hounslow	10	10
Kingston upon Thames	10	10
Merton	10	10
Redbridge	10	10
Richmond upon Thames	10	10
Sutton	[1]	[1]
Waltham Forest	10	10
London	550	630
Bracknell Forest	10	10
Brighton and Hove	0	0
Isle of Wight	[1]	[1]
Medway	10	10
Milton Keynes	[1]	[1]
Portsmouth	20	30
Reading	0	0
Slough	10	10
Southampton	30	30
West Berkshire	10	10
Windsor and Maidenhead	10	10
Wokingham	[1]	[1]
Buckinghamshire	30	30
East Sussex	10	10
Hampshire	70	80
Kent	60	60
Oxfordshire	20	20
Surrey	50	60
West Sussex	10	20
South East	360	400
Bath and North East Somerset	0	0
Bournemouth	0	0
City of Bristol	0	0
North Somerset	30	30
Plymouth	20	20
Poole	10	10
South Gloucestershire	20	20
Swindon	20	30
Torbay	10	10
Cornwall	0	0
Isles of Scilly	0	0
Devon	20	30
Dorset	20	20
Gloucestershire	10	10
Somerset	30	40
Wiltshire	20	20
South West	220	250
England	2,750	2,990

[1] Between 1 and 5

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10

Source:

Annual survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies.

Pupil-Teacher Ratios

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* students and *(b)* teachers there were in Essex county in the 2003–04 school year. [217146]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In January 2004 there were 200,420 full-time equivalent students and 10,980 full-time equivalent regular teachers in maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special and pupil referral units in Essex local education authority.

Romford Schools

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money is allocated to each school in Romford. [217144]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is collected at local education authority level. Romford schools fall within Barking and Dagenham, Essex, Havering and Redbridge LEAs. I have placed in the Library tables showing the requested financial data for 2004–05.

SATs Tests

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the grounds on which children can be excused or withdrawn from sitting SATs tests for *(a)* reading, *(b)* writing. [216067]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The key stage 2 tests assess levels 3 to 5 of the national curriculum. Schools should enter pupils for the tests in English, mathematics and science except where:

a pupil has been assessed as working at level 2 or below, and will not be working at level 3 by May;

the school is unable to establish whether a pupil is working at the level of the tests, for example because they have recently arrived in the school and cannot speak English; or

a pupil is working at the level of the tests but is unable to access them, for example because of a very severe physical disability.

Details of circumstances in which pupils should not be entered for the key stage 2 tests are set out in section 8 of the "Key Stage 2 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements" booklet, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which is issued to schools and is available on the QCA website.

School Admissions Policy

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the local education authority admissions authorities determine which address is used for a child seeking a school place in an oversubscribed school in the case of joint custody; and if she will make a statement. [216100]

Derek Twigg: Guidance in the statutory School Admissions Code of Practice advises admission authorities that where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the oversubscription criteria need to make clear how the 'home' address will be decided in a fair and considered way. It is for the individual admission authority to decide what method they will use.

School Attendance

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the accuracy of the data provided by schools to her Department for the last three years regarding attendance. [215725]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We are satisfied the pupil absence in schools data published by my Department is accurate. We have processes in place to quality assure and clean the data submitted by each school prior to its provisional publication each September. The data is checked by schools as part of the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables exercise and revised figures are published each December.

School Building (Isle of Wight)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* commitments and *(b)* undertakings she has made to the Isle of Wight Council regarding future capital allocations provided (i) through the Building Schools for the Future programme or (ii) otherwise, whether (A) contingent on or (B) not contingent on school reorganisation. [216280]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: A letter has been sent to all council leaders stating that, for authorities not prioritised in the first three waves of Building Schools for the Future (BSF), including the Isle of Wight, we are determined to make a start on BSF plans between 2005–06 and 2010–11. Our ambition is that in the next full Parliament, subject to future spending decisions, 60 per cent. of all authorities will have started in the BSF programme, or else be given resources to renew at least one secondary school with the greatest need as a school for the future, or as an academy. Each BSF scheme will be judged on its merits, and is not necessarily contingent on school reorganisation. Other capital allocations to the council and its schools were announced on 30 November, and are set out in the following table:

	£000
2006–07	14,853
2007–08	15,446

School Incomes

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for how long her Department has collected information on the income of individual schools; and if she will provide that information and the number of pupils for the first 10 community primary schools and first 10 community secondary schools by her Department's number in each local education authority for each year for which the information is available. [216033]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department has just finished collecting the second year's worth of Consistent Financial Reporting data from individual schools. I have placed in the Library tables showing the requested

financial data for 2002–03 and 2003–04. Some authorities have fewer than 10 community primary or secondary schools.

School Leavers (City of Durham)

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school leavers in the City of Durham moved on to *(a)* higher education, *(b)* further education and *(c)* employment in each of the last five years. [214357]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Information on 18-year-olds entering HE is collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and is available at constituency level. The number of 18-year-olds entering HE from City of Durham constituency from end 1999 to end 2003 is given in Table 1. The numbers have been rounded to the nearest five.

Table 1: The number of 18-year-olds from City of Durham constituency entering HE: 1999 to 2003

End of calendar year	*Number of people*
1999	260
2000	240
2001	260
2002	295
2003	305

Estimates of the percentage of young people participating in education and LSC-funded work-based learning (WBL) are not available below the local education authority (LEA) level. The number of 16-year-olds participating in full-time education, and in education and WBL, in Durham LEA, from end 1997 to end 2001, are shown in Table 2. The numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundred. Estimates for end 2002 and end 2003 (provisional) are due to be published in March 2005.

Table 2: Participation in education and training by 16-year-olds in Durham LEA: 1997 to 2001

End of calendar year	*Full-time education*	*Education and LSC funded work based learning (WBL)*
1997	3,800	5,400
1998	3,800	5,200
1999	4,000	5,500
2000	3,900	5,200
2001	4,200	5,500

Information on 16 to 19-year-olds in employment (both full and part-time) is available at parliamentary constituency level from the Office for National Statistics. Table 3 following shows the numbers and percentages in City of Durham constituency since 2001. However, sample sizes are very small due to the narrow age band and small geographic area. Therefore, the employment rate is volatile and care should be taken when interpreting the figures. The numbers have been rounded to the nearest thousand, with the rates calculated from unrounded numbers.

Table 3: The number and the percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds in employment in City of Durham constituency, 2001/02 to 2003/04

	Number	*Percentage*
2001–02	3,000	88.3
2002–03	3,000	49.1
2003–04[1]	1,000	37.8

[1] The employment rate for 2003–04 is based on a sample size of less than 10.

School Organising Committees

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she has provided on declaration of interests by members of school organising committees. [216437]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has issued guidance on the conduct of members of School Organisation Committees (SOCs) which includes advice that members should declare an interest in any proposal which directly affects a school at which they are a governor or which their children attend, or in which they might have a pecuniary interest in the decision made. The guidance suggests that any member with such an interest should withdraw from the discussion and take no part in the decision. Alternatively, where it is known in advance that a conflict of interest will arise, a member may invite an alternate, who has no interest to declare, to attend the meeting in his place.

Regulations also provide that where two groups on a SOC do not vote on a statutory proposal because members of two groups declare an interest, the proposals should be referred to the schools adjudicator for decision.

School Toilets

Mr. Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will extend school premises regulations to stipulate the *(a)* suitability, *(b)* condition and *(c)* accessibility of pupils' toilets. [215712]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 are due to be revised within the next year and, subject to consultation, may be extended to place a duty on schools to maintain pupils' toilets in good condition, although the regulations do provide for necessary maintenance under the health, safety and welfare paragraph. Accessibility by disabled pupils is already covered by the regulations; suitability is taken into account in design for build, rebuild or refurbishment of premises.

Mr. Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will introduce legislation governing toilet provision for pupils in schools to bring provisions into line with those governing the adult workplace. [215713]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Provision of toilet and wash facilities is covered by the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999. These regulations, which are due to be revised later this year, include a section on Health, Safety and Welfare. Paragraph 17(3) provides that

"every part of a school building and of the land provided for a school shall be such that the health, safety and welfare of the occupants . . . are reasonably assured".

This paragraph, we believe, should ensure that toilet provision equates with that provided for adults under Health and Safety legislation.

Mr. Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how adherence to the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 is monitored with regard to the number of toilets and washbasins provided for pupils. [215714]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The responsibility for enforcement of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 lies with local education authorities. The Department does not monitor individual schools for compliance with the regulations.

School Uniforms

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Department's policy is on school uniforms in primary schools. [217142]

Derek Twigg: School governing bodies are responsible for deciding whether their school should have a uniform policy, and if so, what it should consist of. The headteacher's role is to ensure pupils comply with the uniform policy agreed by the governing body.

When setting a uniform policy the Department expects school governing bodies to behave reasonably, considering the impact of their policies on parents and pupils.

Secondary Schools (Romford)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the performance of secondary schools in Romford. [217141]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Between 1997 and 2003, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above at key stage 3 in Romford constituency schools increased by 4.2 percentage points in English, by 9.2 percentage points in mathematics and by 7.3 percentage points in science. School level key stage 3 information for 2004 is not yet available. At key stage 4 there has been a significant increase of 20.6 percentage points in the attainment of 5A*-C GCSEs between 1997 and 2004, well above the national rate of improvement of 8.6 percentage points. A summary of secondary outcomes is set out in the following table.

Information about education and skills by constituency is made available by the Department through the 'In Your Area' website, available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea.

Key stage 3: percentage of pupils at level 5 and above

	English	*Maths*	*Science*
1997	63	65.2	63
1998	64.3	62.3	61.5
1999	72.2	67.8	58.5
2000	71.3	70.6	61.1
2001	74.5	72.5	70.5
2002	70.3	74.4	72.6
2003	67.2	74.4	70.3

Key Stage 4

	Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining 5+ GCSEs at A-C*
1997	41.7
1998	42.6
1999	46.8
2000	48.4
2001	47.6
2002	52.8
2003	58.2
2004	62.3

Sex Education

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will establish abstinence as the starting point for all sex education lessons; and if she will make a statement. [216438]

Derek Twigg: The Government believes that all young people should receive a balanced programme of sex and relationship education (SRE) at school, which encourages them to delay sexual activity until they are ready and prepares them to make responsible choices about their relationships when they do become sexually active.

In 2000, DfES issued guidance to schools on the teaching of SRE. Schools are required to adhere to the principles set out in the guidance, which makes clear that pupils should learn the reasons for delaying sexual activity and the benefits to be gained from such delay.

School Staff

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the number of *(a)* teachers and *(b)* teaching assistants has changed in Stockton, South since 1997. [215311]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Information for maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, and pupil referral units, in Stockton, South is provided in the following table.

	January 1997	*January 2004*
Full-time equivalent number of teachers	910	940
Full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants	90	160

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual School Census

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers were employed at all schools in Easington constituency in each year since 2001. [216091]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The full-time equivalent number of teachers in all maintained schools in Easington constituency is given in the following table.

Maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units[1,2,3,4]
Full-time equivalent number of teachers
Position in January each year: 2001 to 2004
Easington parliamentary constituency

	FTE Teachers
2001	640
2002	650
2003	650
2004	650

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.
[3] Includes teachers with and without qualified teacher status.
[4] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistant posts there were in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Leicester, South in each year since 1997. [216384]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants and other support staff in Leicester, South constituency is given in the following table:

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1,2]: full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants
January 2004
Leicester, South parliamentary constituency

	Primary schools	Secondary schools
1997	90	10
1998	90	10
1999	110	10
2000	100	20
2001	130	20
2002	180	30
2003	210	30
2004	210	30

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants are employed in schools in *(a)* Warrington and *(b)* Warrington, North. [214971]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In January 2004 there were 460 full-time equivalent teaching assistants in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, and pupil referral units, in Warrington local education authority. There were 240 in Warrington, North parliamentary constituency.

University Education

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the university drop-out rate was in *(a)* England and *(b)* the North East in 2003–04. [215872]

Dr. Howells: The latest information on non-completion rates was published last September by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in "Performance Indicators in HE", which is available from their website at http://www.hesa.ac.uk/ The figures for HE institutions in the North East and England are shown in the table.

Projected non-completion rates of students on full-time first degree courses

	Percentage Non-completion rate of those starting courses in 2001/02[1]	
	Projected[2]	Benchmark[3]
University of Durham	2.3	6.4 +
University of Newcastle	7.0	8.7
Northumbria University	13.9	16.5
University of Sunderland	26.9	18.5-
University of Teeside[4]		
England	14.1	[5]

[1] The non-completion rates cover UK domiciled full-time students starting first degree courses who are projected neither to transfer nor achieve an alternative award from their study.
[2] HESA use a method of projection applied to the cohort of students starting full-time first degree courses in a particular year, based on the assumption that they will move through the system in the same way as current students.
[3] As well as the projected value, HESA also calculate an expected (benchmark) value for each institution, which allows for the entry qualifications, age and subject mix of the institution's students. Those institutions whose projected non completion rate differs significantly from their benchmark value are highlighted (+ or -) in the table.
[4] The outcomes for the University of Teesside have been left out because problems with their data this year have adversely affected their figures.
[5] Benchmarks are not calculated at national level.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of those between the ages of 18 and 22 years from the constituency of Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East are studying at university. [215871]

Dr. Howells: The recent HEFCE publication "Young participation in higher education" (HEFCE 2005/03) looks at the proportion of young people who enter higher education at age 18 or 19 by parliamentary constituency. A discussion of the participation divisions and trends (18-year-olds in 1994 to 18-year-olds in 2000) for constituencies is contained in the report [sections 2.12, 3.8 and 4.1].

In addition, participation rates for parliamentary constituencies based on this work are given on the supporting POLAR website (www.hefce.ac.uk/polar). These indicate that, for the cohorts reaching 18 between 1997 and 1999, 28 per cent. of young people living in Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency entered higher education at age 18 or 19 (the English average for these cohorts is 29 per cent.).

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 18 to 22-year-olds from Chorley constituency are studying at university. [216310]

Dr. Howells: The recent HEFCE publication 'Young participation in higher education' (HEFCE 2005/03) looks at the proportion of young people who enter higher education at age 18 or 19 by parliamentary constituency. A discussion of the participation divisions and trends (18-year-olds in 1994 to 18-year-olds in 2000) for constituencies is contained in the report [sections 2.12, 3.8 and 4.1].

School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post-16.

Higher education institutions may also receive funding for capital and for special initiatives from HEFCE.

In addition, participation rates for parliamentary constituencies based on this work are given on the supporting POLAR website www.hefce.ac.uk/polar. These indicate that, for the cohorts reaching 18 between 1997 and 1999, 34 per cent. of young people living in Chorley constituency entered higher education at age 18 or 19 (the English average for these cohorts is 29 per cent.)

Youth Clubs

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to encourage provision of further youth clubs and other recreational places for young people. [214841]

Margaret Hodge: The Department for Education and Skills Five Year Strategy signalled the intention to consider a new offer for young people. Details will be set out in a Green Paper to be published for consultation shortly.

Central to this offer is enabling young people to access exciting and enjoyable activities in and out of school or college that enhance their personal, social and educational development and reflect what they do, including sport, outdoor activities and residential opportunities. As part of this work, my Department is looking at the full range of youth facilities, safe places and spaces in which young people can spend their leisure time.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Doctor/Nurse Ratios

Mrs. Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* doctor and *(b)* nurse to patient ratio is at each hospital in the Province; and what it was (i) 10 and (ii) 20 years ago. [215378]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Nursing Vacancies

Mrs. Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many whole-time equivalent nursing vacancies there were on the latest date for which figures are available at each trust in the Province. [215461]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Police (Medical Retirements)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* regular, *(b)* full-time reserve and *(c)* part-time reserve police officers were medically retired as a result of an injury on duty in each year since 1975. [216246]

Mr. Pearson: The figures requested are provided in the following table.

Figures for medical retirements as a result of IOD

	Regular officer	*Full-time reserve*	*Part-time reserve*	*Service total*
1970	1	0	0	1
1971	1	0	0	1
1972	2	0	0	2
1973	5	0	1	6
1974	6	0	1	7
1975	4	0	1	5
1976	2	0	3	5
1977	6	2	4	12
1978	4	5	5	14
1979	3	4	5	12
1980	5	1	0	6
1981	3	1	2	6
1982	1	3	0	4
1983	4	4	4	12
1984	11	2	2	15
1985	10	2	3	15
1986	6	2	2	10
1987	13	5	2	20
1988	7	2	1	10
1989	10	4	2	16
1990	10	3	1	14
1991	4	6	0	10
1992	12	7	1	20
1993	10	6	3	19
1994	7	2	0	9
1995	18	7	0	25
1996	38	14	4	56
1997	26	13	3	42
1998	29	13	2	44
1999	24	28	0	52
2000	65	55	3	123
2001	90	101	0	191
2002	102	145	0	247
2003	65	61	3	129
2004	55	66	1	122
Total	659	564	56	1,279

Television Licences

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many television licences have been issued in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [216478]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

The BBC has statutory responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system and TV Licensing carries out the day to day administration under contract to the Corporation. The BBC has advised that this information is not available as the Corporation does not collect any data on a constituency level.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been paid in television licence fees in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [216479]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

The BBC has statutory responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system and TV Licensing carries out the day to day administration under contract to the Corporation. The BBC has advised that this information is not available as it does not split licence fee revenue by nation or region.

this information.

website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of households in Northern Ireland which have not paid for television licences where such licences should have been paid for. [216480]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

The BBC has indicated that the data required to produce accurate estimates is not available for the nations and regions. However, as the hon. Member may be aware, the National Audit Office's 2002 report "The BBC: Collecting the Television Licence Fee" indicated that the estimated evasion rate for Northern Ireland at the end of March 2001 was 17.6 per cent.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Children and Young People Action Plan

Charles Hendry: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total costs of publishing the Involving Children and Young People Action Plan 2004–05 were; and what he estimates the total costs of implementing the plans set out in the document will be. [217208]

Mr. Leslie: The total cost of publishing the Involving Children and Young People Action Plan 2004–05 was £3,748.20. The total cost for implementing the plans set out in the Proposal section and the Appendices of the Action Plan could be supplied only at disproportionate cost. The DCA Schools Conference held in September 2004 cost £9,314.90.

Electoral Registration

Mr. Gale: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps his Department is taking to ensure that only the names of bona fide electors appear on the electoral register and are eligible and permitted to vote in any forthcoming general election. [216252]

Mr. Lammy: The annual canvass form which is sent to all households provides information about who is eligible to register. Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), who are responsible for compiling the electoral register as accurately as possible, may require a person applying to register to give additional information if they are in doubt as to whether that person is eligible to be registered. They may also refer to other records kept by the council or the registrar of births, marriages and deaths if they consider that further checks are necessary. It is an offence under the Representation of the People Regulations 2001 to fail to comply with a request for information from an ERO or to provide false or inaccurate information to a registration officer. The electoral register is available for public inspection which enables checks to be made that only eligible electors are on the register. It is an offence to register fraudulently as another person and also for a person who has so registered subsequently to vote in an election.

Equality of Opportunity

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether under the Equality Bill it will be the responsibility of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights to promote equality of opportunity regardless of religion and sexual orientation. [215294]

Ms Hewitt: I have been asked to reply.

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights will have the function of promoting equality, diversity and human rights generally, and will do so particularly in relation to religion or belief and sexual orientation as well as age, disability, gender (including reassigned gender) and race.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 were received by Government departments between 1 and 12 January; and how many *(a)* had been answered, *(b)* had been refused and *(c)* were still outstanding 20 working days from the date of receipt. [217121]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Constitutional Affairs will be publishing full monitoring statistics of central Government's operation of the Freedom of Information Act in spring 2005.

The monitoring regime is published at: http://www.foi.gov.uk/map/gus-v4-appf.pdf. It does not require Government departments to provide statistics broken down into specific time periods. Consequently, the information requested is not immediately available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, given the public interest in the volume and handling of Freedom of Information requests, the following figures are available for the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs received 106 requests between 1 January and 12 January. Of these:

(a) 94 have been answered;

(b) 25 were refused either in full or in part;

(c) 12 were still outstanding 20 working days from the date of receipt (including nine cases extended in accordance with section 10(3) of the Act).

Judicial Studies Board

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the training programme of the Judicial Studies Board (JSB) in relation to section 101 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003; how many judges were trained by *(a)* 15 January and *(b)* 15 February; and how many judges he anticipates will have been trained by 15 March or the conclusion of the JSB training programme, whichever is the later. [216791]

Mr. Lammy: The Judicial Studies Board (JSB) has developed a training package to support the implementation of the Criminal Justice Reforms, which include the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the Courts Act 2003 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The core of the programme is a series of two-day residential seminars held during the period January to March 2005 to which all judges exercising the criminal jurisdiction have been invited. The training package also includes seminar and distance learning materials in hard copy and electronic format. Section 101 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 forms a significant element of the seminars and training materials. All criminal judges were issued with written materials on the provisions of Section 101 before their implementation in December 2004, which are available on the JSB's website at www.jsboard.co.uk. Numbers of judges trained in the CJR programme are: *(a)* 268; *(b)* 1,146. It is anticipated that 2,212 judges will have been trained by the completion of the seminars on 23 March 2005.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent on *(a)* the provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213837]

Mr. Lammy: The cost of parking spaces for civil servants is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Civil servants are personally responsible for meeting the cost of parking tickets and penalties and therefore, there is no cost to the Department.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent on postage by the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [215026]

Mr. Lammy: Total postage cost for the Department, which covers costs for the Court Service, the Public Guardianship Office and DCA Headquarters, was £7.7 million in 1998–99, £7.2 million in 1999–2000, £7.6 million in 2000–01, £5.8 million in 2001–02, £7.6 million in 2002–03, £7.3 million in 2003–04 and £6.0 million in 2004–05 (to 31 December).

These figures cover cost of distribution, postage, franking machines, IDX and DX. The Department has a general policy where all post is sent out second class unless it is stated otherwise.

Information on 1997–98 is not readily available.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215043]

Mr. Lammy: It is not possible to list the entertainment costs spent by the Department broken down by *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997 without incurring disproportionate costs.

However, for overall expenditure on entertainment for the Department, I refer the hon. Gentleman to my previous answer on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 118W.

Prince of Wales

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Privy Council was consulted on the date for the proposed marriage between His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Camilla Parker Bowles; and if he will make a statement. [217192]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister today.

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will take steps to stop rape trials at Crown courts from being listed as floating trials. [215689]

Mr. Lammy: Departmental records show that during 2004 four cases were listed as floaters, but this should be placed in the context of 1,039 cases listed for trial where there was at least one count of rape.

Court Service policy is that rape cases are listed as fixtures and not as floating trials because of their sensitivity. However, courts' listing practices are a matter for local judicial discretion.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997; [213659]

(2) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department and its predecessors was in each year since 1997. [213680]

Mr. Lammy: My Department undertakes staff surveys to cover key issues relating to staff satisfaction. Through regular surveying (usually annually) the survey acts as a temperature check for the organisation with a combination of demographic and benchmark questions. This enables my Department to make comparisons between groups internally as well as with other similar organisations and to monitor progress. Staff surveys are usually carried out by external consultants. The costs of these surveys are given as follows.

	Cost (£)	*Surveys*
1997[1]	17,649	Court Service
1998[1]	24,612	Court Service
1999	43,270	Court Service and LCD
2000	82,063	Court Service and LCD
2001[1]	71,090	Court Service
2002	55,923	Court Service and LCD
2003	60,765	DCA combined survey

[1] Surveys not conducted by LCD.

HEALTH

ATMs

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS trusts are free to negotiate contracts exclusively for the installation of ATMs for which there is a charge in hospitals. [217403]

Mr. Hutton: National health service trusts are free to enter into contracts for the installation of ATMs on their premises. Whether users of ATMs are charged for doing so will depend on the policy of the financial institution providing the ATM.

Better Healthcare Consultation

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he gave to the Merton, Sutton and Mid-Surrey NHS Trust during the recent consultation Better Healthcare Closer to Home, with particular reference to *(a)* publicising the consultation within the catchment area and *(b)* definition of the catchment area; and what guidance is available for NHS trusts performing similar consultations on each aspect area. [215787]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has issued general guidance to the national health service on changes to services to support Sections 7 and 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001.

Overview and Scrutiny of Health—guidance to support consultation with overview and scrutiny committees was issued in May 2003.

Strengthening Accountability—policy and practice guidance on public consultation and involvement was issued in February 2003.

Keeping the NHS local: a new direction of travel—guidance on the principles and approach which should be applied to all proposed service change was issued in February 2003.

Botox

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much botox is manufactured in the UK by *(a)* Ipsen (Dysport) and *(b)* Allergan (botox). [216115]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency does not collect information about the amounts of medicinal products manufactured in the United Kingdom.

Chiropodists/Podiatrists

Miss Begg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the organisations representing chiropody and podiatry practitioners who responded to his Department's consultation on the establishment of the Health Professional Council; and which organisations *(a)* supported and *(b)* opposed the establishment of the Council. [214056]

Mr. Hutton: The consultation exercise did not seek respondents' views on whether or not they supported the establishment of a new Council, but sought their views on the structure, composition, functions and operations of the proposed Council.

The following organisations representing chiropody and podiatry were consulted:

The Association of Chiropodists and Podiatrists.

The British Chiropody and Podiatry Association.

Heads of Chiropody/Podiatry Service Group for Wales.

The Institute for Chiropodists and Podiatrists.

Podiatrists Group in Scotland.

Scottish Chiropodists Association.

The SMAE Institute.

The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists.

Waiting Times (Worcestershire)

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many consultant episodes were completed in Worcestershire in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [213458]

(2) what the *(a)* maximum and *(b)* average waiting times were for in-patient treatment in Worcestershire in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [213478]

(3) how many people waited for in-patient treatment for more than 18 months in Worcestershire in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [213480]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the number of finished consultant episodes, the average waiting time (both the mean and the median) and the number of patients who waited more than 18 months for each year since 1997–98, for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals National Health Service Trust and its predecessor organisations; Alexandra Healthcare NHS Trust, Worcestershire Royal Infirmary NHS Trust and Kidderminster Healthcare NHS Trust.

Maximum waiting time information is not available centrally.

Activity and waiting times for Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Finished episodes	*Mean waiting time in days*	*Median waiting time in days*	*Finished admissions with more than 18 months waiting time*
1997–98	91,549	100.7	42	158
1998–99	93,133	125.7	57	404
1999–2000	94,279	112.3	56	439
2000–01	91,325	98.5	48	294
2001–02	88,468	107.3	56	240
2002–03	92,091	128.8	75	414
2003–04	97,612	131.1	82	377

Notes:

1. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

2. A finished consultant episode (FCE) is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

3. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

4. Length of stay—duration of spell (LOS)—is calculated as the difference in days between the admission date and the discharge date, where both are given. LOS is based on hospital spells and only applies to ordinary admissions, i.e. day cases are excluded (unless otherwise stated). Information relating to LOS figures, including discharge method/destination, diagnoses and any operative procedures, is based only on the final episode of the spell.

5. Time waited statistics from hospital episode statistics (HES) are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

Dentistry (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists are working in *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Lancashire. [216240]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As of 31 December 2004, there were 79 general dental service (GDS) or personal dental service (PDS) dentists working in the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust area and 454 GDS or PDS dentists working in the county of Lancashire.

Source:
Department of Health.

Depression

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources are available from the NHS for people suffering from depression. [216334]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national service framework for mental health sets out how people suffering from depression should be able to access a full range of effective national health service treatment and care in and through primary care, and in specialised secondary services, including in-patient care, where appropriate.

Guidance published by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence further elaborates the services that may be needed for people suffering from chronic, treatment-resistant, recurrent, atypical, psychotic depression, and for those at significant risk.

Further information about the financial, service-related and workforce resources currently available nationally may be found in the "National Service Framework for Mental Health—Five Years On", published in December 2004. Information about the resources and services in any one locality may be obtained from the relevant primary care trust.

Diabetes

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people suffer from diabetes in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley and South Ribble primary care trust. [215512]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his most recent estimate is of the cost to the NHS in a year of treating *(a)* diabetes, *(b)* diabetes type 1 and *(c)* diabetes type 2. [217269]

Dr. Ladyman: The recent report by Wanless, "Securing good health for the whole population: Final report—February 2004" states that the total cost to the national health service of treating type one and type two diabetes is £1.3 billion per year. The specific costs relating to treatment of type one and type two are not available.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in Leicester, South are on waiting lists for digital hearing aids. [216943]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected centrally.

Dr. Chai Patel

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what capacity Dr. Chai Patel advises his Department. [214849]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* Dr. Chai Patel does not act as an advisor to the Department.

Eating Disorders

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effect of outreach workers on the rates of readmission for in-patient care by people with serious eating disorders living in the community. [215958]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Assertive outreach has been shown to be an effective approach to the management of people with severe mental health problems with complex needs who have difficulty engaging with services and often require repeat admission to hospital. Using an assertive outreach approach can:

Improve engagement.

Reduce hospital admissions.

Reduce length of stay when hospitalisation is required.

Increase stability in the lives of service users and their carers/family.

Improve social functioning.

Be cost effective.

Assertive outreach teams work with people with severe and persistent mental disorders, which may include serious eating disorders. However, the Department does not collect diagnostic information centrally about case loads of such teams.

The evidence base for assertive outreach was set out in the "Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide" (2001).

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance his Department provides to primary care trusts on commissioning primary care services for people with serious eating disorders. [215959]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Tertiary eating disorder services are part of the national specialised services definition set (NSSDS), which provides guidance to commissioners on securing effective collective planning arrangements that take into account the needs of a planning population considerably larger than that of a single primary care trust. A group led by the national director for mental health is currently reviewing the NSSDS, with a view to publishing updated guidance later this year.

Local health communities should design the provision of their services for the treatment and management of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and related eating disorders in light of the clinical guidelines published by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence in 2004.

Elective Surgery

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has commissioned into the information on which patients would want to base their choices for elective surgery; and what steps he is taking

to provide this information *(a)* through primary care trusts, *(b)* through strategic health authorities and *(c)* centrally. [210826]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has commissioned research through MORI and Dr. Foster and consulted with patients and clinicians through a number of workshops to identify the information that patients would want to make a choice of hospital. We have also drawn on a number of independent studies including those looking at the information and support needs of hard-to-reach groups.

We know from this body of research that patients require information on four key areas: waiting times, location and convenience factors, patient experience and clinical quality. The Department provides comparative information for national health service providers in these four key areas on its website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/PatientChoice/Choice/ChoiceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4084336&chk=j6/TOq

It has also asked primary care trusts to supplement this with local information on providers to further support patients.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the Community action programme on pollution-related diseases in the framework of the action plan for public health met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214772]

Mr. Hutton: The committee for the implementation of the Community action programme on pollution-related diseases did not meet during the Italian, Irish or Dutch presidencies.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the Community action programme on health promotion information, education and training met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214773]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Community action programme on health promotion, information, education and training ran from 1996 to 2002. The last meeting of the programme committee was held on 7 February 2002 in Luxembourg, prior to the commencement of the Italian, Irish and Dutch European Union presidencies, which fell within the period from July 2003 to December 2004.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the Community action programme on the prevention of drug dependence in the framework of the action plan for public health met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215446]

Miss Melanie Johnson: None. The purpose of the committee for the implementation of the community action programme on the prevention of drug dependence was to assist the European Commission in implementing the action programme. The committee's work had been completed by the time the Italian presidency began.

General Practitioners

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average proportion of patients to general practitioner is in each primary care trust in *(a)* Somerset, *(b)* Devon, *(c)* Dorset and *(d)* North Somerset. [214616]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The average number of patients per general practitioner for each primary care trust (PCT) in Somerset, Devon, Dorset and North Somerset is shown in the table.

Average list size of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] for specified PCTs

Number (headcount)

	PCT	UPEs	Patients of UPEs	Average list size
5CE	Bournemouth	106	170,436	1,608
5 FT	East Devon	78	115,844	1,485
5FR	Exeter	85	131,297	1,545
5FX	Mendip	61	110,276	1,808
5FV	Mid Devon	75	105,718	1,410
5FQ	North Devon	113	156,543	1,385
5CD	North Dorset	66	91,061	1,380
5F1	Plymouth	159	260,369	1,638
5KV	Poole	109	172,143	1,579
5FW	Somerset Coast	92	143,437	1,559
5FN	South and East Dorset	105	152,625	1,454
5CV	South Hams and West Devon	72	104,468	1,451
5K1	South Somerset	99	150,087	1,516
5FP	South West Dorset	97	140,690	1,450
5K2	Taunton Deane	74	106,809	1,443
5FY	Teignbridge	68	108,439	1,595
5CW	Torbay	89	142,209	1,598

[1] UPEs include general medical service unrestricted principals, personal medical service contracted general practitioners and personal medical service salaried general practitioners. Patient data has been revised from previously published figures.

Note:

Data as at 30 September 2003.

Source:

Department of Health general and personal medical services statistics.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there are in each primary care trust in *(a)* Somerset, *(b)* Devon, *(c)* Dorset and *(d)* North Somerset. [214617]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of general practitioners in these areas are shown in the table.

All practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums)[1] for specified organisations as at 30 September 2003

		Numbers (headcount)
5CE	Bournemouth PCT	107
5 FT	East Devon PCT	79
5FR	Exeter PCT	86
5FX	Mendip PCT	75
5FV	Mid Devon PCT	77
5FQ	North Devon PCT	114
5CD	North Dorset PCT	69
5KV	Poole PCT	109
5FW	Somerset Coast PCT	102
5FN	South and East Dorset PCT	107
5CV	South Hams and West Devon PCT	72
5K1	South Somerset PCT	103
5FP	South West Dorset PCT	97
5K2	Taunton Deane PCT	75

[1] All practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums) includes general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted general practitioners, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors, PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

Source:

Department of Health GMS and PMS statistics.

Health Expenditure (Leicester, South)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the health expenditure per head of population in Leicester, South constituency has been in each year since 1997. [215733]

Dr. Ladyman: It is not possible to provide expenditure figures for the Leicester, South constituency, as this does not correspond to any specific health authority (HA) area. The information shown in the table is from the relevant HA areas from 1996–97 to 2003–04, which is the latest year for which figures are available.

Expenditure per weighted head of population in the relevant HA areas

£ per head

	Leicestershire HA area	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic Health Authority area
1996–97	635.71	n/a
1997–98	617.54	n/a
1998–99	654.02	n/a
1999–2000	762.80	n/a
2000–01	779.71	n/a
2001–02	821.16	n/a
2002–03	n/a	951.51
2003–04	n/a	1,082.64

Notes:

1. Expenditure is taken from audited health authority summarisation forms and primary care trust summarisation schedules, which are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. The expenditure is the total expenditure by the relevant HAs, and the commissioner costs of the primary care trusts (PCTs). Figures are given in cash terms.

2. Allocations per weighted head of population provide a much more reliable measure to identify differences between funding of HAs and PCTs.

3. Figures for 1996–97 to 2001–02 have been prepared using gross expenditure figures. This is to ensure consistency between years. Figures based on strategic health authority (SHA) areas have been adjusted to eliminate expenditure, which would be double counted where an authority acts as a lead in commissioning healthcare or other services.

4. In many HAs, there are factors, which distort the expenditure. These include:

the health authority acting in a lead capacity to commission healthcare or fund training on behalf of other health bodies; and asset revaluations in national health service trusts being funded through health authorities or primary care trusts.

5. The majority of general dental services expenditure is not included in the individual health authority accounts or primary care trust summarisation schedules and is separately accounted for by the Dental Practice Board. An element of pharmaceutical services expenditure is accounted for by the Prescription Pricing Authority and not by health authorities or primary care trusts. Total expenditure on these items by the Dental Practice Board and the Prescription Pricing Authority cannot be allocated to individual health bodies. For these reasons, expenditure per head cannot be compared reliably between health authorities or between different years.

6. Expenditure on general dental services and pharmaceutical services accounted for by the Dental Practice Board and Prescription Pricing Authority, respectively, are excluded. This expenditure cannot be included within the figures for the individual health bodies as they are not included in commissioner accounts.

Sources:

HA audited accounts 1996–97 and 1997–98.
HA audited summarisation forms 1998–99 to 2001–02.
SHA audited summarisation forms 2002–03 and 2003–04.
PCT audited summarisation schedules 2000–01 to 2003–04.
Weighted population figures 1996–97 to 2003–04.

Health Funding (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will adjust the funding allocations to Chorley to take account of the increased number of residents. [216826]

Mr. Hutton: Revenue allocations made to primary care trusts for 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced on 11 December 2002. These allocations were based on the best available populations data. There are no plans to revisit these allocations.

Revenue allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 were announced on 9 February 2005. These allocations are based on population projections, which include an adjustment for expected increases in populations.

Health Promotion

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures have been put in place by the Government to tackle *(a)* cardiovascular disease and *(b)* diabetes in the South Asian population in England. [213895]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Both the national service framework (NSF) for coronary heart disease (CHD) and the national service framework for diabetes have set out modern standards and service models for the national health service for the prevention and treatment of these conditions. Both frameworks highlight the need to pay close attention to the needs of groups which are particularly vulnerable to CHD and diabetes, including South Asians.

To support this work, the Department produced a best practice guide for providing CHD services to South Asians last year. The guide includes a chapter on diabetes, which describes the NSF and provides some case studies of good practice. The guide aims to support service providers, including strategic health authorities

(SHAs), primary care trusts (PCTs), hospitals and other organisations working with South Asian communities to deliver heart disease services to South Asian people.

The toolkit is entitled, Heart Disease and South Asians, and was published by the South Asian Health Foundation in conjunction with the Department and the British Heart Foundation. A copy has been placed in the Library.

In addition, the United Kingdom National Screening Committee (NSC) has been asked to advise the Department by the end of 2005 on policy for screening for Type 2 diabetes. The NSC will advise on whether general population screening for diabetes is necessary, or alternatively that screening should be offered to specific sub-groups of the population who are at high risk for diabetes, such as some ethnic minority groups.

LIFT Scheme

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) Scheme to fund general practitioners' surgeries was announced; [216469]

(2) when the Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) Scheme came into operation. [216470]

Mr. Hutton: We announced our intention to set up the National Health Service Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) programme in the NHS Plan, published in July 2000, and explained in detail how LIFT would operate in the NHS LIFT prospectus issued in July 2001. The first wave of LIFT projects was given the green light in November 2001 to proceed to procurement. The first LIFT building was opened to patients on 14 September 2004 at Manor Park in East London.

Mental Health

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people he estimates are suffering from depression in Lancashire. [215511]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally.

Mixed-sex Wards

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* wards, *(b)* medical assessment units and *(c)* surgical assessment units in NHS hospitals in England are operated on a mixed-sex basis. [216521]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested.

The provision of single-sex accommodation is measured as compliance with three objectives we have set, requiring national health service trusts to provide single-sex sleeping areas, separate bathroom and toilet facilities for men and women, and where appropriate, safe facilities for the mentally ill.

Compliance is measured annually at trust level, and information at ward level is therefore not available. Nationally, 97 per cent., of NHS trusts are fully compliant with our standards.

We do not collect information on compliance in specialised areas of a hospital such as medical or surgical assessment units, where the need to provide urgent treatment may take precedence over the strict separation of men and women. No area of a hospital is exempt from the need to protect the privacy and dignity of patients, but no hospital will turn a patient away because a bed is not available in an area appropriate to that patient's gender.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214891]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of Departmental mobile phone bills for each financial year since 2001–02 is shown in the table. Figures for the years 1997–98 to 2000–01 are not available.

Financial year	*Costs (£)*
2001–02	270,000
2002–03	280,000
2003–04	304,000
2004–05	301,000

Healthy Living

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with the Deputy Prime Minister about future funding for healthy living centres and healthy lifestyles workers. [213077]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have had no discussions with my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister about future funding for healthy living centres or healthy lifestyles workers.

Learning Disabilities

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many village and intentional communities have been established for people with learning disabilities since the publication of his Department's White Paper, "Valuing People", (2001) and its statutory guidance. [216910]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not held centrally.

MRSA

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the infection rates of MRSA have been by age groups in *(a)* the London borough of Havering, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* the United Kingdom for the past five years. [209439]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Protection Agency's voluntary reporting system is the only national dataset providing information on methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus bloodstream infections by age.

Information is not available by London borough. Available data for the London region and England, Wales and Northern Ireland is shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Rates of MRSA bloodstream infections by age group: London region, 1999 to 2003 (number of cases per 100,000 population)[1]

Age group	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Up to 1	13.40	15.56	10.07	11.70	22.34
1 to 4	0.50	1.02	—	2.11	1.06
5 to 9	0.84	0.85	0.87	—	0.44
10 to 14	0.45	1.35	0.90	0.45	—
15 to 44	2.93	3.64	3.27	3.39	4.67
45 to 64	13.87	20.15	17.91	19.41	25.93
65 to 74	52.71	55.40	56.62	67.12	67.32
75 plus	108.89	123.55	124.45	132.27	139.09
Overall rate	13.34	15.64	16.35	18.72	19.24

Source:
[1] Health Protection Agency.

Table 2: Rates of MRSA bloodstream infections by age group: England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 1999 to 2003 (number of cases per 100,000 population)[1]

Age group	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Up to 1	5.87	5.89	6.88	6.73	10.52
1 to 4	0.64	0.64	0.73	0.95	0.76
5 to 9	0.25	0.14	0.15	0.15	0.21
10 to 14	0.09	0.42	0.17	0.22	0.11
15 to 44	1.50	1.78	2.38	2.44	2.55
45 to 64	5.82	7.94	8.68	9.08	10.21
65 to 74	18.99	23.89	28.15	28.00	29.21
75 plus	32.31	41.50	52.28	56.01	63.48
Overall rate	6.24	7.99	9.68	10.20	11.10

Source:
[1] Health Protection Agency.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MRSA cases there were in each Government Office region in each year since 1997. [211948]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Regional data for the time period requested are only available from the voluntary reporting scheme for methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bloodstream infections, run by the Health Protection Agency. The data is shown in the following table.

MRSA bloodstream infections reported through voluntary reporting system in England

Region	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
East Midlands	131	135	208	316	451	433	390
East of England	286	364	442	495	632	619	627
London	439	407	451	535	569	680	702
North East	43	138	143	152	181	235	337
North West	15	294	367	365	465	472	501
South East	182	390	408	568	738	771	812
South West	353	191	300	374	481	540	593
West Midlands	219	395	498	763	819	771	868
Yorkshire and Humber	344	206	187	327	396	494	655

Source:
Health Protection Agency.

Orthopaedic Surgery (Ashford Hospital)

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the delay to his plans to privatise routine orthopaedic surgery at Ashford (Middlesex) hospital; [215139]

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress with the proposed independent diagnostic and treatment centre to be established at Ashford hospital. [216527]

Mr. Hutton: Detailed negotiations with private sector provider Capio to create an integrated service orthopaedic treatment centre at Ashford (Middlesex) hospital are ongoing. They were delayed for a time whilst detailed costings for the proposed scheme were developed and agreed. This work was completed at the end of January and a way forward should be agreed by the end of February.

Paediatric and Congenital Services Report

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the recommendations of the paediatric and congenital services report; [214907]

(2) when he plans to implement the recommendations of the paediatric and congenital services report. [214908]

Dr. Ladyman: I understand the questions relate to the report of the paediatric and congenital cardiac services review group, which considered health care services and treatment for children with congenital heart disease in the light of the Bristol Royal Infirmary Inquiry. The group reported that all paediatric cardiac centres were providing high standards of care for children and made a number of recommendations to preserve these standards. This report and the Government's response was published in December 2003 and a copy is available in the Library.

The Government accepted and commended these recommendations to national health service primary care trusts, strategic health authorities and the Healthcare Commission, apart from one recommendation, the effect of which would have been to immediately close centres providing a high level of service, but which were carrying out less than a minimum of 300 operations per year. There was no evidence within the report to support this measure, nor has there been any since. Responsibility for commissioning national clinical audit of paediatric cardiac surgery and congenital heart disease transferred to the Healthcare Commission, previously the Commission Healthcare Audit and Inspection, in April 2003.

Payment by Results

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is for the commencement date of payment by results in NHS acute hospitals. [216528]

Mr. Hutton: National health service trusts began to use the national tariff in a limited way on 1 April 2003. There is a gradual implementation path, with more services being brought within the scope of the tariff on 1 April 2005, and which will see approximately 90 per cent. of all hospital activity being commissioned using the tariff by 2008–09.

Primary Care Trusts

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many reorganisations in the geographical composition of primary care trusts (PCT) there have been since their establishment; and how many PCTs are operating with a chief executive overseeing a cluster of PCTs. [209655]

Mr. Hutton: Since their establishment, 124 primary care trusts (PCTs) have amended the statutory instruments that set out their geographical composition. However, the majority of these changes were not to reflect substantial changes in population served, but merely to identify a district by a more appropriate name or to take account of minor changes in electoral ward boundaries.

The Department does not collect information on the number of PCTs who share a chief executive. Such local management arrangements are at the discretion of strategic health authorities and PCTs.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will allocate more funding to the NHS to allow preventative treatment for respiratory syncytial virus in premature babies; [217119]

(2) how many premature babies contracted respiratory syncytial virus in hospital in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [217132]

Dr. Ladyman: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health recently announced an allocation of £135 billion to national health service primary care trusts for the next two financial years. Among other objectives, this will assist primary care trusts to invest more funding in preventative treatments including appropriate prophylactic treatment for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

Infants born preterm are at especially high risk of the consequences of RSV because they may have lungs that were damaged as a result of their prematurity. For that reason, they feature high on the list of children who should be considered for prophylactic therapy.

The information requested on numbers of premature babies who contracted RSV in hospital is not collected centrally.

Sane

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what budget was allocated to the mental health charity Sane for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the allocation will be in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07. [216432]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has a two-year contract with Saneline for the financial years 2003–04 and 2004–05. £1 million has been paid in each of these financial years.

No specific funding has been allocated to Saneline for 2005–06 and 2006–07.

The contract ends in March 2005. Saneline, like other voluntary and community sector organisations in health and social care, can apply for funding through the Department's section 64 scheme, mental health helplines investment framework and any other Government funding streams.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has for primary care trusts to fund the capital and revenue costs of new sexual assault referral centres; [215561]

(2) what advice he has issued to primary care trusts on the funding of sexual assault referral centres in their trust areas. [215562]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is working together with the Home Office to strengthen and extend the network of Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) in England and Wales. Money from the victims fund has been made available over this and next financial year to local police and health partnerships to assist with the set-up costs for SARCs. Applications must demonstrate long-term funding commitments from local police and primary care trusts (PCTs) to sustain the SARC.

In addition, guidance has recently been issued to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, which include PCTs, on tackling sexual violence. This recommends the development of SARCs, funded jointly by police and PCTs.

Further guidelines on the development of SARCs will be issued jointly by the Department and the Home Office later this year.

Silverlands

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to complete the sale of the Silverlands mansion in Chertsey, Surrey. [216525]

Mr. Hutton: The property is currently advertised for sale on the open market and we hope that a sale will be concluded as soon as possible.

Smoking Cessation

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the use of psychotherapy in smoking cessation programmes. [215012]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A systematic review of the evidence on the effectiveness of smoking cessation approaches, including individual counselling, has been undertaken by the Cochrane review—Lancaster T., Stead, L. F., Individual behavioural counselling for smoking cessation. "The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews" 2002, (3), a copy of which is available in the Library.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether officials from his Department have met representatives of the Allen Carr Easyway to Stop Smoking organisation; [214669]

(2) what recent representations he has received on smoking cessation techniques. [214706]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Officials from the Department have not met representatives of the "Allen Carr Easyway to Stop Smoking" organisation. However, officials have corresponded with the organisation.

The Department regularly receives approaches about smoking cessation techniques and recognises that there are a number of methods that may help smokers to quit. The national policy focus is on those methods with accumulated independent evidence of efficacy. The Department, following guidance from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, endorsed the use on the national health service of nicotine replacement therapy and bupropion (Zyban) as effective stop smoking aids. Used in conjunction with trained support through the NHS stop smoking service, smokers are up to four times more likely to quit successfully than using willpower alone.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997; [213664]

(2) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213672]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There have been four staff surveys in the Department since 1997. These were contracted out to consultants and the costs were as follows:

	Costs (£)
1999	39,500
2000	42,900
2001	35,800
2004	[1]13,000

[1] Sample survey.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215796]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the Department's public service agreement (PSA) targets and progress against these is reported bi-annually in the departmental report and autumn performance report. These are publicly available and are published by the Stationery Office. Copies are currently available in the Library and can also be accessed via the Department's website at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/12/85/04081285.pdf (departmental report 2004)

http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/83/48/04098348.pdf (autumn performance report 2004).

Vacancy Statistics

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the three-month vacancy *(a)* rates and *(b)* numbers were for (i) midwives, (ii) nurses, (iii) GPs, (iv) district nurses, (v) health visitors, (vi) physiotherapists, (vii) occupational therapists, (viii) speech and language therapists and (ix) consultants, by specialty for (A) England, (B) Strategic Health Authority, (C) each NHS trust and foundation trust and (D) each primary care trust in each year since 1997. [209548]

Mr. Hutton: The Department's annual vacancy survey, which collects medical and non-medical data, started in 1999.

Information on the three-month vacancy rate and number of qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff, midwives, district nurses, health visitors, occupied therapists, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists by health authority from 1999 to 2001 and by strategic health authority (SHA) from 2002 to 2004 has been placed in the Library.

Information on the three-month vacancy rates and vacancy number for consultants in England broken down by speciality group and by SHA from 2002 to 2004 has also been placed in the Library. Prior to 2002, the medical and dental work force data was collected on a different basis with regard to specialty and therefore is not available in a comparable format.

The Department could provide information by national health service trust or by specialty only at a disproportionate cost.

The Department's annual general practitioner (GP) recruitment and retention vacancy survey started in 2000 and began collecting information at primary care trust (PCT) level for the first time in 2003. The survey takes place between 1 April and 31 March each year and is a count of all GP vacancies that have occurred during each year. It will include existing posts that doctors have left and also new posts created to increase the work force, even where they were filled very quickly.

Information on the number of GP vacancies in England broken down by SHA in each year from 2000 to 2004 and by PCT from 2003 to 2004 has been placed in the Library.

The estimated three-month GP vacancy rate for England from 2002 to 2004 has been placed in the Library. It is not possible to produce reliable estimates of the vacancy rate for GPs at SHA or PCT level. Estimated three-month vacancy rates are not available before 2002.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how and where he plans for houses to be constructed for a selling price of £60,000. [213652]

Keith Hill: Homes for All the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Five-Year Plan, launched on 24 January 2005, stated that a "Design for Manufacture" competition would invite organisations to bid for the right to construct one or more new developments on sites owned by English Partnerships.

The competition will provide up to 1,000 homes. A minimum of 30 per cent. of the housing dwellings within the competition will be built to a target cost of £60,000 and the remainder will be larger or smaller dwellings that should be built at an equivalent cost-efficiency.

English Partnerships are currently identifying the sites for the competition. These will be in the south-east of England. A formal prior information notice will shortly be placed in the Official Journal of the European Union, and advertised in the media.

Business Rates

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to change business rates for those who generate electricity using green methods. [217087]

Mr. Raynsford: There are no present plans to do so. Any specific rate relief scheme would require primary legislation and the costs and benefits would have to be fully appraised. Through the Renewables Obligation, the Government already provides a very significant level of support for renewable energy generation; this is expected to reach £1 billion per year by 2010. Government will also be providing approximately £500 million of support for renewables in the form of research and development and capital grants between 2002 and 2008. In addition, good quality Combined Heat and Power generators already have certain plant and machinery excluded from the rating valuation.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average council tax per dwelling was in each local authority in England in each year since 1996–97. [216260]

Mr. Raynsford: The figures requested have been made available in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average parish council precept on council tax levied was in England in the most recent year for which figures are available. [216273]

Mr. Raynsford: Information on amounts of council tax precepted by individual parish and town councils is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The average precept for parish and town councils for 2004–05 is, however, estimated to be equivalent to about £40 per Band D property, if averaged across parished areas only, rather than across the whole of England.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether each collecting local authority's council tax register is available for public inspection. [216439]

Mr. Raynsford: The valuation list prepared for each English billing authority area by the Valuation Office Agency sets out information about dwellings which may be subject to council tax. Each list is available for inspection at the Valuation Office Agency and at the principal office of the relevant local billing authority. It is also possible to view and search the valuation list for any billing authority on the Valuation Office Agency's website (www.voa.gov.uk)

Decent Homes Standard

Lynne Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost of increasing to SAP 65 the thermal requirements set out in the Decent Homes Standard for Social Housing in all buildings where it is practicable to do so. [216476]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimates that it would cost £8.5 billion to bring up to SAP 65 all social housing for which that level of thermal efficiency is achievable by means of improvement works. To demolish and rebuild the social sector homes that could not otherwise be brought up to SAP 65 would cost an estimated additional £20 billion.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on official Ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214956]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002.

In the financial year 2002–03 the amount spent was:

(a) £96 on ministerial business cards

(b) £3,753 on ministerial headed paper

(c) £962 on ministerial compliment slips.

In the financial year 2003–04 the amount spent was:

(a) £939 on ministerial business cards

(b) £750 on ministerial headed paper

(c) £505 on ministerial compliment slips.

In the financial year 2004–05 the amount spent was:

(a) £1,785 on ministerial business cards

(b) £1,406 on ministerial headed paper

(c) £743 on compliment slips.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister uses an electronic template for much of the ministerial correspondence as opposed to pre-printed headed paper.

Departmental Expenditure (London)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Office's expenditure has been on *(a)* Romford and the *(b)* London borough of Havering in each of the last seven years. [217147]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The table sets out the amounts of formula grant and other grants and payments made to the London borough of Havering since 2002–03. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold separate expenditure data on Romford.

In addition to the amounts in the table, the London Development Agency (LDA) has spent some £61.6 million in Havering since 2000. The LDA receives around 80 per cent. of its funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

All figures (£ million)

	Formula grant[1]	*Other grants and payments*
2002–03	142.977	12.983
2003–04	154.419	15.755
2004–05	161.568	[2]4.610

[1] These figures may not be comparable year-on-year due to changes in the funding and function of local authorities.
[2] Excludes Housing Revenue Account Subsidy for which audited data for 2004–05 is not yet available.

E-Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to continue funding for e-government after the completion of IEG4. [216648]

Phil Hope: Following the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's notification of a satisfactory IEG4 return, local authorities in England will be eligible to apply for further IEG capital grant of £150,000 towards achieving e-government covering the period 1 April 2005–31 March 2006. The equivalent IEG capital grant for National Park Authorities in 2005–06 is £100,000.

Empty Dwellings

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many empty homes there have been in each Government Office Region in England in each year since 1997. [216037]

Keith Hill: The available information on empty residential dwellings in England by Government Office region is tabled as follows:

Vacant dwelling stock at 1 April, 1997 to 2004

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
North East	41,000	44,000	49,000	50,000	46,000	47,000	44,000	40,000
North West	125,000	126,000	127,000	138,000	141,000	136,000	135,000	128,000
Yorkshire and the Humber	81,000	86,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	94,000	88,000	85,000
East Midlands	67,000	67,000	67,000	68,000	63,000	58,000	59,000	59,000
West Midlands	73,000	78,000	77,000	80,000	79,000	77,000	73,000	76,000
East of England	81,000	73,000	70,000	70,000	63,000	64,000	63,000	60,000
London	122,000	114,000	114,000	105,000	105,000	101,000	101,000	100,000
South East	101,000	96,000	95,000	87,000	86,000	85,000	81,000	84,000
South West	78,000	70,000	67,000	64,000	68,000	71,000	76,000	63,000
England	767,000	753,000	767,000	761,000	751,000	732,000	720,000	694,000

Sources:
The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return and Housing Corporation's Regulatory and Statistical Return.

Exchange Flags

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made in reinvesting in Liverpool the sum repaid by the Walton Group in respect of Exchange Flags, as promised by his Department on 4 April 2003. [216461]

Yvette Cooper: English Partnerships (EP), the Government's national regeneration agency, is currently working on a number of schemes in Liverpool including one to significantly enhance the Lime Street Gateway. This will include new public space, improved accessibility and potentially a new landmark building. English Partnerships will seek to allocate the Exchange Buildings windfall to a scheme including environmental improvements, in line with the intention behind the original grant. One option is the proposed investment in the Lime Street scheme where EP is working with Liverpool Vision, Liverpool city council, Network Rail, Merseytravel and the private sector.

Detailed design work and financial analysis is ongoing with a view to obtaining the necessary approvals for this scheme by the summer.

Fire Authority (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make provision for district council representation on the Fire Authority in Lancashire. [216212]

Mr. Raynsford: The Lancashire Combined Fire Authority comprises of 25 councillors representing Lancashire County and the Unitary Authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. There are no proposals to alter the composition of the Authority.

Fire Deaths (Leicester, South)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire-related deaths in dwellings in Leicester, South there were in each year since 1997. [216937]

Phil Hope: This information is not published at constituency level. Fire statistics are compiled by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for each fire and rescue authority. In this case, Leicester, South's fires and casualties are reported as part of the Leicestershire total.

Figures supplied by the Leicestershire fire and rescue service are tabled as follows:

Fire related deaths in dwellings: Leicester, South constituency, 1997 to date

	Number
1997	1
1998	2
1999	2
2000	0
2001	0
2002	1
2003	1
2004	1
2005 (to date)	0

Fire Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's estimate is of the *(a)* capital and *(b)* start-up cost of the Firelink communications system. [216614]

Mr. Raynsford: This information is commercially sensitive. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is conducting an open competition under EU procurement procedures for the Firelink contract, with a view to letting a contract by mid 2005. The imperative is to run a fair and open competition in order to deliver best value for money for the public purse.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice he has given to fire and rescue authorities regarding retention of skilled fire control staff in the period up to the introduction of regional fire control centres in 2007–08. [216618]

Mr. Raynsford: Fire and Rescue Authorities are the employers of control staff and are best placed to understand what is required to retain them. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has provided draft guidance to the Employers' Organisation, which they may wish to use. It has also indicated a willingness to fund sensible retention programmes devised by local Fire and Rescue Authorities taking into account the proximity of the location of existing controls to the RCC, the local employment market and other local conditions, and provided for the first element of those costs in 2005–06 under "new burdens" principles.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of the capital receipt that would be achieved from the sale of radio spectrum released by the fire and rescue services upon completion of the Firelink Project. [216624]

Mr. Raynsford: The sale of spectrum is a matter for Ofcom, the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent studies his Department has commissioned on fire services. [217150]

Mr. Raynsford: The following sets out recent studies (commissioned in this financial year) that were commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on fire services (or their work):

A study to standardise terminology used by police and fire services.

A study to examine the potential for a low cost suppression system for the domestic environment.

A study to explore Fire and Rescue Service experiences of implementing key components of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS).

A study to establish and assess the range of interventions currently available at rehabilitating known or suspected arsonists, or aim to prevent a young child's interest in fire from developing into more serious fire-setting behaviour.

A study commissioned a specialist consultant to review existing materials relating to fire investigation standards/protocols, and to devise new standards for fire investigation applicable to all professionals who investigate fires (eg fire, forensic service, Ministry of Defence fire services etc.).

A survey of retained duty system personnel working to establish their main or primary employment and the extent to which their current employers support them in taking time off work to undertake retained duties.

A study to evaluate the work of the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund in its first two years.

The Building Disaster Assessment Group commissioned three elements of work to further inform fire and rescue service operating procedures. These are *(a)* the development of computer programme to inform personnel of the pressures and flows available for dry rising fire mains in tall buildings, *(b)* an initial review of the performance of externally located systems for measuring core body temperature, and *(c)* formal agreement with the Australasian Fire Authorities Council on the joint development of a fire brigade intervention model.

A scoping study to define requirements for the development of decision making support tools for incidents involving hazardous materials.

A study to examine the effectiveness of casualty showering as a decontamination process for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents.

A joint study between the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) evaluation of personal protective equipment (PPE), including the FRS gas tight suit.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many firefighters were *(a)* wounded and *(b)* killed on duty in (i) 2004 and (ii) each of the previous seven years. [217151]

Mr. Raynsford: The latest available information reported to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by fire and rescue services via the FDR1 return is in the following table:

Firefighter casualties incurred while fighting fires in England, 1997–2003

	Fatal casualties	Non fatal casualties[1]
1997	0	538
1998	0	509
1999	0	499
2000	0	428
2001	0	375
2002	1	336
2003[2]	0	361

[1] Excludes precautionary checks
[2] Provisional

Source:
Fire and Rescue Service returns to ODPM

From others sources; there were two firefighter fatalities reported in 2004. Full information on non fatal injuries to firefighters in 2004 is not available at present.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on the impact his proposed regional reorganisation of the fire service will have on services in North Yorkshire; and if he will make a statement. [215953]

Mr. Raynsford: The North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service operates under the direction of a Fire and Rescue Authority made up of elected councillors from York and North Yorkshire. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to change these arrangements.

Fires (Romford)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish the statistics on recorded fires in Romford in each of the last five years. [217148]

Mr. Raynsford: This information is not held centrally. Fire statistics are compiled by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for each Fire and Rescue Authority. In this case, Romford's fires are reported as part of the London total.

The London Safety Plan (figures prepared by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority) lists the number of fires in Havering on an annual average based on a five year period (1999–2000 to 2003–04) as 1,585.

Government Building Projects

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what Government-funded building projects are under construction in *(a)* Romford and *(b)* Essex. [217149]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Homelessness

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many homeless families with children were living in bed and breakfast accommodation on the latest date for which figures are available; [211564]

(2) what proportion of homeless people in bed and breakfast accommodation are families with children. [212258]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities report their activities under homelessness legislation quarterly, and this includes the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation, either following acceptance by the local authority as homeless, or pending a decision an their application, on the last day of the quarter. Bed and breakfast style accommodation involving the shared use of bathroom and kitchen facilities is separately distinguished.

The following table shows the number of homeless households in B and B type accommodation as at 31 March in each of the past three years, how many contained dependent children and/or an expectant mother and how many of the households with children had been resident for more than six weeks in B and B. Also shown are the numbers on 30 September 2004, the latest quarter for which figures are available. The September figures were reported in the Statistical Release on statutory homelessness for the third quarter of 2004, published on 14 December; copies are available in the Library of the House, and on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Homeless households[1] in B and B type accommodation, England

		Of which: with dependent children[2]	
As at	*Total*	*Total*	*Resident for six weeks or more[3]*
31 March 2002	11,840	6,730	
31 March 2003	12,070	4,800	2,770
31 March 2004	7,170	830	30
30 September 2004	7,400	1,370	190

[1] Households in B and B type accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting re-allocation of a settled home following acceptance.
[2] Includes households that contain an expectant mother.
[3] Data collected from December 2002.
Source:
ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homeless families there were in each Greater London borough in each of the last seven years.[214559]

Keith Hill: Local authorities report their activities under homelessness legislation quarterly. Information on the number of households accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need during the quarter and the number of these that contain dependent children, together with the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation as on the last day of the quarter and how many of these contain dependent children, as reported by the London boroughs for the past seven years, has been placed in the Library of the House.

After being accepted as homeless, a household will be placed in some form of accommodation. They may be placed in temporary accommodation, until a settled solution becomes available, or they may be given a settled solution straight away depending on the accommodation available to the local authority. As an alternative to temporary accommodation an authority may arrange for a household to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Quarterly Statistical Releases on statutory homelessness published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister include information on acceptances, and households in temporary accommodation, at local authority level in an associated Supplementary Table. The latest Release of, 13 December, and previous editions are available both in the Library of the House and via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many families with children were housed in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks in Sefton in each year since 1997; [214594]

(2) how many homeless families have been housed in bed and breakfast accommodation in Sefton in each year since 1997. [214688]

Yvette Cooper: Information reported by Sefton district council about the number of homeless households in bed and breakfast style accommodation as at 31 March of each year since 1997 is tabled as follows. The number of households containing dependent children or an expectant mother has been collected since March 2002, and the number of these resident in B&B for longer than six weeks has been collected since December 2002.

Households in Bed and Breakfast style temporary accommodation arranged by Sefton MBC under homelessness legislation, as at the end of March

	All households	*Of which: with dependent children*[2] *Total*	*Of which: resident longer than 6 weeks*
1997	0	0	0
1998	0	0	0
1999	0	0	0
2000	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0
2002	0	0	0
2003	0	0	0
2004	3	3	0

[1] Households in B&B accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting re-allocation of a settled home following Acceptance.

[2] Households containing dependent children and/or an expectant mother.

Source:
ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly).

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many rough sleepers there were in Crosby in each year since 1997. [214687]

Keith Hill: The number of rough sleepers within each local authority in England have been collected by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister since 1998. Figures for Sefton MBC, which includes Crosby, are tabled as follows:

Rough sleepers for Sefton MBC

	Number
1998	21
1999	21
2000	17
2001	5
2002	2
2003	0
2004	0

Source:
ODPM Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (annual)

Housing

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will ask the Housing Corporation to issue updated guidance on the use of ground 8, schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1988 following Lord Justice Dyson's concluding remarks in the case of North British Housing Association *v.* Snaith. [215716]

Keith Hill: The regulatory circular "Tenancy Management: Eligibility and Evictions" issued by the Housing Corporation in July 2004 contains clear guidance about the corporation's expectations of registered social landlords (RSLs) (more commonly known as housing associations) in dealing with eviction and in particular housing benefit. The guidance states

'Possession proceedings for rent arrears should not be started against a tenant who can demonstrate that they have (1) a reasonable expectation of eligibility for housing benefit; (2) provided the local authority with all the evidence required to process a housing benefit claim; (3) paid required personal contributions towards the charges. Associations should make every effort to establish effective ongoing liaison with housing benefit departments and to make direct contact with them before taking enforcement action. A certificate should be obtained, if possible, to confirm that there are no outstanding benefit enquires, according to Department of Work and Pensions good practice guidance'.

The Housing Corporation expects RSLs as a matter of course to make continued contact with local authority housing benefit departments before and during enforcement action. It is in an RSL's interest to collect the rent that is owed to it.

The Civil Justice Council is working with the Department of Constitutional Affairs to issue a pre-action protocol for possessions cases. If introduced, then it would require social landlords to have carried out all the actions contained within before a court will hear a possessions case. In addition the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is leading on a cross-Whitehall group on possessions and evictions which includes the Housing Corporation. We are clear that possession should be a last resort and intend to issue good practice guidance later this year which will set out the steps we would expect landlords to take in order to avoid possession action wherever possible.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many residential properties have been built in each Lancashire district in each of the last five years. [216406]

Keith Hill: The annual numbers of new build completions reported for each of the authorities in Lancashire since 1999–2000 are in the following table.

New build completions

Number	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Blackburn and Darwen	312	524	400	407	347
Blackpool	149	227	521	206	141
Burnley	249	260	96	77	132
Chorley	467	412	404	464	385
Fylde	244	241	184	248	327
Hyndburn	212	178	143	164	169
Lancaster	335	284	172	459	500
Pendle	190	207	272	159	158
Preston	274	360	401	82	289
Ribble Valley	133	198	172	187	226
Rossendale	133	59	148	158	208

New build completions

Number	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
South Ribble	428	237	330	523	269
West Lancashire	330	340	274	411	256
Wyre	324	493	398	368	381

Source: Returns (P2) to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on building control completions

Mr. Gill: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authority-owned properties in Leicester, South do not meet the Government's decent homes standard; and what the estimated cost of bringing them up to this standard is. [215732]

Keith Hill: The information requested is submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister according to local authority districts rather than by parliamentary constituency. In their Business Plan Statistical Appendix Leicester reported that 11,350 local authority-owned properties did not meet the Government's decent homes standard at April 2004.

Leicester reported that it would cost £68 million to bring these dwellings up to the standard. This covers the cost to bring existing non-decent dwellings up to the decent homes standard, but does not cover work to prevent currently decent dwellings from falling into non-decency.

Mr. Gill: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of Leicester, South Housing Association homes are fitted with *(a)* smoke alarms, *(b)* fire doors and *(c)* double glazing. [216385]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Housing Associations are regulated by the Housing Corporation, which is a non-departmental public body which in turn is sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Housing Corporation does not keep the detailed information requested.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what help his Department gives to those people who need rented housing when the relevant council lists are very long and the relevant housing associations have closed lists. [216557]

Keith Hill: In England housing authorities are responsible for setting their own allocation policies and procedures. However, they must ensure that their allocation scheme is framed so as to give reasonable preference to certain categories of persons. The categories are set out in s167 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 and are designed to ensure that priority for the allocation of social housing is given to those in the greatest housing need.

The Government recognise, however, that in some areas of the country there is a great demand for social housing resulting in long waiting lists; to alleviate this we have secured funding in the Spending Review 2004 which will, along with efficiency improvements, produce 75,000 new social homes for rent by 2008.

"Homes for All" sets out the Government's agenda to increase choice and opportunity for tenants. It makes clear that the Government are keen to encourage the extension of choice based lettings to cover low cost home ownership options and properties for rent from private landlords, as well as social housing.

The Government believe that the private rented sector is an important resource in meeting housing need. "Homes for All" states that the Government will improve access to the private rented sector for households who might otherwise face homelessness, through schemes that provide rent deposits, guarantees or rent in advance, or which offer approved lettings with accredited private landlords.

"Homes for All" also outlines our plans to help 80,000 people get a foot on the property ladder, through our First Time Buyers Initiative and other low cost home ownership schemes.

Housing Standards

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will adopt the EcoHomes very good standard within his proposed sustainable building code. [216010]

Phil Hope: The Senior Steering Group overseeing the development of the Code for Sustainable Buildings will consider how best to build upon all relevant existing assessment methods, including EcoHomes and its "very good" standard.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what target he has set for new Government-funded housing to meet the EcoHomes very good standard. [216011]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to increasing the standard to which all publicly funded housing is built. As of April 2003 all new built homes funded by the Housing Corporation are required to achieve a British Research Establishment (BRE) EcoHomes rating of "Pass" as a minimum essential condition of grant and Registered Social Landlords are encouraged to aim for "Good". The Housing Corporation intends to increase the minimum requirement to a 'Good' rating from April 2005 with Registered Social Landlords Associations encouraged to aim for the higher 'Very Good' rating from the same date.

English Partnerships requires that all its developments must achieve a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) rating of "Very Good" or better on their mainstream site disposals. This includes residential developments. The Millennium Communities programme, a specific initiative being taken forward by English Partnerships, is working towards the 'Excellent' target

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what environmental standards he intends to incorporate into the Thames Gateway development. [216012]

Keith Hill: In the Thames Gateway, as elsewhere, the Government are committed to the construction of sustainable homes that minimise the impact on climate change.

Building Regulations set minimum environmental standards for new buildings. The 2002 revision of Building Regulations sets performance standards that mean new dwellings will be around 25 per cent. more energy efficient than before. The Government are currently carrying out a further review of Part L of Building Regulations and new standards will come into effect by the end of 2005.

The Government are committed to raising the environmental standards to which publicly funded housing is built. All new homes funded by the Housing Corporation, including those in the Thames Gateway, will be required to achieve a BRE EcoHomes "Good" rating from April 2005.

The Government are developing a new Code for Sustainable Buildings to establish higher standards for energy and water efficiency, waste and use of materials than the minimum standards in Building Regulations. This will be taken forward in demonstration schemes in the Thames Gateway before being rolled out nationally.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213646]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister came into existence as a Government Department in May 2002.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has spent the following on its in-house magazine since 2002:

	£
2002–03	29,710
2003–04	48,204
2004–05	37,002

The magazine aims to communicate key Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's news and policy issues to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's staff both centrally and in the Government Offices for the Regions. It includes a range of articles, from short news pieces detailing policy announcements and internal events, to more in depth articles highlighting and sharing good practice in delivery on the ground.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Office in each year since 1997; and how much the Office spent on each in each year. [207652]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. Separate expenditure figures for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister while subsumed within the Department for Transport, Local Government and Regions and Cabinet Office are not available for previous years. The total expenditure by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (C) for the period from formation until 23 December 2004 was £429,000. to the nearest £1,000. This figure can be split between newspapers and periodicals only at disproportionate cost.

With effect from 1 November 2004, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's central publications acquisitions service ceased operation and responsibility for purchases was transferred to individual Divisions within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as part of its commitment to greater efficiency. Although expenditure information can still be obtained for the whole of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, information on titles purchased is only available centrally for those titles ordered or on active subscription as at 31 October 2004. The current list has been made available in the Library of the House. The list of titles includes those titles taken by the Department for Transport, to whom the central acquisitions services was also provided. Extracting listings for individual Departments can be done only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Office and its predecessors spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213855]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002 and figures for previous years are unavailable. The spend shown does not include figures from the Government Offices. The available spend information is tabled as follows:

£

	Stationery	*Office supplies*
2002–03	1,438,559.68	275,434.26
2003–04	1,482,321.29	163,885.46
2004–05 (to date)	688,071.88	154,419.16

Key Worker Housing

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his plans for developing homes for key workers on public sector land will include greenfield or green belt development; and if he will make a statement. [216649]

Keith Hill: Proposals for key worker homes will be subject to planning policies and procedures in the normal way. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's planning policies for housing set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing" gives priority to reusing suitable brownfield land in preference to the development of greenfield. The Government does not rule out sustainable greenfield development if it is necessary to meet a justified housing need. Planning policies for the Green Belt set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: "Green Belts", which include the general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, will also apply in any case where development on Green Belt land is proposed.

Much of the surplus public sector land that has been identified for affordable housing by the Government is brownfield.

Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent estimate the Government has made of the cost of local government inspection to local government. [211974]

Mr. Raynsford: There are no agreed or reliable figures to calculate indirect costs of inspections to local government (e.g. staff time).

Mr. Flight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on the establishment and implementation of local authority call centres. [215256]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not received any specific representations on this issue.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost of establishing and running local authority call centres has been in each year for which figures are available. [215257]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what measures his Department uses to assess the *(a)* cost-effectiveness and *(b)* efficiency of local authority call centres in terms of local service delivery; [215258]

(2) what the total Government investment into local authority call centres has been; and if he will make a statement; [215266]

(3) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of local authority call centres on the improvement of local service delivery; and if he will make a statement; [215268]

(4) what assessment he has made of the effect of local authority call centres on local service delivery costs; and if he will make a statement. [215269]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not made any specific investments in or appraisals of local authority call centres. Many individual local authorities will, however, have invested their own resources in developing call centres where these demonstrate an effective way of meeting local priorities. This development will often have been supplemented with funds provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to support their overall e-government development programme. Local authorities recognise the contribution effective initial contact can make to efficient service delivery.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many directives his Department has issued to local authorities regarding local authority call centres in each year since 1997. [215259]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not issued any specific directives regarding local authority call centres.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the funding arrangements for local authority call centres; and what estimate he has made of the impact of this funding on *(a)* local government budgets and *(b)* council tax. [215267]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not make any specific funding available for local authority call centres.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what level of balances his Department assesses as reasonable for each of the tiers of local authorities to retain in their budgets; and if he will make a statement. [216122]

Mr. Raynsford: It is for each local authority to decide for itself the level of balances it should hold in the light of the financial risks and circumstances affecting it. In doing so members should take account of the views of their chief finance officer, in accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003. It would not therefore be appropriate for central Government to specify reasonable levels of balances for tiers of local authorities.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the change in the per capita grant was for *(a)* Worcestershire and *(b)* Worcester City between (i) 1993–94 and 1997–98 and (ii) 1997–98 and 2004–05. [216576]

Mr. Raynsford: The per capita grant for Hereford and Worcester between 1993–94 and 1997–98 showed a decrease of 38 per head. Hereford & Worcester authority was abolished on 31 March 1998. The change in per capita grant for Worcestershire between 1998–99 and 2004–05 was an increase of £233 per head.

The per capita grant for Worcester City increased by £2 per head between 1993–94 and 1997–98 and between 1997–98 and 2004–05 increased by £21 per head.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what population statistics he relied upon in setting the revenue support grant for Stafford borough council for 2005–06; and what representations he has received about the accuracy of those statistics. [216896]

Mr. Raynsford: The 2005–06 Revenue Support Grant was calculated using the 2003 mid-year population estimates produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). During the consultation period, representations were received from 17 local authorities plus the Association of London Government (ALG) commenting on the accuracy of the population estimates.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* cash and *(b)* percentage funding variance of Leicestershire county council from the county council (i) Standard Spending Assessment and (ii) Education Funding Assessment average was in each year between 1998 and 2004–05. [216930]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is tabled as follows:

Total standard spending assessment/total formula spending share

	Leicestershire	*Average shire county*	*Change from average*	*Percentage change from average*
1998–99	352.825	416.951	-64.126	-15.4
1999–2000	371.945	438.818	-66.873	-15.2
2000–01	390.321	461.008	-70.686	-15.3
2001–02	410.978	483.929	-72.951	-15.1
2002–03	410.854	491.364	-80.510	-16.4

Total standard spending assessment/total formula spending share

	Leicestershire	Average shire county	Change from average	Percentage change from average
2003–04	480.995	569.310	-88.315	-15.5
2004–05	489.279	587.804	-98.525	-16.8

Education standard spending assessment/education formula spending share

	Leicestershire	Average shire county	Change from average	Percentage change from average
1998–99	215.261	244.681	-29.420	-12.0
1999–2000	228.194	258.399	-30.205	-11.7
2000–01	241.044	272.584	-31.541	-11.6
2001–02	255.752	287.793	-32.041	-11.1
2002–03	247.670	285.698	-38.028	-13.3
2003–04	278.946	319.900	-40.954	-12.8
2004–05	294.246	337.564	-43.318	-12.8

Interpreting this information is difficult. It is complicated by the fact that shire counties differ considerably with respect to the number of people for which services are provided. For this reason amounts per head are often used to compare one authority against another. An equivalent table showing amounts per head is tabled as follows:

Total standard spending assessment per head/total formula spending share per head

	Leicestershire	Average shire county	Change from average	Percentage change from average
1998–99	590.71	627.09	-36.38	-5.8
1999–2000	620.05	655. 72	-35.68	-5.4
2000–01	651.92	685.34	-33.42	-4.9
2001–02	677.29	714.25	-36.95	-5.2
2002–03	672. 18	721.15	-48.97	-6.8
2003–04	788.16	842.01	-53.85	-6.4
2004–05	794.94	864.98	-70.04	-8.1

Education standard spending assessment per head/education formula spending share per head

	Leicestershire	Average shire county	Change from average	Percentage change from average
1998–99	360.40	368.00	-7.60	-2.1
1999–2000	380.41	386.12	-5.72	-1.5
2000–01	402.59	405.23	-2.63	-0.7
2001–02	421.48	424.76	-3.28	-0.8
2002–03	405.20	419.30	-14.10	-3.4
2003–04	457.08	473.13	-16.05	-3.4
2004–05	478.07	496.74	-18.67	-3.8

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total amount of *(a)* council tax raised by and *(b)* central Government grant paid to Sevenoaks district council was in (i) 1996–97 and (ii) 2003–04. [216034]

Mr. Raynsford: The information is as follows:

(a) Sevenoaks district council set a council tax requirement (excluding parish precepts) of £2.860 million for 1996–97 and £6.308 million for 2003–04.

(b) Sevenoaks district council received £6.860 million in revenue grants for 1996–97. The budgeted figure for 2003–04 was £6.740 million. These figures are as reported by the local authority and include special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates.

Because of changes in local authority responsibilities in the intervening period, such comparisons are not statistically valid.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the practicalities of introducing a local income tax whose rates could be varied by county, district and parish councils; and if he will make a statement. [215006]

Mr. Raynsford: Local income tax (LIT) was one of the options for the reform of local government funding in England considered by the Balance of Funding Review which reported in July 2004. Copies of the report are available in the Library of the House. Working papers of the review are available on the website of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

In looking at LIT, the review found that there are a number of potentially serious risks and disadvantages that would need to be considered in detail, including the potential additional costs that the system could impose. A LIT could be potentially complex to administer and its effects on individuals or employers would also need to be examined with great care. The review concluded that council tax should be retained but reformed and that any further work on LIT should proceed on the basis that it is a supplement to, not a replacement for, council tax.

The Government agreed with the review's conclusion that council tax should be retained but reformed. It has appointed Sir Michael Lyons to undertake an independent inquiry that will consider, in the light of the report by Balance of Funding Review, the detailed case for changes to the present system of local government funding and make recommendations on any changes that are necessary and how to implement them. The inquiry will, among other things, conduct thorough analysis of options other than council tax for local authorities to raise supplementary revenue, including LIT, reform of non-domestic rates and other possible local taxes and charges, as well as the possible combination of such options. Sir Michael will report by the end of 2005.

Millennium Dome

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will commission an external valuation of the Government's remaining interest in the Millennium Dome site, including the current value of its future expected receipts under the sale contract. [216612]

Keith Hill: Independent formal valuations and valuation advice, by retained professionals, have been obtained by English Partnerships as a matter of course throughout the entire sale process in respect of land on the Greenwich Peninsula, and similar advice will continue to be taken on a regular basis as the developments are delivered over time. Appropriate protections and mechanisms are built into the contracts

between English Partnerships and Meridian Delta Ltd. and Anschutz Entertainment Group to ensure that English Partnerships receives value from money from the transaction, as was verified by the recently published report from the National Audit Office. Regular valuations of English Partnerships' landholdings will also be undertaken as part of English Partnerships' corporate responsibilities to report to Parliament, in its annual report and accounts, the value of assets held.

Northern Way

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to section C9 of Moving Forward: The Northern Way, First Growth Strategy Report, if he will list *(a)* the total number of houses proposed for demolition in each local authority area and *(b)* the streets where demolition s proposed. [217105]

Keith Hill: The Northern Way is an independently chaired, Regional Development Agency-led initiative. "Moving Forward: The Northern Way" First Growth Strategy Report is a publication of its steering group. The report makes no proposals for the demolition of houses.

It is an essential pillar of the strategy that people living in the north, and the people the Northern Way Steering Group want to attract to the north, have real quality and diversity in housing that not only accommodates their needs when starting out but also provides real choice when they begin to prosper and their families grow.

The Northern Way Steering Group have made it clear that any proposals will be taken forward by working with the Regional Housing Boards and through the Regional Spatial Strategies, which are subject to formal consultation processes with stakeholders, at which heritage and conservation issues can be fully explored.

Parish Councils (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the percentage increase in the parish council precept in each parish council area in Chorley has been since 1997. [216559]

Mr. Raynsford: Information on amounts of council tax precepted by individual parish and town councils is not held centrally and could be collected only at disproportionate cost. The information requested should be available from Chorley borough council.

Park Homes

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will require local authorities which implement the six metre rule on park homes to make appropriate grants to the owners of such park homes; and if he will make a statement. [216428]

Yvette Cooper: No. It is for a local authority to decide whether to impose the six metre rule as a site licence condition and to decide whether to enforce a site owner to comply with any condition. The cost of compliance is normally met by the site owner who may seek to recover his costs from residents as part of the pitch fee review.

Under the park home provisions in the Housing Act 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is to lay secondary legislation on the pitch fee reviews. These provisions are expected to come into force in July 2005.

Planning Advisory Service

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the *(a)* purpose and *(b)* estimated yearly expenditure of the Planning Advisory Service. [216274]

Keith Hill: The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) supports local planning authorities across England in improving their performance and promotes good practice. It also offers direct support to individual authorities to help them deliver key Government objectives, such as large-scale regeneration projects.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has allocated £1.5 million to PAS in 2004–05, and £2 million in 2005–06.

Planning Appeals

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the longest time taken for the Planning Inspectorate to consider an individual appeal was, in each year since 1997. [216269]

Keith Hill: The information requested is tabled as follows:

Longest time taken to determine an appeal

	Weeks
1998–99	117
1999–2000	147
2000–01	138
2001–02	271
2002–03	127
2003–04	151
1 April to 31 December 2004	205

Information prior to 1998–99 is not readily available.

It is common practice for an applicant for planning approval, having had permission refused and having submitted an appeal, to submit an amended application to the local planning authority and to ask the Inspectorate for the determination of the initial appeal to be delayed. If the amended application is also turned down by the local planning authority, both appeals are determined together.

So far as can be ascertained, the appeals listed were linked to and decided with subsequent appeals. This would have been done at the request of the appellant.

Policy Initiatives

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* reports, *(b)* strategies, *(c)* five-year plans and *(d)* 10 year plans he has launched in his role as Deputy Prime Minister or Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions. [211136]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions have published reports, strategies and plans reflecting the wide range of their

responsibilities. Most recently this has included two five year plans: "Sustainable Communities: Homes for All" and "Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity". Together these plans show how the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will take forward its agenda of creating sustainable communities, first described in the 2003 "Sustainable Communities Plan". A full list of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's publications is available on its website at http://www.publications.odpm.gov.uk/.

Polytunnels

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether under planning policy guidance polytunnels which are placed on the same agricultural land each year for several months, while being removed during winter months, constitute a permanent fixture requiring full planning permission. [216350]

Keith Hill: It is for the local planning authority to decide if placing any structure on farmland would amount to development. Even where a polytunnel is regarded as development, it is likely to benefit from the general permission granted in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued no guidance on polytunnels as such, but we do encourage farmers always to have regard to the impact of their work on the environment.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) on how many occasions his Department's Ministers used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years; [213704]

(2) how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213706]

Yvette Cooper: "Travel by Ministers" makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government has published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government has also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to regional assemblies on holding meetings in different locations around the region. [214157]

Mr. Raynsford: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has not issued any guidance on where regional assemblies should hold meetings.

Regional Referendums

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1087W on regional referendums, if he will place in the Library copies of the research undertaken on *(a)* the Your Say Information Campaign and *(b)* other groups' campaigns relating to the regional referendum in the north-east. [216427]

Mr. Raynsford: Copies of the research conducted on the Your Say Information Campaign have been made available in the Library of the House This research was conducted by NOP World and was designed to measure the effect of the information campaign in raising awareness of the referendums.

Six quantitative studies were undertaken between October 2003 and September 2004. These studies were undertaken in all three northern regions, with the exception of the last study, which was only undertaken in the north-east. In addition, a qualitative study was undertaken in October 2003 and June 2004 in all three regions.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold any research relating to any other groups' campaigns.

Regional Spatial Strategies

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what discussions his Department has had with each of the English regions with regard to their spatial strategies concerning *(a)* key priorities, *(b)* resources required and *(c)* time scales for delivery; and if he will make a statement; [216120]

(2) what discussions *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Government Offices have had with regional assemblies in England on the preparation of their spatial strategies with particular reference to developing freight infrastructure. [216121]

Keith Hill: Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) were put on a statutory basis by section 1(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The final version of any Regional Spatial Strategy revision is approved and issued by the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Regional Planning Body (RPB) is required to work in consultation and cooperation with the Government office (GO) in the development of the RSS. The RPB should for example, agree the project plan with the GO which will include key priorities and timescales for delivery. It is good practice for the RPB to work closely with the GO in preparing the draft revision, although care needs to be taken to ensure that ownership of the emerging RSS rests clearly with the RPB until the point at which the revised draft RSS is submitted to the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. The Government office can advise on issues to be addressed in the revision and the application of national policy. This could include working in liaison with the Office of the Deputy

Prime Minister and the Department for Transport to inform the development of the transport aspects of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

A number of Government offices have been involved with Regional Assemblies, Regional Development Agencies and local stakeholders to develop regional freight strategies to inform the development of Regional Transport Strategies.

The Regional Assemblies are required to produce rolling medium-term business plans for three financial years, setting out for year one their proposed activities including priorities and timescales for delivery of the RSS for the year in question and providing forward projections for years two and three. Business plans are submitted to the Government office for consideration, and inform the level of resources required for the relevant financial year.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he plans to take when the consultation process on the South East Spatial Strategy is complete; and if he will make a statement. [216458]

Keith Hill: The South East England Regional Assembly is currently consulting on spatial options for future development in the south east region. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects it to submit the draft south east plan by late 2005. Thereafter it will tested by an independent panel. It would not be right for us to pre-empt the outcome of this process. Therefore Government will not make a statement at this stage.

Rent Harmonisation

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what he expects the average change to council tenant rents will be when the measures designed to increase harmonisation between council and housing association tenants come into effect. [216611]

Keith Hill: At this stage the effect on council rents is unknown. The plans are being reviewed in response to concerns raised following the consultation over the summer of 2004. As they stood, those proposals would have had the effect of increasing the average rent by £0.36 per week beyond that planned under the existing policy.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reason rent harmonisation measures for council and housing association rents have been postponed until the end of 2005. [216643]

Keith Hill: The decision was taken to postpone the introduction of the proposals after concerns were raised over the accuracy of some of the property valuation data, and the impact this would have had on rent levels.

These concerns are being investigated and, subject to a further consultation period, the revised proposals will be introduced in time for the 2006–07 financial year.

Roadside Advertising

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what Government policy is on commercial advertising alongside motorways and major roads. [216392]

Keith Hill: Local planning authorities are responsible for the control of outdoor advertisements and have powers to take enforcement action against any advertisements displayed unlawfully. Before giving consent for an advertisement to be displayed, local planning authorities must consider amenity and public safety aspects. Prior consent from the owner of the land is also required. Advertisements which are likely to distract motorists on a motorway or major road are unlikely to be approved.

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether his Department maintains records of temporary wheeled billboards placed next to motorways; and if he will make a statement; [216858]

(2) what provisions there are for temporary wheeled billboards placed next to motorways to be removed where they are judged to be a distraction to drivers; [216859]

(3) what assessment he has made of the potential for distraction by temporary wheeled billboards being placed next to motorways. [216860]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not maintain records of temporary wheeled billboards placed next to motorways. Research carried out into causes of road accidents has considered the effect of advertisements alongside motorways and trunk roads but the results have not been conclusive.

Local planning authorities have enforcement powers they can use to remove unlawfully displayed advertisements.

Sand Reserves

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1586W, on sand reserves, how much of the 3.2 million tonnes of sand released under the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan has been taken; what estimate he has made of how long the sand at the existing permitted reserves will last; whether a full survey has been carried out to establish the total sand reserves in Lancashire; and how much sand will be needed for the next 10 years for Lancashire in accordance with revised Minerals Planning Guidance Note 6. [217159]

Keith Hill: None of the 3.2 million tonnes of sand required to be released by the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan has been extracted since the plan was adopted. All production has been from reserves which already had planning permission at the time of adoption. Two applications for sand extraction have been submitted recently and await determination—one is near St. Michaels on Wyre, in Wyre borough, and the other is at Adlington in Chorley borough.

The existing permitted reserves of sand in Lancashire amount to £3.54 million tonnes. At the present rates of production, these reserves would last for seven years.

Stage 1 of a Sand and Gravel Study, undertaken by planning consultants and the British Geological Survey on behalf of the Lancashire joint authorities, has recently been completed. It identifies potential areas of high grade sand deposits within the county for further investigation in stage 2 to be conducted later this year.

The revised Mineral Planning Guidance Note 6 require the north-west to provide 55 million tonnes of land-won sand and gravel over the period 2001 to 2016. Lancashire's share of this total is 8.2 million tonnes, which equates to 5 million tonnes in a 10-year period.

Social Exclusion Unit

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of the Social Exclusion Unit was in the last year for which figures are available. [217318]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1088W to the hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Turner).

Social Housing

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of the working age population who are *(a)* economically active and *(b)* economically inactive are social housing tenants. [215526]

Keith Hill: Based on Labour Force Survey results for spring 2004 it is estimated that, of household reference persons[1] in England of working age:

11 per cent. of those who were economically active were social housing tenants.

47 per cent. of those who were economically inactive were social housing tenants.

[1] Previously referred to as heads of household.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many social housing tenants there are; and how many are *(a)* employed, *(b)* unemployed and *(c)* economically active, broken down by age and gender. [215527]

Keith Hill: Using data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) it is estimated that in spring 2004 there were approximately 3,782,000 social housing tenancies in England.

The following table provides a breakdown of these households on the basis of the economic status, age and gender of the household reference persons for households living in social housing.

Thousand

	Economic activity of household reference persons for households in social housing						
Sex/age	*Employed*	*Unemployed*	*Economically active*	*Retired*	*Other inactive*	*Not known*	*Total*
Male							
16–24	31	7	38	0	14	2	53
25–34	116	23	139	0	59	6	204
35–44	168	34	202	1	82	6	290
45–64	239	31	271	15	257	12	554
65 or over	24	2	26	492	35	1	554
Total	578	97	675	507	447	27	1,656
Female							
16–24	50	16	66	0	91	1	158
25–34	151	24	175	0	194	4	373
35–44	200	30	231	0	194	4	428
45–64	179	19	198	52	209	4	463
65 or over	10	0	10	693	0	1	705
Total	590	90	680	745	688	13	2,126
All	1,168	187	1,355	1,252	1,135	40	3,782

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* housing association tenants and *(b)* local authority tenants (i) have and (ii) do not have the right to buy in the Chorley constituency; and how many properties have been sold in each of the last five years. [216405]

Keith Hill: At 1 April 2003, there were around 2,800 housing association tenants in Chorley. It is not possible to say exactly how many of these have the right to buy their rented homes.

In England, around 50 per cent. of housing association tenants qualify for the right to buy or the preserved right to buy. The right to buy is available to pre-1988 secure tenants of non-charitable housing associations. Housing association properties were generally let on secure tenancies until 1988, but all new lettings since then have been on assured tenancies which do not include the right to buy. In addition, tenants of former local authority housing stock that has been transferred to housing associations retain a preserved right-to-buy.

At 1 April 2003, there were around 3,200 local authority tenants in Chorley. The majority of these have the right to buy their homes. Secure tenants of local authorities (ie, the majority of local authority tenants) have the right to buy.

Tenants must have spent at least two years as a public sector tenant to qualify for the right to buy. The Housing Act 2004 increases the qualification period to five years for new tenancies granted on or after 18 January 2005.

Right to buy sales in Chorley during the past five years for which figures are available are tabled as follows:

	Number
1999–2000	44
2000–01	41
2001–02	52
2002–03	95
2003–04	134

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which ministers were not present; [210538]

(2) if he will list the speeches his special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210567]

Yvette Cooper: Special advisers attend meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. Information relating to these meetings could be provided only at disproportionate cost. One special adviser has made various speeches on the role of the special adviser at civil service training events.

All meetings held by special advisers and all speeches given by special advisers are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers."

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of staff surveys in the Department and its predecessors was in each year since 1997. [213684]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created in May 2002. One staff survey has been conducted since that date, in January 2003. The total cost of the survey, was £57,980 excluding VAT.

The purpose of the survey was particularly to obtain baseline information to direct the corporate change programme.

Supporting People Grant

Nick Harvey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what factors underlay the decision to reduce the Supporting People grant; what assessment he has made of the effects of reduction of grant; and what plans he has to consult on the proposed draft distribution formula for this grant. [215503]

Yvette Cooper: The Government commissioned an Independent Review into the Supporting People programme following significant late growth in estimated costs from £1.4 billion in December 2002 to £1.8 billion by March 2003. The review reported in January 2004 that there are wide variations in unit costs between authorities and that £1.8 billion was too much to pay for the services provided.

Reductions in Supporting People programme grant reflect the findings of the Independent Review and subsequent work carried out on value for money including work commissioned into the efficient use of legacy funding and the results of Audit Commission inspections. These studies demonstrate that there is significant potential for making savings in the current pattern of service provision whilst safeguarding valuable services.

Administering authorities should be using the service review process for identifying and delivering efficiency savings. The Supporting People standards and monitoring team monitor the progress being made by authorities in their service reviews. They also monitor the feedback from the Supporting People Audit Commission Inspections and milestones information from administering authorities.

We will consult widely on a revised version on the distribution formula later this year.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons funding for the Supporting People programme in North Yorkshire is to be reduced by 40 per cent. from the 2003–04 level; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that quality of care received by people in North Yorkshire is not adversely affected. [215515]

Yvette Cooper: The Government commissioned an Independent Review into the Supporting People programme following significant late growth in estimated costs from £1.4 billion in December 2002 to £1.8 billion by March 2003. The review reported in January 2004 that there are wide variations in unit costs between authorities and that £1.8 billion was too much to pay for the services provided.

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The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has taken no decisions about the longer term distribution. A formula for the distribution of Supporting People funding in the longer term is being developed. We are working with local authority representative bodies and will consult widely on a revised version later this year. The extent of the increases or reductions and the rate of which they are introduced are open to further consideration. We will include this issue in the consultation.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will monitor the impact on administering authorities of introducing any new needs based distribution formula.

Terrorist Suspects

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether terrorist suspects subject to house arrest in council housing under the Home Secretary's proposals for detaining suspects without trial will be eligible *(a)* for the Right-to-Buy scheme, *(b)* for housing benefit and *(c)* to vote in ballots on large scale voluntary transfers. [213461]

Keith Hill: Full details of how Control Orders will operate will be brought forward in due course. Their precise effect in such cases will need to be assessed once these details are available.

Timber

Sue Doughty: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he will take to ensure that environmentally sustainable building materials, with particular reference to sustainable timber, are used in the construction of proposed new homes in London and the South East as outlined in the report, Sustainable Communities: Homes for All. [216600]

Phil Hope: The Government are committed to raising the environmental standards to which publicly funded housing is built. All new homes funded by the Housing Corporation will be required to achieve a BRE EcoHomes "Good" rating from April 2005. Those delivered by English Partnerships must reach a "Very Good" standard.

We are also committed to delivering new homes in London and the South East, as set out in Homes For All to high environmental and sustainability standards. We will achieve this both through raising building standards and also through the Code for Sustainable Buildings, which will be piloted in the Thames Gateway. In particular, the Code will specify a minimum percentage of timber to be acquired from sources that are independently verified as either legal and sustainable or reclaimed.

In addition, in pursuance of its objective to establish a Central Point of Expertise on Timber Procurement, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs aims to establish in 2005 an inquiry point that will help local authorities and other stakeholders to procure legal and sustainable timber.

Tri-service Centres

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the evidential basis was for the statements made at the meeting with Ministers on 13 January *(a)* that local geographical knowledge of staff in a fire control room was less important than access to computerised gazetteers and *(b)* that the different business needs of the three services in a Tri-Service Centre are a key implementation barrier. [215058]

Mr. Raynsford: The 12 fire and rescue services in England which have installed advanced technology and geographical information systems to locate callers and mobilise appliances have demonstrated that local knowledge of individual members of staff is unreliable and of diminishing use. This was stated at the presentation on 13 January by a control room officer who has 25 years of experience of working in four different fire and rescue service control rooms in both urban and rural areas. The requirement to have local knowledge does not form part of the selection criteria for staff so its depth, accuracy and currency are not measurable. It would be unacceptable for the quality of control services to be dependent upon which staff are on duty.

A joint report in 2001 by the presidents of the professional associations representing the three emergency services, entitled 'Three Distinct Services—Shared Ambitions for a Healthier and Safer Community' states that the operational requirements of the three services are very different and should not be compromised. The report cited different cultures, financial regimes, organisational structures and statutory responsibilities as barriers to joint working and that the emphasis should be on collaboration, not integration. None of the three ISB tri-service projects has yet been able to implement common mobilisation systems. Control room staff in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire have been co-located but continue to work separately.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on *(a)* relations within the ruling military Junta in Burma and *(b)* the position of the Junta leader Than Shwe. [215760]

Mr. Alexander: Our embassy in Rangoon closely monitors developments in Burma. There have been no changes announced in the senior leadership since October 2004, with the departure of the then Prime Minister Khin Nyunt.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Burmese regime on reported unrest within the region. [215761]

Mr. Alexander: None.

However, I last met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November and pressed for political reform, full respect for human rights and the need for all groups in Burma, including ethnic nationalities, to play a full part in national reconciliation.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the future of democracy in Burma. [215762]

Mr. Alexander: It is essential that the National Convention to draw up a new constitution, which reconvened on 17 February, is an inclusive and transparent process, involving all political parties and ethnic groups in Burma. Without their participation, the process lacks all credibility and the prospects for democracy in Burma will be bleak.

We remain willing to support a genuine process of national reconciliation leading to the restoration of democracy and full respect for human rights in Burma and we will respond positively to tangible progress.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the statement of the Workshop of ASEAN Parliamentarians in November on the Myanmar Issue. [215763]

Mr. Alexander: We fully support the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Parliamentarians' efforts to promote national reconciliation in Burma.

We believe that all Burma's regional neighbours have a key role to play in encouraging substantive change in Burma.

We shall continue to work closely with our partners in the region to press the regime to begin a genuine process of reform involving all political parties and ethnic groups. That is the only way to achieve lasting peace and national reconciliation. The prospect of Burmese chairmanship of ASEAN in 2006 makes the need for change all the more pressing.

I met ambassadors from ASEAN on 29 November and underlined the need for political reform and full respect for human rights in Burma.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the UN Human Rights Commission regarding the Government of Burma's treatment of *(a)* Muslim Rohingya, *(b)* Christians among the Chin, Kachin, Karen and Karenni ethnic nationalities and *(c)* Buddhists who do not support the regime. [215764]

Mr. Alexander: The UK works closely with its UN partners to promote human rights in Burma, and fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary General's Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro, with whom officials remain in close contact.

Discrimination and persecution on the basis of religious or ethnic background has been condemned in successive UK co-sponsored UN Commission on Human Rights Resolutions on Burma, most recently in April 2004.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letters dated 1 June 2004, 8 September 2004 and 25 November 2004 from the hon. Member for Brent, East regarding Indonesian Christians and the Indonesian Government's draft Bill on Religious Harmony. [215627]

Mr. Alexander: I replied to the letters on Indonesia on 1 February 2005.

Departmental Costs

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213715]

Mr. Straw: The guidance note "Travel by Ministers", makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/private charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and the guidance on Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204356]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not separately record the information requested by the hon. Member. Analysis of records to produce the information requested could be undertaken only at disproportionate cost. However, we do record the total amount spent on entertainment.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 27 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 565W, for entertainment costs for 2000–01 and 2001–02. Costs for the years 1998–99, 1999–2000, 2002–03 and 2003–04 are shown as follows. Figures for 1997–98 have not been included, as they were not recorded on the same basis as subsequent years.

	£ million
1998–99	5.69
1999–2000	8.46
2002–03	8.61
2003–04	8.39

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who the ministerial design champion for his Department is. [215648]

Mr. Straw: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Mr. Rammell) is the Ministerial Design Champion for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Diplomatic Bags

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of the Department's diplomatic bag service was in 2003–04; and what proportion of that cost is estimated to be related specifically to the delivery of sensitive documents. [214247]

Mr. Rammell: The cost of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) diplomatic bag service from London to its diplomatic missions overseas for the financial year 2003–04 was £6,317,417 of which 39 per cent. was spent on the classified bag service.

4.3 per cent. of the total (£269,754) was spent on sensitive documents sent by air freight bag.

Information on the cost of inward diplomatic bags from our overseas missions to the FCO in London could be compiled only at disproportionate cost. Each mission holds a local budget for this expenditure.

EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Service

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 13W, on EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Service, if he will list those documents, with security grading and caveat, that have been supplied to the EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Service by his Department; and if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on the nature of departmental material that may be supplied. [216510]

Mr. MacShane: There is no "EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Service". The EU's Joint Situation Centre does not share or co-ordinate intelligence. The Situation Centre produces analyses and risk assessments, to help formulate EU policy, based on inputs from member states including nationally-assessed material. The Government's policy on release of material was set out in my answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 13W: UK information is released to the Situation Centre on a strict need-to-know basis at classifications up to and including secret.

It would not be appropriate for the Government to give details of the information which has been released to the centre. Parallel exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act would likely be section 23 (information supplied by, or related to, bodies dealing with security matters), section 24 (national security) and section 27 (international relations).

European Constitution

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department has to translate the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe into *(a)* Gaelic and *(b)* Scots. [203691]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has no plans to translate the EU constitutional treaty into Gaelic or Scots.

Gaelic Language

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is on the use of the Gaelic language; and what plans his Department has to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme. [217094]

Mr. Straw: The UK Government have committed themselves to the principles of protecting and promoting specified regional minority languages, including Gaelic, through their ratification of the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

We have no current plans to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), but FCO officials, if approached, are ready to work with the Bòrd na Gàidhlig to explore what scope exists for facilitating the use of the Gaelic language.

GCHQ

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when child care vouchers will be made available to staff at GCHQ; and if he will make a statement. [216452]

Mr. Straw: GCHQ has committed itself to making child care vouchers available to staff as part of its overall package of benefits. The plan is to introduce child care vouchers as part of a thorough overhaul of the pay system currently being negotiated with the trade union. The intention is to introduce child care vouchers no later than April 2006.

Global Conflict Prevention Pool

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what proportion of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool has been spent on human rights since its inception; [217320]

(2) what proportion of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool has gone on mine clearance. [217321]

Mr. Rammell: The Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) was established in 2001. From 2001–02 to 2004–05 £276 million has been allocated to the GCPP strategies. There are 15 regional and thematic GCPP strategies, each running a large number of individual projects.

The Global Opportunities Fund (GOF) is now the main Foreign and Commonwealth Office vehicle for funding human rights projects. In financial year 2004–05, the GOF is supporting human rights projects worth approximately £13 million, up from about £11 million in 2003–04. We expect this to increase still further in 2005–06.

The GCPP only funds de-mining and human rights activities if they clearly form an integral part of a conflict prevention strategy. However, the human rights impact of every GCPP project is considered during the project selection process. Specific details relating to de-mining and human rights activities funded under GCPP strategies are not held centrally. As a result, the information could be collated only at disproportionate cost.

Haiti

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the impact on the security situation in Haiti of MINUSTAH since 1 June 2004; and if he will make a statement. [216401]

Mr. Rammell: The security situation in Haiti has improved over recent months, thanks to the deployment of the UN stabilisation force MINUSTAH. MINUSTAH is now operating at full strength, and this should be an important factor in helping to provide the more secure environment needed for Haitian elections at the end of 2005. But further progress is needed—disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration need to be accelerated.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports his Department has received regarding the killing of police

officers in Clercine neighbourhood in Port-au-Prince on 7 February; how many similar incidents have been reported since September 2004; and if he will make a statement. [216402]

Mr. Rammell: We have received reports on the killing of four police officers in the Clercine neighbourhood of Port-au-Prince on 6 February. Despite improvements since the departure of former President Aristide in February 2004, the security situation in Haiti remains tense. There have been a number of violent incidents over recent months, many of which have involved armed groups of ex-military personnel. The UK has supported the UN's role in providing a stabilisation force, and has lobbied for the disarming of gangs.

Iraq

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* nationalities and *(b)* identities of the foreign (i) suppliers and (ii) financiers of the Iraqi military procurement programme during Saddam Hussein's regime; and if he will make a statement. [212174]

Mr. Rammell: During the course of UN weapons inspections in the 1990s, the inspection teams did, on occasion, bring to the notice of the Government details of equipment uncovered in Iraq that had been supplied by UK firms. Similarly, Iraq's Full, Final and Complete Declaration produced in December 2002 under UN Security Council Resolution 1441 also listed a number of companies and individuals as suppliers of materials to Iraq. The circumstances surrounding the supply and/or financing of supplies were investigated at the time by the relevant UK authorities and any appropriate action taken.

The Government have not undertaken any investigation into supplies by, or financing from, companies or individuals from other countries. Any such investigation is the responsibility of the authorities of those countries.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had with *(a)* the US Administration, *(b)* the Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority and *(c)* others on the management of reconstruction funds in Iraq (i) prior to the establishment of those funds and (ii) since the report of the US Government auditors; and if he will make a statement. [215154]

Mr. Rammell: The UK had discussions with the US Administration and other coalition partners over the text of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483 of 22 May 2003, which noted the establishment of the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) as the account into which Iraq's oil revenues would be paid. Following establishment of the DFI the UK Government had discussions with the US Administration and officials in the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) over the terms of reference for the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB), mandated under UNSCR 1483 to oversee the auditing of Iraq's oil revenues and their management by the coalition.

The UK has not had discussions with the US or Iraqi Administrations following the report into CPA operations and programmes by the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR). Under UNSCR 1546 of 8 June 2004, as of the end of the occupation and the dissolution of the CPA on 28 June 2004, control over management of the DFI passed to the Iraqi Administration. UNSCR 1546 also provided for continuation of the IAMB'S oversight function until the Iraqi Government decides otherwise.

In addition to discussions on the DFI, the UK Government have worked closely with other Governments, the UN and the World Bank over the establishment and management of the UN and World Bank managed International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, which provides a channel for donor country support to the reconstruction of Iraq. The UK Government also have regular discussions with other bilateral donors to promote the co-ordination of international assistance to Iraq.

Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what percentage of the total Iraqi adult population is estimated to have voted in the recent election; [215829]

(2) what the official estimate is of the percentage of registered voters who voted in the recent election in Iraq. [215830]

Mr. Rammell: There has been no recent, reliable population census in Iraq. In preparation for the January elections, around 14 million adult Iraqis were included in a passive registration conducted by the Public Distribution System using Oil for Food Programme records. The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq announced the provisional final election results on 13 February and said that 8.45 million people voted on 30 January, 58 per cent. of the registered voters.

Nepal

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the reign of King Gyanendra of Nepal since his coronation in 2001; and if he will make a statement. [214729]

Mr. Alexander: King Gyanendra of Nepal assumed the throne under difficult circumstances, following the massacre of King Birendra and members of the royal family in 2001. During King Gyanendra's reign the conflict with the Maoists has escalated while the security and human rights situations have deteriorated considerably. While we have welcomed the King's stated commitment to multi-party democracy and peace, the shared failure of the King and the political parties to work together to find a common way forward on tackling Nepal's problems has been disappointing. We are deeply concerned by the King's assumption of power on 1 February, which will increase the risk of instability in Nepal and undermine the institutions of democracy and constitutional monarchy in the country.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the investigation

announced by King Gyanendra of Nepal on 4 June 2001 into the massacre at the royal palace on 1 June 2001; and if he will make a statement. [214730]

Mr. Alexander: We welcomed the publication on 14 June 2001 of the investigating commission's report into the massacre of the Nepalese royal family. The terms of reference for the investigating commission were extensive and gave the commission the authority to make a thorough investigation.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will change his advice on travel to Nepal to indicate that travel there is unsafe. [215541]

Mr. Alexander: Our Travel Advice has been changed to take account of the situation in Nepal following the King's takeover of power on 1 February. This change reflected our assessment that, given the fairly muted reaction in Nepal to the King's action, it was not necessary at the time to advise against all but essential travel.

The changes are intended to ensure that the public are aware the country is in a volatile state at present and there is the potential for disturbances. The Travel Advice also urges travellers who decide to go to Nepal to exercise extreme caution and vigilance, especially in and around Kathmandu, until the situation becomes clearer.

Officials are keeping the situation in Nepal under regular review and will change this travel advice if and when necessary.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with governments of other countries on the safety of travel by their nationals to Nepal. [215542]

Mr. Alexander: Travel Advice Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office discusses travel advice issues regularly with our international partners. But our Travel Advice is written ultimately for the benefit of British nationals; other countries' advisories are for their own nationals. We are keeping a very close eye on events in Nepal, but we continue to believe that British nationals are not being specifically targeted. We aim to include the level of detail necessary to allow British nationals to make their own decisions on whether or not to travel to Nepal. We will continue to keep the advice for Nepal under regular review.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his current assessment is of the *(a)* safety and *(b)* desirability of travel by British citizens to Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [215543]

Mr. Alexander: Our Travel Advice for Nepal is based on an objective assessment of the risks to British nationals at any given time. It is designed to help British travellers make informed decisions and to avoid trouble by providing information on threats to personal safety.

As our Travel Advice for Nepal makes clear, the country is in a volatile state at present and there is the potential for disturbances following the King's takeover of power. There is a significant risk that there may be violent demonstrations in the weeks to come, especially in Kathmandu and the surrounding valley. Such demonstrations may flare up quickly and with little warning. However, the actual response so far to the King's takeover of power in Nepal on 1 February has been fairly muted and business is still operating much as usual. We have therefore judged that it was not necessary at this stage to advise against all but essential travel.

We are keeping the situation under regular review and will change this Travel Advice if and when necessary. In the meantime we continue to advise travellers to Nepal to exercise extreme caution and vigilance, especially in and around Kathmandu, until the situation becomes clearer. If the situation in Nepal deteriorates we would change our Travel Advice to reflect this.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on the King of Nepal's recent political actions. [215660]

Mr. Alexander: We have received reporting on recent events in Nepal from our embassy in Kathmandu and through other diplomatic channels as well as from non-governmental organisations and the media. We have also shared assessments with a number of our international partners.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Nepal on progress towards democracy, with particular reference to freedom of the press. [215661]

Mr. Alexander: The UK has consistently upheld the importance of democracy and democratic institutions in Nepal, including freedom of the press. The King's takeover of power on 1 February seriously undermines Nepal's democratic credentials and we have called for the immediate restitution of multi-party democracy. Since the Palace takeover and the introduction of very strict media censorship, our ambassador in Kathmandu has specifically raised the importance we attach to the freedom of the press with both the King and the Foreign Minister.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the call by the Government of Nepal on 7 February for unconditional peace talks with Maoist rebels; and if he will make a statement. [215986]

Mr. Alexander: The UK has consistently held the view that only a negotiated political settlement leading to a democratic outcome will achieve peace, stability and prosperity for Nepal. To that end we welcome calls by the Government of Nepal for unconditional peace talks with the Maoist rebels. However, we have always argued that a successful settlement will require the participation of all interested parties, including the political parties. The King's move to dismiss the Prime Minister and assume power outside the framework of a multi-party democratic system will increase the risk of instability in Nepal and undermine democracy in the country. We have called for the immediate restitution of multi-party democracy in the country.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the possibilities for resolving the situation created by the Maoist revolt in Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [215987]

Mr. Alexander: The UK has always argued that a negotiated political settlement involving all the constitutional forces offers the best way to resolve the conflict in Nepal and to create a stable democracy with good governance and respect for human rights. We have always maintained that no wholly military solution will produce an acceptable outcome. This remains our judgment. We will continue to press all parties for an early return to negotiations.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports his Department has received on Government control over the media in Nepal since 1 February; and if he will make a statement. [215991]

Mr. Alexander: The King of Nepal's takeover of power on 1 February was accompanied by the announcement of a state of emergency, which included a number of draconian measures including strict censorship of the media. The UK has consistently upheld the importance of democracy and democratic institutions in Nepal, including freedom of the press. Since the King's assumption of power our ambassador in Kathmandu has specifically raised the importance we attach to the freedom of the press with both the King and the Foreign Minister.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215089]

Mr. Rammell: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff identity passes are authorised using a computer-based system which was purchased and installed in 2002. The computer is linked to three FCO sites, the FCO Main Building, Old Admiralty Building and Hanslope Park. The identity pass comprises a digital photograph and a unique computer chip. There are currently nearly 12,000 active identity pass holders. 110 identity passes are issued weekly.

The full cost of producing and issuing an FCO staff identity pass, including staff costs, is £3.36 each.

Breakdown of FCO identity passes lost or stolen since 1997 based on our existing records is as follows:

	Stolen	*Lost*	*Total*
1997	0	1	1
1998	2	23	25
1999	8	48	56
2000	7	46	53
2001	16	58	74
2002	10	37	47
2003	13	24	37
2004	10	41	51
2005	1	12	13

(As at 4 February 2005)

Swaziland

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had with the Prime Minister of Swaziland on his recent visit to the UK. [216083]

Mr. Mullin: During the Prime Minister of Swaziland's visit to the UK in early February my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I discussed with him current political developments in Swaziland including constitutional developments and the rule of law; economic developments including the proposed changes to the EU sugar regime; the HIV/Aids pandemic; and the future of British representation in Swaziland.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received regarding the proposed closure of the high commission in Swaziland; and if he will make a statement. [216084]

Mr. Mullin: The Prime Minister of Swaziland raised the planned closure of the high commission in Mbabane with my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and with me during his visit to the UK in early February. There has also been some parliamentary and public interest.

Vietnam

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Vietnam regarding *(a)* the pre-Christmas mass detention of Montagnard Christians in the Central Highlands and *(b)* human rights abuses of Montagnards in Vietnam's Central Highlands; and if he will make a statement. [209568]

Mr. Alexander: We remain concerned about the situation of the Montagnards in the Central Highlands region of Vietnam.

Our ambassador in Hanoi visited the Central Highlands on 17–19 January as part of an EU Troika mission to assess the situation on the ground. We are aware of reports of the arrest of Christians over the Christmas period but have not been able to corroborate these reports.

We raise human rights concerns regularly with the Vietnamese Government, both bilaterally and with our EU partners. These include the problems faced by the Montagnards in the Central Highlands, particularly with regard to land and religious freedom.

With our other EU partners, we participate in a regular human rights dialogue with Vietnam. The most recent meeting, attended by our ambassador in Hanoi, took place on 17 December. We raised the situation of the Montagnards at this meeting.

We will continue to raise our concerns and press the Vietnamese Government to adhere to its international human rights obligations at every suitable opportunity.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to the Cambodian authorities on *(a)* the deportation of Montagnard refugees from

Vietnam's Central Highlands back to Vietnam and *(b)* reopening its north eastern border with Vietnam; and if he will make a statement. [209569]

Mr. Alexander: The UK Government regularly raises its concerns about ethnic mmorities in the Central Highlands and refugees from the region with both the Cambodian and Vietnamese authorities. The EU is also active in this area—it has urged the Cambodian Government to comply with its international refugee obligations and to co-operate with the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

Our embassy in Phnom Penh also remains in close contact with the UNHCR. We will continue to encourage the Cambodian and Vietnamese authorities to engage with the UNHCR on the issue.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money the Government provided for aid in the first week after the Asian tsunami. [217036]

Hilary Benn: By the 3 January, DFID had allocated £50 million and spent £7.2 million in response to the Indian Ocean Crisis. This comprised £6 million channelled through the World Health Organisation, various non-governmental organisations and a DFID chartered flight carrying relief items, £900,000 in donations in kind, and £250,000 for the International Humanitarian Partnership airlift to establish working environments and communications capability for United Nations staff.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions his Department has had with UK-based refugee communities from those countries affected by the tsunami concerning the reconstruction efforts; and if he will make a statement. [214997]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: It is important that the longer-term reconstruction of the regions devastated by the tsunami takes into account the views and needs of the communities affected, and in particular of civil society and vulnerable groups. My right hon. Friend the Secretary for International Development visited the region 6–8 January and spoke to affected communities to better understand their needs, as well as aid agencies operating in the region.

We have received many representations about our response to the tsunami including from UK-based refugee communities from some of those countries affected and welcome the views of all interested groups, including those based in the UK.

A co-ordinated international response to the tsunami, led by the Governments affected and organisations such as the UN and the Asian Development Bank, will ensure that the views of the poorest and most vulnerable are taken into account throughout the process of rehabilitation. The Department for International Development (DFID) will work to ensure a focus on helping the poorest people and those often marginalized because of caste, gender, age, ethnicity or religion.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he will reply to the letter dated 10 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Oscar Brogdan. [217051]

Hilary Benn: Unfortunately, the Department for International Development has no record of having received this letter. If my right hon. Friend would kindly re-send the letter I will ensure that he receives a prompt reply.

Cote d'Ivoire

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to assist refugees from Cote d'Ivoire in *(a)* Liberia, *(b)* Guinea, *(c)* Mali, *(d)* Burkina Faso and *(e)* Ghana. [216288]

Hilary Benn: In Guinea, DFID has supported the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF to a total of £1 million in 2004 to provide for the care and needs of all refugees residing in camps. We are assessing this support, before deciding on possible additional funding. In Liberia, Ivorian refugees are being assisted by the UNHCR and the World Food Programme. DFID has provided grants totalling £2.1 million to these agencies for their work in Liberia, in 2004. DFID is not providing support to Ivorian refugees in Mali, Burkina Faso or Ghana. DFID understands that the numbers in Mali and Ghana are low. According to UNHCR, 10,000 Burkinabe migrants returned to Burkina Faso, but no Ivorian refugees have been recorded there.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the number of refugees from Cote d'Ivoire that have arrived in *(a)* Liberia, *(b)* Guinea, *(c)* Mali, *(d)* Burkina Faso and *(e)* Ghana in each month since September 2003. [216289]

Hilary Benn: Monthly disaggregated data of this nature is not readily available. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the agency responsible for registering and monitoring formal cross-border refugee flows, the numbers of Ivorian refugees arriving in these countries since September 2003 have been relatively low. Between January 2004 and September 2004, Mali registered 805 Ivorian refugee arrivals, Guinea registered nine, and none were recorded in the other countries. Following the upsurge in violence in Cote d'Ivoire in November 2004, 10,000 Ivorians were registered as newly-arriving refugees in Liberia, although more than half have since returned. The same events prompted up to 10,000 Burkinabe migrants to return to Burkina Faso, but, according to the UNHCR, there was no similar movement of Ivorians.

Cuba

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of the Government of (i) the United States of America and (ii) Cuba regarding Cuba's humanitarian assistance to South and Central American countries; and if he will make a statement. [216403]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has had no recent discussions with either the Cuban or US Government concerning Cuban humanitarian assistance to South and Central American countries. Representatives of HMG have had wide-ranging discussions with the Cuban authorities, including on their relations with these countries. Cuba provides technical assistance to a number of countries in the region, most notably Venezuela, but no assessment of its effectiveness has been shared by the Cuban Government or been made independently.

Debt Relief

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answers of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1044–45W, on debt relief and 1049–50W on Tanzania, what additional debt relief is being provided by the UK under the Chancellor of the Exchequer's recently announced debt initiative; and if he will list *(a)* each recipient country and *(b)* the sum each is due to receive in each year up to 2015. [215934]

Hilary Benn: Under the new multilateral debt relief initiative, the UK will pay 10 per cent. of the debt service owed to the International Development Association (IDA) and African Development Fund (AfDF) on behalf the world's poorest countries. This initiative will be funded through the additional resources allocated to DFID in the recent Spending Review, and is additional to the UK's commitments to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

All low-income countries with a demonstrated commitment to poverty reduction are potentially eligible. These countries are those that have reached Completion Point under the HIPC Initiative, and all other IDA-only (i.e. eligible to borrow only from the most concessional lending arm of the World Bank) low-income countries (LICs) that have a Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) approved by the World Bank. Sri Lanka has also been added in light of the impact of the South East Asian tsunami.

The list of currently eligible countries comprises 15 post-Completion Point HIPCs, 4 IDA-only LICs with PRSCs, and Sri Lanka. The cost to the UK for these countries through to 2015 is estimated at up to around US $870 million. As more countries progress through the HIPC Initiative, or have PRSCs approved, the list of eligible countries will expand. The cost to the UK through to 2015 for all countries that could potentially qualify for this initiative is estimated at around US $1,931 million. A table listing the UK's share of (estimated) annual debt service to IDA and AfDF for each country in each year up to 2015 has been placed in the Library under the title "UK's Annual Debt Service to IDA and AfDF to 2015".

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the availability of *(a)* medical supplies and *(b)* adequately trained medical staff in the Manguredjipa area in North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo; and if he will make a statement. [216711]

Hilary Benn: A joint DFID/OCHA (Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs) visit to Eastern DRC in October 2004 considered the humanitarian situation in Manguredjipa, although no particular assessment was made of the availability of medical supplies and the number of trained medical staff.

The mission reported concern about the capacity of NGOs to respond to humanitarian needs throughout North Kivu exacerbated by the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and high level of sexual violence.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* security and *(b)* humanitarian situation in the Manguredjipa area in North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo since September 2004; and if he will make a statement. [216712]

Hilary Benn: The main concern in the Manguredjipa area of North Kivu over the past few months has been the high level of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) due to fighting between different armed groups. A joint DFID/OCHA (Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs) mission to the region in October 2004 reported that most of Manguredjipa population (more than 6,000 households) had been displaced. Fighting in the Kanyabayonga area, south of Manguredjipa, triggered further movement of populations.

Following the cessation of fighting, many displaced people are returning to their homes. 60 per cent. of the Manguredjipa population are now back home, according to an OCHA monitoring report in late January.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* financial, *(b)* logistical and *(c)* material assistance his Department (i) has provided since November 2004 and (ii) plans to provide to Merlin for its work in the Manguredjipa area in North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of the Congo; and if he will make a statement. [216713]

Hilary Benn: We are aware that Merlin is supporting health centres in the Manguredjipa area of North Kivu. During 2003 and 2004, DFID provided £450,000 over 13 months to a Merlin Emergency Health Assistance project for conflict affected populations in Ituri and North Kivu. DFID has committed £17 million of humanitarian assistance to the DRC in this current financial year, including £2 million for a UNICEF

Rapid Reaction Fund in Eastern DRC. Future funding will be made available for those interventions that are directed at meeting the most urgent needs and according to established international standards.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [217391]

Hilary Benn: The latest UN consolidated appeal for DRC reports that the humanitarian situation has not improved significantly over the past year. Up to 3 million Congolese remain displaced from their homes, internally and within the Great Lakes region. Less than 30 per cent. of the population has access to clean drinking water and basic health services.

The humanitarian situation in the east is of particular concern. Although fighting in north Kivu has largely died down since January, and many of the tens of thousands of displaced Congolese have been able to return to their homes, the province remains tense.

Ituri district suffered further serious outbreaks of violence in January. UN agencies report that up to 80,000 civilians have been displaced. Where possible, UNICEF and some NGOs are providing humanitarian support. DFID is providing £2 million of support for a UNICEF Rapid Reaction Fund in eastern DRC, within an overall humanitarian package of £17 million for the country in this current financial year.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213618]

Hilary Benn: The Department For International Development has two main headquarters offices and each has a canteen. The following table shows the cost of staffing and supplying the canteens; utilities are not separately metered and cannot therefore be identified. The increase in costs in recent years followed the competitive tendering of the catering contracts to provide an improved quality and range of food to staff compared to the previous very limited service.

	£
1997–98	54,485
1998–99	56,022
1999–00	63,656
2000–01	81,537
2001–02	73,949
2002–03	92,840
2003–04	181,237
2004–05 (to date)	161,937

There are also two bars, but DFID makes no contribution to the staffing or supply costs for either of these.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215049]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: It is not possible to disaggregate specific costs relating to entertainment lunches and working lunches involving civil servants and guests from overall entertainment expenditure without incurring disproportionate cost. The following table shows recorded expenditure by my Department on entertainment for the years in question, to the nearest £000.

	£
1996–97	10,000
1997–98	24,000
1998–99	43,000
1999–2000	62,000
2000–01	48,000
2001–02	55,000
2002–03	82,000
2003–04	[1]219,000

[1] In 2003–04 DFID introduced new procedures to draw together administration costs, including those entertainment costs which had previously been recorded on country programme budgets. These changes have improved transparency and management of administration costs, but mean that figures from 2003–04 now include entertainment costs that were previously funded by country programmes and as a result are not comparable with earlier years.

All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published Departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in Government Accounting.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213784]

Hilary Benn: The Department For International Development (DFID) has spent the following sums on cleaning its offices since 1997:

		£
	Cost	*Cost per square foot*
1997–98	185,971	0.65
1998–99	169,170	0.68
1999–2000	185,055	0.74
2000–01	193,888	0.78
2001–02	165,807	0.82
2002–03	286,933	0.96
2003–04	351,331	1.17
2004–05 (to date)	267,380	n/a

The increase in overall costs from 2002–03 financial year is largely attributable to the Department's expansion in the amount of space occupied, as can be seen from the much smaller increase in cost per square foot.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214890]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has spent the following amounts on staff mobile phone bills:

April 2004 to date: £132,186

June 2003 to March 2004: £89,500

Mobile phones were not managed under a central contract prior to June 2004, and therefore information for earlier years (and information on mobile phones in overseas offices) is not readily available and cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [213807]

Hilary Benn: The only sum spent in relation to car parking facilities for DFID staff in the UK during the period in question was approximately £1,000 on relining the car park at our East Kilbride office in 2001. Since the relocation of our London headquarters to our current location at 1 Palace street, with the exception of one disabled space we do not have car parking for our staff in either of our London offices.

DFID does not pay for parking tickets or penalties incurred by civil servants. Individuals are personally responsible for meeting the cost of any such fines.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent on postage by the Department in each year since 1997. [215019]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has spent the following amounts on postage since 1997:

	£
1997–98	164,417
1998–99	161,627
1999–2000	216,120
2000–01	154,737
2001–02	128,424
2002–03	105,748
2003–04	102,125
2004–05 to date	55,860

In addition over the same periods the following has been spent on pre-paid postage:

	£
1997–98	29,944
1998–99	43,612
1999–2000	21,105
2000–01	34,588
2001–02	37,794
2002–03	40,876
2003–04	34,195
2004–05 to date	26,272

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent on official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214943]

Hilary Benn: Expenditure on business cards was as follows:

	£
1999–2000	14,779.49
2000–01	24,283.85
2001–02	23,112.34
2002–03	18,161.58
2003–04	24,802.65
2004–05	[1]15,871.00

[1] To date

Corresponding information for the two earlier years is not readily available as it was not separately identified, and cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost. DFID does not purchase headed notepaper as this is produced using an electronic template, and compliment slips are printed internally rather than purchased.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the Department spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213844]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development has spent the following on stationery and office supplies since 1997:

Financial year	£
1997–98	112,920.88
1998–99	97,315.35
1999–2000	99,704.63
2000–01	139,896.64
2001–02	100,488.02
2002–03	136,592.65
2003–04	158,603.15
2004–05 to date	96,286.70

Our records do not allow us to differentiate between stationery and office supplies.

Development Assistance

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which countries he expects will cease to receive development assistance from the UK in each of the next five years. [215316]

Hilary Benn: On current plans, we expect that the following countries will cease to receive development assistance directly from the British Government over the next five years:

2005: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kazakhstan.

2006: None

2007: None

2008: East Timor

2009: None

These countries will however continue to receive development assistance from the EC, other multilateral development organisations and/or British non-governmental organisations to which DFID makes substantial contributions.

Disaster Planning

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what resources his Department plans to allocate to improve counter-disaster measures in the developing world; [215754]

(2) what discussions he has had with the representatives of developing countries on *(a)* preparing for and *(b)* improving their response to natural disasters; [215755]

(3) what assessment he has made of the views of the UN head of humanitarian affairs on disaster prevention and preparedness; [215756]

(4) if he will increase funding for disaster reduction. [215757]

Hilary Benn: DFID is already funding significant disaster risk reduction programmes in countries particularly susceptible to natural disasters, including India where we are providing over £60 million on disaster preparedness and reconstruction in Orissa over six years. DFID is the leading donor to the UN's International Strategy for Disaster Reduction at £1 million a year. We are also supporting other international organisations' efforts in this area including the International Federation of Red Cross and Crescent Societies and the Prevention Consortium Initiative.

We aim to increase our spending on disaster risk reduction. Where practical, we will allocate up to 10 per cent. of each natural disaster response to mitigate the impact of future disasters. We also plan to develop a strategy to set out how we can best make further progress in this sector.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development held discussions with the UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs at the Kobe Conference on 18 January 2005. We are pleased that Mr. Egeland is committed to pressing forward UN reform in this area and we are working closely with him and other interested donors to progress this.

The UK Delegation, led by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, discussed disaster risk reduction with a number of developing countries at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, including those most affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami. We stressed the importance of disaster risk reduction and encouraged the inclusion of disaster risk reduction measures, where appropriate, in countries' poverty reduction strategies.

EC Aid

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the oral answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1654, on the European Union budget, if he will make a statement on the statistical evidence supporting the statement that repatriation of EC aid would lead to lower levels of development assistance worldwide. [207117]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Member state contributions to European Commission development programmes are an annual, legally binding treaty obligation. There is no guarantee that in the event of repatriation, other member states and governments would maintain their previous level of development spend. Globally, the level of aid volumes could therefore fall.

As important is that working with the EC is an effective way to leverage more resources for development. EC aid equals 10 per cent. of world overseas development assistance and the member states of the European Union and the EC together provide over half of global development assistance. This collective effort has given Europe the credibility to challenge its own member states and other Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors to increase ODA/gross national income targets and global development aid. EU co-ordination led in 2002 to a specific EU ODA/GNI volume target commitment of 0.39 per cent: by 2006 as an input to the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference. This has contributed to a considerable increase of aid resources by EU and non-EU donors in support of the Millennium Development Goals. Repatriating aid would reduce the UK's and EU's leverage to help secure such increases.

Eritrea

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in Eritrea. [217392]

Hilary Benn: Eritrea remains one of the poorest countries in the world. The humanitarian situation has been compounded by drought, four consecutive years of failed harvests and on-going conflict over its border with Ethiopia. The UN estimates that roughly two thirds of the population—2.2 million out of a population of 3.6 million—may need food aid assistance at some time during 2005.

The UN Consolidated Humanitarian Appeal (UN CAP) 2005 reports that global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates in 2004 peaked at 19 per cent. in Debub and 18.4 per cent. in Anseba, although rates are lower at present. Maternal malnutrition rates are thought to be among the highest in the world. The UN CAP 2005 for Eritrea is for $158 million, ($144 million of which is specifically for food aid).

Last year, DFID contributed £1 million to the UN CAP 2004 through the World Food Programme (WFP) and currently supports two humanitarian supplementary feeding programmes with the Dutch Interchurch Aid and CAFOD. DFID also funds a water project with Oxfam. The humanitarian programme for 2005 will be £3 million, an increase of £1 million for this financial year. The increase reflects the need to ensure the most urgent humanitarian needs are met in Eritrea this year.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee on co-financing operations with European non-governmental organisations in fields of interest to the developing countries met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214261]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Co-Financing Operations with European Non Governmental Organisations Committee met once under the Italian Presidency of the EU, on 25 November 2003. The Committee met once under the Irish Presidency on 20 21 April 2004. The committee met twice under the Dutch Presidency, on 29 September 2004 and on 23 November 2004.

All meetings took place in Brussels and were attended by an official from the Department for International Development.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the series of Command Papers that sets out the main elements of government business in the EU under the respective Presidencies: Cm 6174 laid in April 2004, Cm 6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm 6450 laid in February 2005. These are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee on food security and food aid met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214262]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Food Aid and Food Security Committee met twice under the Italian Presidency of the EU, on 16 July 2003 and on 6 November 2003. The Committee did not meet under the Irish Presidency. Under the Dutch Presidency the Committee met twice; on 2 July 2004 and on 10 November 2004.

All meetings took place in Brussels and were attended by an official from the Department for International Development.

The Food Security and Food Aid Management Committee is convened and chaired by the Commission and is constituted for member states to assist the Commission with implementation of Council Regulation No 1292/96 of 27 June 1996. The EC's Food Security and Food Aid programme consists of identification, planning and implementation of food aid operations and operations in support of food security in developing countries.

Council Decision 1999/468/EC sets out to

"simplify the requirements for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission".

Under this decision, the Commission undertakes to publish an annual report on the working of committees. The reports are deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the series of Command Papers that sets out the main elements of Government business in the EU under the respective Presidencies: Cm6174, laid in April 2004 and Cm6310, laid in September 2004.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on implementation of humanitarian aid operations met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215427]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Italian presidency of the European Union occupied the second six months of 2003. During that period the Humanitarian Aid Committee met five times, on a monthly basis with a break in August. Four meetings were held in Brussels, and one in Rome (October 2003). The Irish presidency ran for the first six months of 2004. Five meetings were held in Brussels, and one in Dublin (March 2004). The Dutch presidency occupied the second six months of 2004. Four meetings were held in Brussels, and one in the Hague (October 2004). The UK was represented by officials from DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department.

The Humanitarian Aid Committee operates independently of the presidency. It is convened and chaired by the Commission and is constituted for member states to assist the Commission with implementation of Council Regulation No. 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid. The EC's humanitarian aid programme provides assistance, relief and protection to victims of natural disasters and man-made crises in third countries, as well as preparedness for risks of natural disasters. It approves annual allocations ("global plans") to countries suffering chronic humanitarian crises, as well as emergency response to disasters.

Council Decision 1999/468/EC sets out to "simplify the requirements for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission". Under this Decision, the Commission undertakes to publish an annual report on the working of committees. The reports are deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the series of Command Papers that sets out the main elements of government business in the EU under the respective presidencies: Cm6174, laid in April 2004 and Cm6310, laid in September 2004 refer.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EEC-Côte d'Ivoire) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215428]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID officials are not aware of any meetings of a Joint Committee (EEC-Côte d'Ivoire) having taken place. In response to our inquiries, the European Commission was unable to recall such a Committee ever having met or what its mandate might have been.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidencies of the EU the European Development Fund Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215935]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The European Development Fund (EDF) Committee met four times under the Italian presidency of the EU, in July, September,

October and November 2003. The Committee met four times under the Irish presidency of the EU, in February, March, May and June 2004. The Committee met four times under the Dutch presidency, in July, September, October and November 2004.

All meetings took place in Brussels and were attended by officials from-the Department for International Development and the UK Permanent Representation in Brussels.

The EDF Committee operates independently of the presidency. It is convened and chaired by the Commission and is constituted for member states to meet with the Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB). Its role is to scrutinise and approve financing proposals and allocation of EDF funds, serve as a forum for the exchange of views on country and regional strategies and approve multi-annual allocations to country and regional programmes.

Operations financed from the European Development Fund are governed by the provisions of the Partnership Agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Community (ACP-EU) signed in Cotonou, Benin on 23 June 2000 (known as the Cotonou Agreement).

The 15 December 2000 Internal Agreement applicable to the Cotonou Agreement specifies that the Commission produce an annual report. This report is subject to parliamentary scrutiny in the normal manner.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the series of Command Papers that sets out the main elements of government business in the EU under the respective presidencies: Cm6174, laid in April 2004 and Cm6310, laid in September 2004.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidencies of the EU the Advisory Committee on the special system of assistance to traditional ACP suppliers of bananas met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215941]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Advisory Committee on the special system of assistance to traditional African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) suppliers of bananas met once in November 2003 under the Dutch presidency of the EU, the Committee did not meet under the Irish presidency of the EU and met once in November 2004 under the Dutch presidency of the EU.

All meetings of this Committee took place in Brussels and were attended by officials from the Department for International Development and the UK Permanent Representation in Brussels.

The special framework of assistance (SFA) for traditional ACP suppliers of bananas provides for financial and technical assistance to 12 ACP countries, taking account of changes in the marketing arrangements for bananas in Europe following the amendments to the import regime introduced on 1 January 1999. The objective of this programme is to improve competitiveness of traditional ACP banana production. The Council regulation aims to achieve this goal by funding projects designed to increase banana productivity. Funding is also available for diversification where no opportunities for sustainable increase in banana production exists.

Council Decision 1999/468/EC sets out to "simplify the requirements for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission". As an obligation to this Decision, the Commission undertakes to publish an annual report on the working of committees. The reports are deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the series of Command Papers that sets out the main elements of government business in the EU under the respective presidencies: Cm6174, laid in April 2004 and Cm6310, laid in September 2004.

EU Trade

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the Expanding Exports Helpdesk on the *(a)* value and *(b)* volume of exports from developing countries into the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [215942]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: To help exporters in developing countries to make the most of EU trade preferences, and to make sure that this theoretical market access translates into more trade in practice, the European Commission set up the online Export Helpdesk in February 2004. This innovation aims to boost developing countries' exports by ensuring that exporters in these countries get the maximum information and assistance necessary to tackle the EU market. Practically it provides extensive information free of charge on customs duties, documentation, and rules of origin and trade statistics. An improved multilingual version, the Expanding Exports Helpdesk, was launched on 4 February 2005.

DFID has not made a formal assessment of the potential impact of this Helpdesk, but we expect the European Commission itself to monitor its impact regularly to ensure that it is effective and provides good value for money.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the official initiatives in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the EU to boost export opportunities for developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [215943]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The European Commission is responsible for EU member states' trade policies, including import policies. As part of this, the EU as a whole operates a series of preferential import arrangements with all developing country partners, either on a bilateral, regional or multilateral basis, including arrangements under the Cotonou Agreement, the Generalised System of Preferences, and the Everything But Arms Initiative. All of these have as part of their objectives the aim of improving the export competitiveness of developing countries and helping them take advantage of trading opportunities through privileged access to EU markets. In addition, the European Commission has recently launched an improved version of its "Expanding Exports Helpdesk".

aimed at boosting developing country exports to the EU by giving exporters in these countries all the practical information and advice they need.

In addition, the UK and EU provide support through its Trade Related Capacity Building (TRCB) Programmes. The UK has committed a total of £109 million since 1998 to building the skills and knowledge developing countries need to develop their trading capabilities, almost three quarters of which is aimed at helping small businesses export both regionally and internationally. The UK provides this support to increase the volume and value of developing country exports, including widening their range of exports and selling in a wider range of markets.

For example, in Southern Africa, the UK is funding a £12 million programme to boost export opportunities for small-scale farmers and traders by developing common standards across goods and services in the region and improving customs procedures.

We are also funding a £2 million programme in Kenya, which is supporting the business and investment climate there, in order to strengthen Kenyan capacity to export goods to regional and international markets.

The UK is also funding a £17 million programme which will enable small enterprises from Nigeria to access new commodity and services markets—including international markets.

Additionally, we contribute to European TRCB efforts, which have provided £675 million to develop the exports of developing countries since 2001.

Grenada

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment he has made of the level of continuing need for aid and assistance in Grenada following Hurricane Ivan; and if he will make a statement; [216601]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact on the *(a)* tourist industry and *(b)* economy of Grenada of Hurricane Ivan; and if he will make a statement; [216603]

(3) what assistance is being given to Grenada to diversify its agricultural production; and if he will make a statement; [216606]

(4) what assessment he has made of the impact of Hurricane Ivan on agriculture in Grenada, with particular reference to *(a)* nutmeg and *(b)* cocoa; and what assistance is being given towards recovery of these industries; [216604]

(5) what assessment he has made of housing need in Grenada following Hurricane Ivan; and what assistance his Department is providing. [216605]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Hurricane Ivan has been a catastrophe for Grenada. Two weeks after the hurricane hit the island, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) undertook a macro-socio-economic assessment of the damage caused. This assessed that 90 per cent. of housing stock was either destroyed or damaged, and around 30 per cent. of the population made homeless. The OECS/ECLAC assessment indicated that the damage to schools, hospitals, businesses and infrastructure was estimated to be in the region of £500 million, or twice Grenada's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Grenada had been recording impressive growth rates in recent years and was expected to grow by 5.7 per cent. in 2004. With significant losses to the main productive sectors of agriculture and tourism caused by the hurricane, the economy is now expected to have contracted by 1.4 per cent. in 2004. Some 90 per cent. of hotel rooms on the island were affected by the hurricane. A staff mission from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will provide a further update on the post-Ivan macro-economic situation and the prospects for economic recovery at a donor briefing meeting in Barbados at the end of February 2005.

Unemployment has increased with an estimated 40,000 jobs directly affected by the hurricane. However, as the physical reconstruction of buildings and infrastructure gets under way, it is anticipated that unemployment levels will start to decline.

The devastation to the agricultural sector caused by Hurricane Ivan was particularly severe: 95 per cent. of nutmeg trees—Grenada's principal export commodity—were uprooted. Regrowth and recovery of the nutmeg industry will take an estimated 7–10 years. Grenada can, however, continue to export its reserve stocks for the next three years. This should help to cushion the impact of the loss of the trees on the economy. Cocoa was also affected, albeit, to a much lesser extent. 30 per cent. of the crop will need to be replanted, and it is expected that 50–70 per cent. of the harvest for next year will be available.

At the 19 November donor conference on Grenada, the IMF announced that for the calendar year of 2004, donor contributions would fill the £21 million gap in Grenada's finances. At that time, the IMF anticipated that a financing gap of £4.2 million remained for 2005, which would widen in 2006 to £19.2 million. The IMF currently has a team in Grenada to undertake a fuller assessment of financing needs in 2005 and 2006. The IMF team will brief DFID officials and other development partners on their findings at a meeting in Barbados on 23 February 2005.

One of the key financial challenges for the Government of Grenada is a high debt burden. We are working with the United States Agency for International Development, to provide a team of debt advisers to help the Government of Grenada to restructure its total stock of debt.

Despite the unprecedented scale of the damage to the agricultural sector, the Grenadian Government has identified significant potential to restructure and transform the sector with support from the private sector. DFID is currently funding an evaluation of the direct and indirect effects of Hurricane Ivan on the forestry sector in Grenada as the basis for determining the interventions needed to rehabilitate and reconstruct the forestry sector. The study will implement a detailed assessment of the key damage to forestation on the island, and prioritise activities to ensure that work is urgently undertaken to prevent landslides and provide protection to the water table.

Under the United Nations Flash Appeal for Grenada, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, appealed for some £2.2[1] million to support agriculture. £1.4 million has so far been committed and assistance has been provided to rehabilitate the cocoa crop and to assist the Government in its development of a strategy for nutmeg production.

The Grenada Board of Tourism now reports 50 per cent. of hotel rooms on the island are back in operation, and predicts that the figure will be 80 per cent. by the end of December 2005. The rehabilitation has been mainly funded by private insurance and the private sector.

Reconstruction of the housing sector is a Government of Grenada priority, and is under way. Insurance payments are being made to those eligible, and the raw materials needed are being imported. For priority vulnerable and needy families, the Government of Grenada has committed itself to constructing 225 low-income homes between November 2004 and February 2005 at a cost of about £8,000 per home, and providing material assistance for the repair of 1,125 roofs during the same period. The Government are also offering a Soft Loan Facility that provides a maximum loan amount of approximately £8,000 for 10 years with a one year grace period, at an interest rate of 3 per cent. A training and a public information programme on construction tips are also on-going, with model houses displaying appropriate building techniques being driven around the island. Over a longer timeframe, the Government of Grenada has set a target to construct 10,000 low-income homes under a phased programme over the next five years.

In addition, the Venezuelan Government has committed to the construction of 130 homes in the Parish of St. David's; the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to constructing 200 houses and repairing a further 1,500 houses by the end of 2005; and the People's Republic of China has also undertaken to provide 2,000 low-cost homes. A number of NGOs are seeking to provide low-cost, quickly constructed homes.

DFID's micro finance project in Grenada has developed a new facility for small housing loans. The European Commission are considering how their micro finance programme might provide similar support.

[1] Conversion US$ to GBP = 1.8

Guyana

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department is providing to *(a)* the Government of Guyana, *(b)* non-governmental organisations in Guyana and *(c)* multinational agencies and institutions assisting Guyana to deal with the aftermath of the flooding that occurred in Guyana in January 2005; and if he will make a statement. [216322]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms Abbott) on 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1219W, and also to the written ministerial statement I made on 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 91–93WS.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of recent research into *(a)* the drug Nevirapine and *(b)* the consequences of that research for use of the drug in preventing HIV/AIDS transmission from mother to baby. [215964]

Hilary Benn: Nevirapine is one of the most cost-effective and clinically effective ways of preventing mother to child transmission of HIV. However, there have been concerns raised about the extent to which the use of the drug creates resistance. These issues will be discussed at a conference on Retrovirus and Opportunistic Infections in Boston in two weeks time.

DFID follows World Health Organisation guidelines on treatment for HIV positive mothers. The guidelines provide for a range of options, that take into account both clinical outcomes and practical considerations about health system capacity in each country, and the difficulties for women to adhere to more complicated treatment regimes.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will take steps to ensure that the EU's HIV/AIDS strategy in developing countries *(a)* gives priority to HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children, *(b)* adopts the Unicef-led framework for protection of these children and *(c)* allocates adequate resources to it. [215345]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Along with other member states we are engaging in the consultation process towards a new Programme for Action on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis which the EC expects to adopt in 2006. The current Programme for Action does not sufficiently address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children and we will consider how best to address this gap in the forthcoming consultations.

Last July, DFID was one of the first bilateral development agencies, along with Danish International Development Agency (DANI DA) and USAID, to endorse the UNAIDS/UNICEF Framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV/AIDS. Since then we have taken every opportunity to promote its use with governments and other organisations working to provide protection, care and support to children affected by AIDS. This includes children living with HIV and AIDS.

We will use our Presidencies of the G8 and the EU to increase action on AIDS and will encourage those member states who have not yet endorsed the framework to do so. Committing resources to implement the framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children through national plans is key to this.

Responding to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children needs to be part of the larger picture of the AIDS response. By the end of 2005, we want to have agreement among donors and the international system on a well coordinated and funded plan to tackle AIDS which will include support for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children.

Hurricane Ivan

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the differences between pledges made by the international community of donations to assist with recovery from Hurricane Ivan and the amounts raised. [216602]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Officials from the Department for International Development (DFID) are in constant contact with the other major donors, and receive regular updates on commitments and disbursements. Thus far, the Government of Grenada have received considerable commitments from the international donor community to provide reconstruction and recovery assistance. At the 19 November 2004 Second Donor Conference on Grenada, the World Bank reported that the total commitments were in the order of £105 million. However, this remains a fluid situation, and additional monies have also been pledged from non-traditional donors such as Taiwan and Venezuela.

DFID is leading on the development of a single donor framework for monitoring and reporting on finances and implementation progress. This will reduce the burden on the Government of Grenada to fulfil a number of different reporting requirements. It will also provide a clearer picture of donor commitments and disbursements, allowing the Government to plan better their reconstruction programme.

The UK Government have provided nearly £7.1 million of additional support to Grenada since the hurricane, as represented in the following table. On 18 October, the Secretary of State for International Development announced the provision of £5.5 million worth of emergency budgetary support to the Government of Grenada in order to help meet their wage and salaries bill in the last quarter of 2004. This budgetary support was released to the Government at the beginning of January 2005 while emergency response contributions were released immediately after the hurricane hit Grenada.

UK's financial contributions to Grenada post-Ivan

	£
Emergency relief supplies	56,000
Development assistance to maintain the delivery of public services	5.5 million
Health services through the Pan-American Health Organisation	85,000
Emergency help through the International Federation of the Red Cross	300,000
Relief and rehabilitation through Christian Aid	239,000
Relief operations through Oxfam	200,000
The UK's portion of European humanitarian assistance	700,000
Total	7,080,193

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance is being provided by his Department to *(a)* Grenada, *(b)* the Cayman Islands and *(c)* the Caribbean region as a result of Hurricane Ivan; and if he will make a statement. [216656]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In response to the disaster caused in the Caribbean by Hurricane Ivan, the Government have provided both immediate emergency assistance and additional development assistance totalling some £8.6 million. Most of this has been delivered by the Department for International Development (DFID), and has included:

	£
Emergency relief supplies	56,000
Development Assistance to enable public services to continue	5.5 million
Health services through the Pan-American Health Organisation	85,000
Emergency help through the International Federation of the Red Cross	300,000
Relief and rehabilitation through Christian Aid	239,193
Relief operations through Oxfam	200,000
The UK's portion of European humanitarian assistance	700,000
Total	7,080,193

We have also changed our ongoing programmes in Public Sector Reform, Education and Micro-Finance to take account of the disaster in Grenada. We are funding a surveyor and architect to assess the damage and re-building options for the Grenadian Parliament and the Governor-General's House; jointly with the United States Agency for International Development, we are providing a team of debt advisers to help the Government of Grenada restructure the total stock of Grenada's debt; and funding a Forestry specialist to advise on reforestation, which will help prevent landslides and provide some protection for the water table. We are also co-ordinating design work for a harmonised donor approach to monitoring and reporting which will reduce the Government's need to respond to a number of different reporting requirements. DFID continues to remain engaged in this process as the international community works together to assist Grenada rebuild its economy.

Other UK Government Departments played a vital role in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane. HMS Richmond and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Wave Ruler provided immediate emergency medical help and clean-up support. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office funded urgent repairs to the prison.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ivan, the Government provided emergency relief supplies and a contribution to the clean-up operations, worth about £230,000 in total, to the Cayman Islands. In addition, DFID's Disaster Management Adviser visited Grand Cayman to offer advice. The Government remains engaged.

Other assistance in the region included £940,699 to Jamaica, £50,000 to Cuba and £304,560 to the Bahamas. A further £50,000 worth of assistance to the region was provided through the Pan American Health Organisation.

Iran (Bam Earthquake)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* financial, *(b)* material, *(c)* personnel and *(d)* other aid the UK Government (i) pledged and (ii) delivered to Iran after the Bam earthquake. [207738]

Hilary Benn: After the Bam earthquake, DFID pledged around £2.15 million, of which we have disbursed all apart from £450,000 which we had pledged

to the International Federation of the Red Cross but which was subsequently not needed because their appeal was sufficiently funded by other contributions they received.

Of the money spent, £1,206,640 was channelled through United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations as financial support. From the balance, DFID provided 68 search and rescue specialists and four DFID personnel, 450 family winterised tents and other shelter materials for distribution by the Iranian Red Crescent as well as two cargo aircraft put at the disposal of the Iranian Government.

Iraq

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what reports his Department has received on corruption within the UN aid distribution network in Southern Iraq; what investigations have been undertaken by agencies within the Basrah UN node; what losses have been estimated of UN assets; and if he will make a statement. [216460]

Hilary Benn: DFID has not received any reports of corruption, or investigations into corruption, relating to United Nations development projects in southern Iraq.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what steps the Government have taken to provide medical assistance to civilians injured during the conflict in Iraq; and if he will make a statement; [216847]

(2) what resources the Government have provided to assist civilians injured during the conflict in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [216848]

Hilary Benn: Improving health services presents major challenges and will take time. The system has suffered from neglect and decades of under-investment. The Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) have acknowledged these challenges and, with support from donors, has identified priorities for investment and development. Despite the security situation steady progress is being made: for example salaries have improved, hospital and primary care clinics rehabilitated and national immunisation programmes organised.

The UN and the World Bank managed multi-donor Trusts Funds are providing support to the health sector in partnership with the MoH, focusing on emergency and primary health care services which affect the poorest and most vulnerable. DFID has contributed £70 million to the multi-donor trust funds, £5 million to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and technical assistance to the MoH.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what resources the Government have provided to assist civilians suffering from psychological distress as a result of the conflict in Iraq; and if he will make a statement; [216849]

(2) what steps the Government have taken to provide assistance to civilians suffering from psychological distress as the result of the conflict in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [216850]

Hilary Benn: In its 'Health in Iraq' report of September 2004, the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) notes the lack of mental health services and that new approaches to community mental health are needed. The report also highlights the need to address psychosocial issues, mental health promotion at individual and community level integration of mental health into primary care. A national workshop, conducted by the MoH in June 2004, discussed priorities for mental health promotion and strengthening of services. The MoH has taken this agenda forward through the development of a new planning process for 2005, published as the 'Planning Guidelines for 2005', in which the MoH have set out national priorities, objectives and standards.

DFID's support for the health sector in Iraq, including psychosocial support, is primarily channelled through the multi-donor Trust Fund managed by the United Nations, to which DFID has made an initial contribution of £30 million. UN work in this sector will focus on the provision of technical assistance to develop mental health and psychosocial support services at the primary level. DFID has also provided technical assistance to the MoH, directly and through the World Health Organisation (WH[illegible]

Kazakhstan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Government of Kazakhstan about the use of oil revenues to promote sustainable development. [215769]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has had numerous discussions with the Government of Kazakhstan, to urge them to participate in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a UK-led international initiative to promote transparency over revenues from oil, gas and mining. The UK Government believe that EITI could lead to significant improvements in resource management in Kazakhstan, and help to ensure that Kazakhstan's significant oil revenues fulfil their potential as an engine for growth and poverty reduction.

Kazakhstan sent representatives to the EITI conference held in London in 2003, and signed the statement of principles agreed at that conference. However, DFID is not aware of any significant progress by the Government of Kazakhstan towards EITI implementation since then. The UK Government have raised this issue at official level on a number of occasions, and will continue to do so. We also hope to be able to discuss it with Kazakh representatives at the forthcoming EITI conference on 17 March, and the issue is part of the broader UK-Kazakhstan Energy Dialogue.

The UK Government are also supporting a project through the FCO's Global Opportunities Fund, which is developing Kazakhstan's Energy Strategy to 2020. A sound energy policy will help promote sustainable development. The same fund is being used to support a series of Chatham House workshops on good governance in oil and gas producing countries, to which Kazakhstan has been invited.

Kenya

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the level of corruption in Kenya; and what discussions he has had with the Kenyan Government on *(a)* tackling corruption and *(b)* establishing good governance. [215662]

Hilary Benn: The anti-corruption ticket, which swept the Kenyan Government into power in 2002, has been almost totally discredited. Though Transparency International records a slight reduction in the perception of petty corruption and bribery, grand corruption seems to have returned to pre-2002 levels and possibly higher. The resignation on 7 February of the Permanent Secretary in the Office of Governance and Ethics, John Githongo, was a particularly severe blow to the Government's anti-corruption credentials.

In continued dialogue with the Government, the UK and other donors have made clear that allegations about *unsatisfactory tendering and contracting procedures are* serious and need to be fully investigated. We have remained categorical that firm action should be taken against those found to have acted corruptly. We have continued to press the Government to pass important legislation including the Public Procurement Bill, and the Public Financial Management Bill.

At the same time, we continue to encourage the Kenyan Government to give their full and undivided support to the country's anti-corruption institutions. The UK authorities have assisted the Kenyan authorities with their ongoing investigations. We will continue to give them co-operation and would consider further help with investigations into corrupt cases that are followed through with energy and probity. They should be followed through to their conclusion and those found responsible made to answer for their wrongdoings, regardless of position or connections.

To this end, DFID is supporting the central Government systems that are intended to ensure that public financial resources are monitored and used more effectively. DFID, alongside 16 other donors, is also supporting the Kenyan Governance, Justice, Law and Order sector. This programme is working to strengthen key institutions that are directly involved in fighting corruption. There is to be increased support to the Director of Public Prosecution, Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission and civil society organisations, such as Transparency International, that work to improve the transparency of public resources. The donors will take recent events into account when making their assessments and planning their joint ongoing support, and the emphasis must be on building the institutions over the medium term, but the Kenyan Government will have to demonstrate that they are serious about tackling corruption.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what mechanisms his Department has put in place to ensure that effective delivery of aid is not prevented by corruption in Kenya. [215663]

Hilary Benn: DFID's programme in Kenya is subject to the same rigorous safeguards as all our development assistance. These are intended to ensure that funds are spent in line with our objectives and with minimal risk of fraud or misappropriation. DFID is not providing poverty reduction budget support to the Kenyan Government, since we are not convinced that the Government are either seriously committed to fighting corruption or to making good progress on its overall reform programme. However, we can make progress on the Millennium Development Goals by supporting specific sectors and projects.

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Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he plans to reduce aid to Kenya in response to its slow progress in tackling corruption. [215664]

Hilary Benn: Our Country Assistance Plan, launched with the Government of Kenya in June 2004, makes clear that we want to support the implementation of Kenya's Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS). Our CAP makes provision to increase our development assistance to £50 million in 2005–06, but final decisions will depend on ERS progress, including tackling corruption. Our assistance is designed to support long term change in Kenya that will lead to improved governance, and to help Kenya to make sustainable progress towards the MDGs. The faster the pace of reform, and the more conducive the environment, the faster progress we will make.

However, we are not providing poverty reduction budget support to the Kenyan Government, since we are not convinced that the Government is seriously committed to fighting corruption and making good progress on its overall reform programme.

Nonetheless, we believe that we can make progress on the Millennium Development Goals by supporting specific sectors and projects. For example there are opportunities for constructive engagement in, and support to, the education and justice, law and order sectors. In these we have pooled our funding with other donors to support the Government of Kenya's own strategies such as free primary education, without putting our money directly into their systems. Under these arrangements, we helped the Government to set up reliable school management systems to attract large support for learning materials for primary schools. All 18,000 primary schools in Kenya now have textbooks.

In addition, there are opportunities even in sectors that have less well-established strategies by the Government of Kenya. In health for example, DFID is funding the social marketing of insecticide treated bed nets that is expected to reduce the rate of under-five mortality by 14 per cent. (68,000 lives saved).

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made by the Kenyan Government in *(a)* promoting and *(b)* implementing good governance practices. [215665]

Hilary Benn: Progress on governance by the Kenyan Government has generally been disappointing. However, there have been a few exceptions. The Government established a governance, justice, law and order reform programme with support from 16 donors, including support for anti-corruption institutions, police training, and judicial reform. In addition, the investigations into the Goldenberg scandal have continued credibly; all public servants (including the president) have declared their assets; land policy has been formulated and land laws are being reviewed; and there have been wider governance achievements around improved national budgetary processes and primary school management. Progress is being made in the implementation of the national integrated Monitoring and Evaluation system at both central and devolved level, and this will be fully rolled out during 2005.

However, progress on dealing with corruption, especially on prosecutions, remains too slow. The biggest blow came last week with the resignation of the Permanent Secretary in the Office of President in charge of Public Ethics and Governance. The Public Procurement Bill has still not been passed. The continuing failure to bring the Constitutional Review process to a satisfactory conclusion has impeded progress towards the Government's objective of decentralisation and empowerment of local communities.

Latin America

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the Cartagena Declaration on the *(a)* definition and *(b)* treatment of refugees in Latin America; and if he will make a statement. [216293]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has made no assessment of its own of the impact of the Cartagena Declaration on either *(a)* the definition or *(b)* treatment of refugees in Latin America.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who leads on refugee issues, organised a meeting last November in Mexico City on the 20th anniversary of the Cartagena Declaration. At that meeting, the Latin American countries re-affirmed their commitment to the spirit of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees and approved a Plan of Action to improve refugee protection throughout the region. The UNHCR is expected to include a number of programmes/projects outlined in the Mexico Plan of Action into its 2006 country operation plans in the region, as a way to guarantee a concrete follow up and implementation of the recommendations. Further details can be found on the UNHCR website (www.unhcr.ch).

Liberia

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what contribution his Department *(a)* has made and *(b)* is making to the dispatch of emergency aid to Butuo, Liberia. [216287]

Hilary Benn: With the upsurge of violence in Cote d'Ivoire in November 2004, approximately 10,000 Ivorian refugees fled to Liberia, into Butuo town and its vicinity. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme and NGOs brought initial food and other assistance to these refugees by helicopter, drawing in part on £4.7 million in grants already provided by DFID for their work in Liberia. According to the UNHCR, over half the refugees have returned to Cote d'Ivoire, and the remaining 5,000 in and around Butuo are now receiving adequate levels of support, again drawing on DFID grants.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department is providing to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for its voluntary return programme for the repatriation of Liberian refugees. [216290]

Hilary Benn: DFID has recently provided a grant of £1.1 million to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in support of its programme to facilitate voluntary return of Liberian refugees from neighbouring countries. DFID funds are helping provide non-food items, transport capacity, road repairs and protection assistance. DFID has also provided £1 million to the World Food Programme to support the distribution of food rations to returning refugees, and a further £3 million to various agencies and NGOs to reactivate services and livelihoods in areas to which refugees are returning.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the number of Liberian refugees in West Africa. [216291]

Hilary Benn: DFID relies mainly on data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who reports that there are currently 257,000 Liberian refugees registered in camps across West Africa: 42,000 in Ghana, 52,500 in Sierra Leone, 74,000 in Côte d'Ivoire, 1,000 in the Gambia, and 87,500 in Guinea. These figures take into account recent voluntary facilitated returns of nearly 7,000 refugees from neighbouring countries, but may not take into account unofficial spontaneous repatriation. In addition, up to 75,000 Liberian refugees are estimated to reside outside formal refugee camps in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Nigeria.

Malawi

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of projects aimed at diversifying the agricultural sector of the economy of Malawi; and if he will make a statement. [216735]

Hilary Benn: DFID has supported studies, programmes and organisations in Malawi that have contributed to the development of Malawi's economic

growth strategy and more productive agriculture. Over time, these will lead to a re-balancing of the economy and of crop production.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the need to diversify the agricultural sector of the economy of Malawi away from tobacco farming; and if he will make a statement.[216736]

Hilary Benn: Tobacco contributes 60 per cent. of Malawi's export earnings. It is produced increasingly by smallholders who make up 80 per cent. of the population. Furthermore, Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and the Government of Malawi is naturally cautious about the risks of premature diversification out of tobacco. DFID knows of no evidence to suggest that there are alternative crops that are high value and low volume and therefore appropriate for export from a landlocked country and whose production could be scaled up rapidly under present circumstances in Malawi to replace tobacco in the short to medium term.

However, if the Malawi Government's policies for promoting economic growth are successful, we expect agriculture to contribute significantly less to national income in the longer term and more emphasis to be placed in agriculture on the regional trade in food staples. Changes in international trade policies could facilitate this diversification.

Mr. Nelson Mandela

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he last met Mr. Nelson Mandela; and what matters were discussed. [215329]

Hilary Benn: I met with Nelson Mandela on 3 February 2005 with the Prime Minister and Chancellor of Exchequer. We discussed the Africa and the G8 and how we can achieve our objectives on aid, debt relief and trade.

Nepal

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to modify his Department's development programme in Nepal following King Gyanendra's recent actions in the country; what assessment he has made of allegations of misuse of development funds by the Royal Nepal Army; and if he will make a statement. [215937]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has been monitoring recent developments in Nepal closely and with considerable concern.

The criteria for reviewing the DFID programme in Nepal will remain clearly focused on an assessment of continued effectiveness and capacity to support pro-poor development and on the safety and security of staff.

DFID will monitor the situation over the coming weeks, do all we can to maintain respect for unhindered access by poor communities to development assistance and assess changes in the operating environment over this period.

For the time being, DFID will continue those programmes that operate through non-government channels, where we assess it is safe to do so. We have placed under immediate review, our programmes which operate through governmental channels, in order to assess, case by case, whether they can now be expected to deliver the poverty reduction benefits anticipated at the time of their approval.

Over a slightly longer timeframe, we will also undertake a comprehensive review of the programme, to decide on a balance of aid instruments, funding channels and resource allocations that is appropriate under the new circumstances.

I am not aware of any systematic or orchestrated misuse of development funds by the Royal Nepalese Army.

New Partnership for Africa's Development

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what measures his Department supports to improve the effectiveness of the New Partnership for Africa's Development peer review mechanism; [215636]

(2) what assessment he has made of the New Partnership for Africa's Development peer review mechanism. [215635]

Hilary Benn: The New Partnership for African Development's (NEPAD) African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a promising initiative to improve governance in Africa. DFID is ready to support the APRM Trust Fund when it is up and running. This will facilitate the work of the APRM secretariat and their engagement with country peer reviews. DFID has contributed £160,000 to Ghana and £300,000 to Rwanda to support the APRM in these two countries. The initiative is still in its early stages and it is too early to assess effectiveness.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with *(a)* the African Union (AU), *(b)* the South African Government and *(c)* the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) concerning the possible incorporation of NEPAD into the AU structure.[215680]

Hilary Benn: In July 2004 at the African Union (AU) Summit, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was legally and administratively incorporated into the AU, changing the name to AU-NEPAD. Prior to this and subsequently, DFID officials have regularly discussed related issues with the AU, South African Government and NEPAD.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effects of incorporating into the African Union the New Partnership for Africa's Development. [215681]

Hilary Benn: We support the incorporation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) into the African Union (AU) as a means of ensuring coordination of these important initiatives. It is too early to make an assessment of how effective this will be in practice.

Palestine

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* humanitarian and *(b)* other aid assistance is being provided by his Department to the Palestinian Lebanese refugees. [215772]

Hilary Benn: DFID provides humanitarian and development assistance to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon through its funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). Since 2000, DFID has contributed over £65 million to UNRWA's regular budget which provides basic education, health and social services to the refugee population. Over 15 per cent. of this funding directly supports those refugees based in Lebanon. Because of the particularly poor social and economic conditions in the refugee camps in Lebanon, UNRWA allocates more per person there than to the other centres in the region.

Rohingya Refugees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what programmes his Department *(a)* has set up, *(b)* is running and *(c)* is funding in Malaysia to assist the Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. [216292]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is not running or funding projects in Malaysia to assist the approximately 10,000 Rohingya refugees from Burma. DFID does not have a programme in Malaysia, which is one of South East Asia's richest countries. EU Missions in Malaysia, at the initiative of the UK, have lobbied the Malaysian Government over the status and treatment of Rohingya refugees, most recently in November 2004 following the Malaysian Government's decision to issue them with identify cards.

DFID's support to Burmese refugees is focused on support to the 185,000 Burmese people living in camps in Thailand. We support the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) in providing food and shelter for those living in the camps. We are also funding the World Health Organisation to co-ordinate health services to refugees on the Thai-Burma border.

South Africa

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the Government of South Africa about *(a)* acknowledgement of the scale of the HIV/AIDS problem and *(b)* the allocation of resources and expertise to tackle the epidemic. [215666]

Hilary Benn: The Government of South Africa recognises the scale of their HIV/AIDS epidemic and, since 2000, has increased sevenfold, the amount allocated through the budget to HIV/AIDS programmes. South Africa launched its "operational plan" for comprehensive HIV and AIDS care, management and treatment in November 2003. During 2004, more than half a million people undertook voluntary counselling and testing, and more than 50,000 started anti-retroviral treatment.

DFID supports South African efforts to combat HIV and AIDS through a number of programmes. A £30 million multisectoral HIV/AIDS programme, approved in 2003, provides technical support and advice to Government at national and provincial levels to implement its plans. The programme also provides support to non-governmental organisations and works with the private sector to disseminate best practice.

DFID and British high commission staff in Pretoria regularly discuss both the scale of the epidemic, and the Government of South Africa's response, with their South African Government counterparts.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215085]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The cost of producing a staff identity pass is £4.57, made up of the encodable pass itself (£3.99) and production costs (58p).

According to available records the number of passes reported lost or stolen since 1998 is as follows:

	Number
1998	4
1999	21
2000	26
2001	30
2002	45
2003	39
2004	30

Figures for 1997 are not available.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997; [213673]

(2) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997. [213665]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development commissioned two staff surveys in 2004, at a total cost of £86,435. The Department has also carried out staff management surveys in 2000, 2001 and 2003. These were undertaken in house and no external costs were incurred

The specific internal costs could not be identified without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Sudan

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the United Kingdom is taking in partnership with other countries to ensure that the food, shelter, sanitation, healthcare and other basic needs of refugees in the Darfur region of

Sudan are being adequately met; and what steps are being taken to assist in providing protection against attacks. [216664]

Hilary Benn: The UK is the second largest bilateral donor to the Darfur crisis, having committed £62.5 million since September 2003. The UK also contributes around 18 per cent. of the European Commission's €152 million contribution to the crisis. This year the UK will provide £70 million in humanitarian assistance across Sudan. This includes £20 million for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in a wide range of sectors, including food, shelter, sanitation, and healthcare; £5 million for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) 2005 Sudan Appeal; £5 million for the UN consolidated Appeal for Eastern Chad; and an un-earmarked £40 million contribution for the UN Workplan for Sudan, which will allow the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Khartoum to target funding where it is needed most. When making funding allocations, DFID co-ordinates closely with other major donors; particularly the US and EC. The large majority of DFID interventions are jointly funded by other donors.

The UK remains gravely concerned about the security situation in Darfur, and we are pressing all sides to stop fighting and adhere to the Abuja protocols on providing unimpeded and unrestricted humanitarian access and refraining from all hostilities and military actions in the region. The UK has provided some £14 million to the Africa Union monitoring mission in Darfur, including the provision of 143 vehicles; 470 more vehicles are on their way. DFID also funds NGOs and international organisations providing protection to the Sudanese population. One such example is, the ICRC 2005 Appeal, to which DFID will contribute £5 million this year, this includes dialogue with all parties, and interventions to minimise violence due to competition for resources between internally displaced peoples (IDPs), nomads and farmers.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in the Sudan. [217390]

Hilary Benn: UN social indicators for Sudan are among the lowest in the world. Infant mortality is 106–111 per 1,000 live births and in large areas of the country people continue to rely on humanitarian assistance to survive. Needs are huge—the UN Workplan for Sudan requires $1.48 billion for development and humanitarian assistance in 2005.

The recently ended conflict in southern Sudan is estimated to have displaced four million people. Food insecurity is critical and there is little primary health care except that provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). However the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in January this year, now holds out the prospect of peace throughout Sudan. Ensuring a stable, sustainable environment for the return of the displaced population will be a critical challenge.

In Darfur the humanitarian situation remains precarious. There are over 1.8 million internally displaced people (IDPs), and a further 200,000 have fled to eastern Chad. The total population affected by the crisis in Darfur is estimated at 2.4 million. Despite limitations due to increasing insecurity, the humanitarian response continues to improve. In January 2005 food distribution reached 1.48 million people, some 140,000 more than the previous month. Shelter and non-food items have been provided to 73 per cent. of the IDP population while 56 per cent. were covered by sanitation activities. Of the total affected population, 49 per cent. had access to clean water, 62 per cent. to primary health facilities and 54 per cent. to secondary health facilities. Of major concern, is the observation of the first signs of food shortages among the general population, expected after the failure of the 2004 harvest season.

Other areas of concern in Sudan include the Northern Red Sea State, which has suffered persistent drought and repeated crop failures since 1988, resulting in high food insecurity for the 700,000 population. Agricultural production for 2004 was better than the previous few years, but a large proportion of the population is likely to remain without sufficient food, and will require nutritional assistance for some time to come.

The UK is the second largest bilateral donor to the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, having allocated £62.5 million since September 2003. This year the UK will provide £70 million for humanitarian assistance across Sudan.

Tobacco

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* social and *(b)* economic impact of the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control on (i) Malawi and (ii) other developing countries with a large tobacco sector in their economy; and if he will make a statement. [216734]

Hilary Benn: DFID has made no formal assessment of the likely impact of the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in Malawi or other countries. However, the WHO envisages that reducing tobacco consumption will take several decades. In the more immediate term, it is likely that national and regional policy factors such as domestic trade reform in China; energy, transport and land tenure crises in Zimbabwe; and the prospects of losing market share to expanding producers like Brazil are more pressing constraints for poor tobacco-dependent economies.

We are very sensitive to the serious adverse consequences of tobacco on public health, in particular the growing burden of tobacco-related disease in developing countries, and we recognise the importance of the FCTC. DFID funds are not used identifiably to support the tobacco sector, but it is consistent with our Millennium Development Goal mandate to provide advice to tobacco-dependent poor countries on constraints to their economic development and the livelihoods of their citizens. This may include measures to assist farmers dependent on tobacco crops to diversify into alternative activities.

Uganda

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment has been made of birth control policies in Uganda. [216914]

Hilary Benn: Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan emphasises the need to improve the ability of individuals to plan the size of their families as a way of contributing to the reduction of poverty. The Government's family planning policy seeks to increase access to high quality, affordable family planning services for those that require contraceptives and to promote integrated family planning information and services. These objectives are set out in the Ministry of Health's draft Health Sector Strategic Plan for 2005–10. Uganda faces a number of challenges in meeting these goals, including social misconceptions about family planning and a shortage of skilled staff and family planning commodities at the district level.

DFID welcomes Uganda's prioritisation of family planning in its efforts to reduce poverty, and its inclusion in the Health Sector Strategic Plan. The latter will help ensure family planning is not an afterthought, but an integral part of the evolution of the health sector. We strongly support the focus on improving services at the district level. DFID also welcomes the Ugandan Government's development of a comprehensive advocacy strategy tackling a range of issues including education for young people in school and public leadership.

The UK supports these efforts in a number of ways: through Poverty Reduction Budget Support and project assistance.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what safeguards are in place to ensure that UK development aid donated to Uganda is spent *(a)* appropriately and *(b)* where designated; and what assurance the Ugandan Government has provided on this. [217077]

Hilary Benn: The UK currently provides 60 per cent. of its assistance as Poverty Reduction Budget Support, as a direct contribution to the Government of Uganda's budget.

Uganda has a well-developed and consultative budgetary process which allows donors to ensure that Uganda meets its commitment to prioritise poverty reduction. It provides an opportunity to endorse the budget at the annual Public Expenditure Review. Allocations to the Government's "Poverty Action Fund", for example, have risen from less than 20 per cent. of the budget in 1997 to 38 per cent. in 2004.

Budget execution is generally good and is closely monitored by Government and donors, including the International Financial Institutions. DFID's Poverty Reduction Budget Support, and that of other partners such as the World Bank, is conditional on endorsement of the budget and its subsequent execution. This ensures that allocations to the Poverty Action Fund are protected. Detailed half and full year budget execution reports are posted on the internet, and the Government continues to produce audited accounts within the statutory period of nine months. Uganda performs well in international comparative assessments of public financial management, including the World Bank/IMF expenditure tracking assessment conducted in 2004.

In addition to DFID's contribution to Uganda's budget, the UK provides a significant amount of project assistance, including support for improving public financial management. These projects are managed in accordance with DFID procedures and are subject to regular reviews to ensure impact and financial propriety. The National Audit Office was satisfied with DFID systems in Uganda when it audited our programme in December 2004.

UN Millennium Project

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the report of the United Nations Millennium Project, with particular reference to its call for results-based management of international aid. [215753]

Hilary Benn: The Government strongly supports the analysis in the report, which shows the Millennium Development Goals are off-track and demonstrates that aid works. We welcome the focus on Africa, and we agree that more countries can meet more of the 2015 targets if we act boldly now. Donors must commit more resources through traditional aid channels, enhanced debt relief, and the International Finance Facility. This will enable developing countries to develop and implement more ambitious poverty reduction strategies. On results-based management, we believe that aid should be provided to support country-led programmes with clear development outcomes and benchmarks.

Zambia

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Zambia concerning *(a)* good governance and *(b)* tackling corruption. [215767]

Hilary Benn: I visited Zambia on 8 February, and met President Levy Mwanawasa, Finance Minister Ng'andu Magande, and Commerce Minister Dipak Patel. We discussed good governance, and the political and economic challenges facing Zambia.

In my meeting with President Mwanawasa I highlighted the importance of his Government's continued fight against corruption. Cases have been launched against members of the previous administration, including former President Chiluba. Assets have been recovered or frozen in Zambia and abroad. Measures to prevent future corruption are being put in place across Government by the Anti-Corruption Commission, which is receiving technical and financial assistance from DFID.

In my meeting with the Finance Minister I congratulated him on recent economic and fiscal policies that are improving growth and the investment climate. Domestic borrowing, interest rates and inflation are all falling. We also discussed the Government's recent improvements in public expenditure management and financial accountability (PEMFA). A PEMFA reform programme is now in place, supported by a group of donors, including DFID. The UK will provide £15 million to this programme over the next five years.

Good economic governance will help ensure that public spending is more focused on poverty reduction priorities. Minister Magande emphasised that Zambia's 2005 budget is allocating more resources to health, education and other priority programmes.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid projects Her Majesty's Government are considering assisting in Zambia; and if he will make a statement. [216086]

Hilary Benn: UK assistance to Zambia presently totals £30 million per year on projects in various areas such as: health, education, HIV/AIDS, public sector reforms, and private sector growth.

In recognition of Zambia's recent progress, I announced during my visit to Zambia on 8 February that DFID will provide up to £60 million over the next three years (2005–07) in the form of Poverty Reduction Budget Support. This will mean a rising UK aid programme, from £30 million per year, to £40 million per year by 2006–07.

In addition, the UK Government will cancel all of Zambia's remaining bilateral debt to the UK if and when HIPC Completion Point is reached. Completion Point is likely in April 2005. The value of this debt cancellation is expected to be £128 million. The UK Government will also then pay 10 per cent. of the debt service owed by Zambia on outstanding World Bank and African Development Bank loans until 2015 in order to release additional funds to support the Government's poverty reduction programme. The savings from this initiative are expected to be £850,000 in 2005, rising to £2.5 million in 2015.

Potential projects being considered at the moment include:

Technical assistance to the Government of Zambia's new Public Sector Management Programme.

Technical and financial assistance to scaling up social safety net programmes being piloted by the Government and other agencies, including ways of assisting the extreme poor, orphans and vulnerable children.

Extension of the UK's present support to the public health system.

The high commission's small grants scheme funds an average of 15 to 20 community and NGO projects every year, up to a total of £160,000. For 2005–06 applications will be accepted from April to June.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures his Department is taking in order to prepare for a possible food shortage in Zimbabwe. [215669]

Hilary Benn: Recent assessments by NGOs working at community level in Zimbabwe suggest that malnutrition is not presently high by emergency standards, but that food availability and affordability are decreasing. The Government of Zimbabwe claimed last year that there had been a bumper crop and that it would not need international food aid during the period up to the next harvest (around April 2005). However, independent surveys suggest that the last harvest was much lower than the Zimbabwean Government claim. The Government cancelled the UN crop assessment and have not provided information to donors and UN agencies about their imports, stocks or their ability to sell or distribute grain. Even if the Government of Zimbabwe can import and distribute enough food, many vulnerable groups will not have resources to buy it. The World Food Programme continue to provide targeted feeding through their regional programme predominantly through institutions such as schools and clinics and some food supplements to Home Based Care programmes.

DFID Zimbabwe, in collaboration with other major donors and the UN system, will continue to monitor the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe closely, while continuing to provide targeted food assistance and other humanitarian support to the most vulnerable sections of Zimbabwe society through NGO programmes which we are able to fund directly. At present DFID provides support to over 1.5 million of the poorest people with the goal to improve household food security through agricultural inputs and targeted food aid.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the Zimbabwe Government's refusal to accept food aid from the United Nations. [215670]

Hilary Benn: The Government of Zimbabwe's decision not to renew their appeal to the United Nations for food aid is of concern to the humanitarian community. The absence of an appeal may restrict the World Food Programme's capacity to plan, seek funding for, and implement further emergency operations over the coming months. Many observers believe that the Government intend to control the supply and availability of food in the country over the coming months as a political tool to gain votes in the parliamentary elections, scheduled for 31 March 2005. Donor-funded relief programmes have remained generally free of political interference. But there has been some evidence that access to food distributed by the Zimbabwe Government is being politicised. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Allowances (Midlothian)

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Midlothian receive *(a)* reduced earnings allowance and *(b)* retirement allowance. [217293]

Mr. Pond: At 30 June 2004 there were 690 people receiving reduced earnings allowance and 330 receiving retirement allowance in Midlothian parliamentary constituency.

Source:

Industrial Injuries Computer System 100 per cent. count, rounded to nearest five to maintain anonymity of customers.

Benefit Claims (Scotland)

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people claimed attendance allowance in each constituency in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available; [215387]

(2) how many people claimed disability living allowance in each constituency in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available. [215389]

Maria Eagle: The administration of attendance allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Vivien Hopkins to Mr. David Marshall, dated 21 February 2005:

In reply to two of your recent Parliamentary Questions about the Disability and Carers Service, the Minister for Disabled People, Maria Eagle MP, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. In the Chief Executive's absence I have been asked to reply on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed attendance allowance and disability living allowance in each constituency in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available. The information requested is as follows:

Thousands

Recipients by constituency at 31 August 2004	*AA*	*DLA*
Aberdeen Central	1.8	3.0
Aberdeen North	1.9	3.3
Aberdeen South	1.8	2.7
Airdrie and Shotts	2.2	6.1
Angus	2.0	3.3
Argyll and Bute	2.2	3.2
Ayr	2.9	3.8
Banff and Buchan	1.9	4.7
Caithness Sunderland and Easter Ross	1.3	2.9
Carrick Cumnock and Doon Valley	2.4	5.9
Central Fife	1.7	5.6
Clydebank and Milngavie	2.2	3.9
Clydesdale	2.4	5.8
Coatbridge and Chryston	2.1	5.2
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	1.7	4.1
Cunninghame North	1.9	4.4
Cunninghame South	1.6	4.6
Dumbarton	1.9	4.7
Dumfries	2.0	4.0
Dundee East	3.0	4.7
Dundee West	2.5	4.3
Dunfermline East	1.4	4.6
Dunfermline West	1.4	3.4
East Kilbride	2.4	3.4
East Lothian	2.3	3.9
Eastwood	2.3	3.3
Edinburgh Central	1.5	3.0
Edinburgh East and Musselburgh	1.7	4.4
Edinburgh North and Leigh	1.7	3.7
Edinburgh Pentlands	1.7	2.8
Edinburgh South	1.8	3.2
Edinburgh West	1.8	2.6
Falkirk East	1.9	4.0
Falkirk West	1.9	4.9
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale	2.1	4.2
Glasgow Anniesland	2.6	5.5
Glasgow Baillieston	2.3	6.3
Glasgow Cathcart	1.5	4.6
Glasgow Govan	1.9	4.4
Glasgow Kelvin	1.8	3.6
Glasgow Maryhill	2.0	6.0
Glasgow Pollok	2.3	5.6
Glasgow Rutherglen	2.4	5.2
Glasgow Shettleston	2.4	6.9
Glasgow Springburn	2.2	6.2
Gordon	1.3	2.4
Greenock and Inverclyde	1.8	4.1
Hamilton North and Bellshill	1.6	4.8
Hamilton South	1.7	5.1
Inverness East Nairn and Lochaber	2.3	3.4
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	2.5	4.2
Kirkcaldy	1.8	3.6
Linlithgow	1.7	5.3
Livingston	1.8	5.3
Midlothian	1.8	4.2
Moray	2.0	2.8
Motherwell and Wishaw	2.2	5.3
North East Fife	1.4	2.2
North Tayside	2.0	3.1
Ochil	1.4	4.6
Orkney and Shetland	1.0	1.5
Paisley North	1.7	5.0
Paisley South	1.7	4.2
Perth	2.6	3.4
Ross Skye and Inverness West	2.0	3.2
Roxburgh and Berwickshire	1.7	2.7
Stirling	1.7	3.5
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	2.2	3.5
Tweeddale Ettrick and Lauderdale	1.8	2.5
West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine	1.6	2.0
West Renfrewshire	1.5	4.0
Western Isles	0.8	1.0

Notes:

1. Figures taken from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 May 2004
2. Figures are in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner. This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.

Source:

IAD Information Centre.

Please let me know if I can be of further help.

Benefit Office Closures

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many redundancies are proposed for each of his Department's benefit offices in Scotland. [217079]

Maria Eagle: Detailed work force plans are currently being developed for Scotland the outcome of which will inform any requirements for funded early releases. Until detailed business cases are fully developed it is too early to say if any redundancies will be required. Our intention remains that wherever possible we will avoid compulsory redundancy.

Benefits Agency

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the policy of the Benefits Agency is on visiting people who wish to make a claim but cannot attend an office; and if he will make a statement; [214797]

(2) what assistance is available from the Benefits Agency to people who wish to make claims but cannot understand the forms they are to complete; and if he will make a statement. [214798]

Mr. Pond: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Mr. David Anderson to Mr. Laurence Robertson, dated 21 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply direct to your questions concerning the Benefits Agency policy on visiting people who wish to make a claim for benefit but cannot attend the office and what assistance is available from the Benefits Agency to people who wish to make claims but cannot understand the forms

they are to complete. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The Jobcentre Plus Customers' Charter explains the level of service our customers can expect from our network which includes the new style Jobcentre Plus offices, social security offices and Jobcentres. Copies of the Jobcentre Plus Customers' Charter are available from the Library.

We want to give the best service we can to everyone who needs our help and we aim to serve all our customers fairly and to the same high standards.

All our claim forms have a statement, which tells customers to contact the local office should they have problems with completing a claim form. For example, if a customer has difficulties that affect the way they can use our service and they have made us aware of this, we will discuss with them the best ways in which we can help them.

Where customers have literacy difficulties, we can help them or, if they prefer, we could refer them to a third party in their local area, where such arrangements are in place. For instance, if a customer had difficulties completing Jobseeker's Allowance claim forms, arrangements would be made for them to attend the office in advance of their interview to get help with completion.

If a customer has difficulty in understanding English, we will arrange for an interpreter to assist them via Language Line or the Department's Face to Face Interpreter Contract.

Where there is a legitimate reason for the customer being unable to attend the office or complete and return a postal claim form, a visit will be offered. For example where the customer has a physical, learning, mental, or communication difficulty, and it is not reasonable for anyone else to help, a visit will be arranged with the customer.

I hope this is helpful.

Carers

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of carers who are over the age of 65 years and receive carers' allowance. [217038]

Maria Eagle: As at 31 August 2004, the latest date for which information is available, there were some 9,550 carers aged 65 or over who were receiving carer's allowance.

Source:

IAD information centre, 100 per cent. sample, as at 31 August 2004. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many carers received both the carers premium and the basic state pension in the latest year for which figures are available. [217325]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 602W to the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight (Mr. Turner).

Chemical Labelling

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how the concept of normal handling and use contained in EU legislation on the classification and labelling of chemicals is applied in the United Kingdom; who is responsible for advising the Government on the application of this concept; what guidance has been issued by the Health and Safety Executive to the business community and others on how the concept of normal handling and use will be applied; and if he will make a statement; [211172]

(2) whether he plans to issue guidance to the business community on how the concept of normal handling and use in EU legislation on the classification and labelling of chemicals will be applied. [211174]

Jane Kennedy: The EU legislation which includes the expression "normal handling and use" is applied in the United Kingdom through the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging Regulations 2002. These regulations formally refer to the Approved Classification and Labelling Guide, a practical document which contains the expression without specific advice on its application. This guide is based on the relevant EU directive and was prepared by the Health and Safety Executive.

We are aware that there is some concern that the present advice does not sufficiently explain the application of "normal handling and use". The term is particularly important in EU negotiations when the dangerous properties of chemicals are discussed and agreed between member states. Clarification of the concept should be developed at European level and UK officials are actively pursuing this in the appropriate fora.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many self-employed people have been pursued *(a)* successfully and *(b)* unsuccessfully for money owed to the Child Support Agency in each of the past seven years. [211717]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Mr. Doug Smith to Mr. Mark Fisher, dated 21 February 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

Your asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many self-employed people have been pursued *(a)* successfully and *(b)* unsuccessfully for money owed to the Child Support Agency in each of the past seven years.

I am unable to provide the information you seek. I can however say that on the new scheme at the current time there are around 7,000 cases where calculations have been made under the new child support arrangements and the main source of income is derived from self employment. Of these payments are being received on around 3,900 cases. The new computer system also contains around 3,500 cases where the calculation of maintenance is made under the 'old rules' and the non resident parent is categorised as self employed. Payments are being received on around 2,500 of these cases. Equivalent information for earlier years for 'old scheme' cases is as follows—the information relates to August in each year:

August	*Number of cases*	*Estimated number in payment*
2003	29,000	19,400
2002	29,000	18,900
2001	27,000	16,700

August	Number of cases	Estimated number in payment
2000	25,000	14,500
1999	23,000	13,100
1998	18,500	10,400

Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213782]

Jane Kennedy: DWP was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) including the former Employment Service. The vast majority of the DWP Estate has been occupied under the terms of the PRIME PFI contract since April 1998. The PRIME contract was expanded in December 2003 to include former Employment Service properties. The Department pays a Facilities Unit Price for the accommodation which includes cleaning costs. The cost of cleaning is not separately identifiable.

The figures in the table represent costs of cleaning former Employment Service properties prior to December 2003. The figures also include the cost of cleaning the Health and Safety Executive offices since it became part of DWP in 2002.

	£ million
1997–98	6
1998–99	6.3
1999–2000	7.4
2000–01	7.5
2001–02	8.3
2002–03	10.4
2003–04[1]	8.3

[1] April 2003 to December 2003

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04, and what the estimated cost of employing consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211562]

Jane Kennedy: The total expenditure by the Department for Work and Pensions on all external consultants in the years requested was:

Financial year	Total (£ million)
1996–97	[1]100.3
2003–04	[2]306.7
2005–08	n/a

[1] Figures for ex-Department of Social Security only.
[2] DWP was formed in 2001 (from former DSS, Employment Service ad parts of the DfEE)

A high level assessment of current consultancy commitments and contracts indicates that consultancy expenditure is reducing during 2004–05.

An estimate of future expenditure is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Bridgwater constituency are *(a)* eligible for and *(b)* in receipt of council tax benefit. [217350]

Mr. Pond: Council tax benefit data is not available broken down by constituency.

Estimates of the total amount council tax benefit that went unclaimed in 2002–03, the latest year for which information is available, can be found in the Department's report entitled: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up in 2002/2003"; copies are available in the Library.

Data Sharing

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress the Department has made in sharing data on deceased claimants with *(a)* CIFAS and *(b)* other public agencies. [210053]

Mr. Pond: The Home Office led Identity Fraud Steering Committee, which comprises public and private sector organisations that are committed to reducing identity fraud, began a project in November 2004 to explore the benefits, feasibility and legal impediments of sharing public sector deceased person information with private sector organisations involved in fraud prevention.

The project is making good progress against the objectives set out in the agreed terms of reference.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213616]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS), and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment including the Employment Service. Health and Safety Executive joined DWP in July 2002. Canteen facilities are currently provided in around 165 of our 1,800 offices. The only costs incurred by DWP in providing these facilities is in the form of subsidies. The first year for which figures are available is 1998–99. The available information is in the following table.

	£ million
1998–99	2.7
1999–2000	3.1
2000–01	3.3
2001–02	3.5
2002–03	3.6
2003–04	3.8

Note:
Figures for periods prior to June 2001 are for the former DSS only.

There is one bar on DWP premises, this is run, managed and financed by a sports and social club and therefore no running, staffing or supply costs have been incurred by DWP.

Departmental Offices, Chelmsford

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects his Department's offices in Beeches road, Chelmsford to close; and if he will make a statement. [216247]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Simon Burns, dated 21 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply direct to your question concerning plans to close the Jobcentre Plus premises at Beeches Road, Chelmsford. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I wrote to you in March 2004 regarding our plans for this site. Since then, the future of our Beeches Road site has been still under review as part of a DWP wide exercise to review Estate holdings throughout Essex. I am aware that a somewhat misleading article was recently featured in the press relating to the closure of our site in Beeches Road.

It may be helpful if I briefly describe the changes we are currently planning.

With the Executive Board of Jobcentre Plus I have carefully considered how we can make benefit processing more efficient in the interests of all our customers. We have now concluded that we should consolidate this important area of our business into a smaller number of locations. Currently we carry out this work in several hundred sites and reducing this to around 77 Benefit Processing Centres by 2008 will enable us to deliver a faster, more efficient service using the improved information technology systems which are now starting to become available to us.

As you are already aware, the benefit processing work we currently carry out at Beeches Road, Chelmsford will be moving to one of our new processing centres. The announcement of our planned changes was obviously a sensitive issue for the staff who currently undertake this work in Chelmsford and a number of similar sites nationally. We considered it vitally important that our people should hear about the plans as soon as possible and that they should hear the news from Jobcentre Plus Managers.

We therefore planned and undertook an extensive programme of communications throughout our organisation, to MPs and to other people and organisations we work closely with. Even at this early stage, an essential part of our communications strategy was to set out the arrangements we are making to re-deploy employees who will be affected by the changes, including our commitment to avoid redundancies as far as possible. The timescale for the transfer of benefit processing work from sites such as Beeches Road has still to be determined, although our intention is that this will take place by 2008.

Jobcentre Plus provides a telephone contact centre network where our customers are able to make enquiries without having to come into one of our offices. Our Beeches Road site currently houses a small part of this network. Our current plans involve this work being undertaken from another part of the network by our staff based in Derby, from 2 September 2005.

Other face-to-face services will continue to be provided by staff at Beeches Road.

Jobcentre Plus keeps under constant review our Estates and operational delivery to customers. I hope it will reassure you to know that, at the present time, there are still no plans to close the Beeches Road premises.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215619]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Blackpool, South will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 24 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in the north-west are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Blackpool, South who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Operational year	*Blackpool, South DLA/AA recipients*
2001	10,600
2002	10,400
2003	11,100
2004	11,600

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.
Source:
DWP Information Centre.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; though in Blackpool, South, the proportion in employment has reduced by 4.7 points since 1997 to 69.7 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with 2,260 in Blackpool, South alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in

receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,600 families in Blackpool, South.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the State Second Pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 6,710 pensioners in Blackpool, South are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £43.14 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their Basic State Pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 20,700 pensioners in Blackpool, South have benefited from this increase.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Folkestone and Hythe constituency, the effects on Folkestone and Hythe of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215985]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Folkestone and Hythe will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 18 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in the South East are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Folkestone and Hythe who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Operational year	*Folkestone and Hythe DLA/AA recipients*
2001	6,000
2002	6,400
2003	6,300
2004	6,800

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.
Source:
DWP Information Centre.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; though in Folkestone and Hythe, the proportion in employment has reduced by 8 points since 1997 to 71.4 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with 1,880 in Folkestone and Hythe alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,000 families in Folkestone and Hythe.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the State Second Pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 5,005 pensioners in Folkestone and Hythe are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £39.47 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their Basic State Pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively.Some 21,800 pensioners in Folkestone and Hythe have benefited from this increase.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, the effects on Huddersfield of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216872]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government has significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Huddersfield will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 25 per cent. of adults and 4 per cent. of children in the Yorkshire and Humber region are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Huddersfield who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA) is in the following table.

Huddersfield

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	6,900
2002	7,000
2003	6,900
2004	7,400

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Huddersfield, the proportion in employment has risen to 70.3 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with 2,970 in Huddersfield alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,400 families in Huddersfield.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 4,750 pensioners in Huddersfield are receiving pension credit, with an average award of 40.58 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive

the one-off 70 plus payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80 plus annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 15,000 pensioners in Huddersfield have benefited from this increase.

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to Rochdale constituency, the effects of his Department's actions and policies since 1997 on Rochdale. [217379]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Rochdale will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to national level which shows that 24 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in the North West are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Rochdale who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Rochdale

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	6,900
2002	7,400
2003	7,700
2004	7,900

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; there are 40,000 people in work in Rochdale.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with over 2,900 in Rochdale alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 3,600 families in Rochdale.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 5,485 pensioners in Rochdale are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £44.24 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 14,500 pensioners in Rochdale have benefited from this increase.

Direct Benefit and Pension Payments

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Bridgwater constituency have been converted to direct payment of pensions and benefits. [217353]

Mr. Pond: In April 2003, when the conversion to direct payment began, 15,905 benefit accounts in Bridgewater were paid into a bank account. By

December 2004 (the latest date for which figures are available) the figure had increased to 31,595 benefit accounts.

DLA and Winter Fuel Payments

Angela Eagle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each ward of Wallasey constituency claim *(a)* disability living allowance and *(b)* winter fuel payments. [217116]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in each ward of Wallasey constituency in receipt of disability living allowance and winter fuel payments is in the table.

Ward	*Disability living allowance recipients*	*Winter fuel payment recipients*
Moreton	995	2,850
Leasowe	1,245	2,600
Wallasey	720	3,615
New Brighton	1,070	3,810
Liscard	1,185	2,940
Seacombe	1,440	2,440

Notes:
1. All wards based on census wards—those current as at April 2003.
2. DLA figures are taken at August 2004, the latest currently available at ward level, and include all DLA claimants including children, working age and pensioners claiming DLA.
3. WFP data are the latest currently available, winter 2003-04.
4. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of 5.

Source:
IAD Information Centre

Employment Advisers

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether patients' referral to employment advisers based in general practitioners' surgeries will be made on a voluntary basis. [217339]

Jane Kennedy: GPs have a key role to play in ensuring that their advice supports the recovery and rehabilitation of patients and, where appropriate, encourages a return to work or work-related activity. We are currently exploring options for the pilot and we will bring forward our proposals in due course.

Employment Rehabilitation

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what standardised data he collates on the performance of UK agencies in securing rehabilitation into employment in comparison with that of other OECD countries. [216434]

Mr. Pond: We provide data for the OECD on active labour market policies for the disabled. A time series for the UK excluding Northern Ireland is shown in the table:

Spending on programmes for disabled people

	Nominal spending (£ million)	*Real spending (£ million 2003-04 prices)*
1982-83	85	191
1983-84	92	198
1984-85	97	198
1985-86	105	204
1986-87	122	229
1987-88	133	237
1988-89	147	245
1989-90	136	211
1990-91	132	190
1991-92	143	194
1992-93	160	211
1993-94	159	204
1994-95	174	220
1995-96	183	225
1996-97	175	208
1997-98	183	212
1998-99	188	211
1999-00	215	237
2000-01	222	242
2001-02	222	236
2002-03	268	275
2003-04	298	298

Source:
DWP figures.

This is then presented as internationally comparable data, for example in Table H of the statistical annex in the OECD publication "Employment Outlook 2004".

Measures for the Disabled	*1999 2000*	*2000 01*	*2001 02*	*2002 03*
Expenditure (Percentage GDP)	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Participant Inflows (Percentage Labour Force)	0.18	0.18	0.17	

Source:
OECD Employment Outlook 2004

EU Committee of Senior Labour Inspectors

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee of senior labour inspectors met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214259]

Jane Kennedy: The Senior Labour Inspector Committee (SLIC) meets twice yearly, once in each EU presidency. During the Italian presidency, in the second half of 2003, the SLIC met in Rome between the 25 and 27 of October. The Irish presidency hosted the SLIC meeting in Dublin between the 19 and 21 of May 2004. The Netherlands held their SLIC meeting between the 3 and 5 of November 2004 in Maastricht. Senior operational officials from the Health and Safety Executive attended on all three occasions.

There have been three Command Papers produced on prospects for the European Union which include highlights from the Presidencies in question—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005. They are available in the Library and on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU

the (i) Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Community action programme to combat social exclusion, (ii) Advisory Committee on the free movement of workers met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if he will make a statement. [216727]

Mr. Pond: The Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Community Action Programme to combat social exclusion met in Brussels on the following dates:

	Date
Italian presidency	30 September 2003
	10 December 2003
Irish presidency	11 February 2004
	28 April 2004
Dutch presidency	28 September 2004
	7 December 2004

The Advisory Committee on the Free Movement of Workers met in Brussels on the following dates:

	Date
Italian presidency	2 July 2003
	26 November 2003
Irish presidency	12 March 2004
Dutch presidency	20 October 2004

The UK Government were represented by officials from the Department for Work and Pensions at all these meetings.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on the prospects for the European Union—Cm 6174 laid in April 2004, Cm 6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm 6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies. They are available in the Library and on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Technical Committee for the implementation of regulations concerning the free movement and employment of workers met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217259]

Mr. Pond: The Technical Committee on the Free Movement of Workers met in Brussels on the following dates:

	Date
Italian presidency	1 July 2003
	25 November 2003
Irish presidency	11 March 2004
Dutch presidency	19 October 2004

The UK Government were represented by an official from the Department for Work and Pensions at the meetings on 25 November 2003 and 19 October 2004. An official from the Home Office also attended the meeting on 19 October 2004.

The UK Government were not represented at the meetings on 1 July 2003 and 11 March 2004.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on the prospects for the European Union—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies. They are available in the Library and on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Administrative Commission on social security for migrant workers (and working parties) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217260]

Mr. Pond: The Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers (and working parties) met in Brussels on the following dates:

Italian presidency

Administrative Commission

28–29 October 2003: Officials from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Department of Health and Inland Revenue attended.

16–17 December 2003: Officials from DWP, the Department of Health and Inland Revenue attended.

Administrative Commission Working Party

15 September 2003: Two officials from DWP attended.

10 October 2003: An official from the Department of Health attended.

20 November 2003: Two officials from Inland Revenue attended.

Irish presidency

Administrative Commission

23–24 March 2004: Officials from DWP and the Department of Health attended.

16 June 2004: Officials from DWP, the Department of Health and Inland Revenue attended.

Administrative Commission Working Party

12 February 2004: An official from the Department of Health attended.

Dutch presidency

Administrative Commission

13–14 October 2004: Officials from DWP, the Department of Health, Inland Revenue and HM Treasury attended.

15–16 December 2004: Officials from DWP, the Department of Health, and HM Treasury attended.

Administrative Commission Working Party

21 October 2004: Officials from DWP, the Department of Health and Inland Revenue attended.

30 November 2004: An official from the Department of Health attended.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on the prospects for the European Union—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies. They are available in the Library and on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the

EU the Scientific Committee for occupational exposure limits to chemical agents met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214260]

Jane Kennedy: The European Commission's Scientific Committee for Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) met on six occasions in the last 18 months. During the Italian presidency the SCOEL met between 23–24 September 2003 and 10–11 December 2003. During the Irish presidency it met between 17–18 March 2004 and 16–17 June 2004. During the Dutch presidency the Committee met between 22–23 September 2004 and 15–16 December 2004. All meetings took place in the Jean Monnet Building in Luxembourg.

SCOEL members act as independent scientific experts, not as representatives of national Governments. Two SCOEL members are nominated by the Health and Safety Executive, on behalf of the UK. One of the two UK Members of SCOEL is the Head of the Health and Safety Executive's Industrial Chemicals Unit. He attended all six meetings.

There have been three Command Papers produced on prospects for the European Union which include highlights from the Presidencies in question: Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005. These are available in the Library and on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209102]

Maria Eagle: The majority of tenders received are in response to low value, low risk procurements let locally under devolved budget arrangements. The Department does not collect information centrally about these tenders and to provide a complete answer to the question would incur disproportionate cost. However, information is collected centrally on high value, high risk procurements conducted by specialist procurement teams. In 2003–04 the Department let 440 contracts and framework agreements with values over the EU threshold level (about £100,000). The total value of these over their full durations, which range between two and 18 years, is expected to be about £2,012 million. The actual value will depend upon the volume of business we place and the quality of services delivered over the period.

Five Year Strategy

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how the employment advisers pledged in the Department's Five Year Strategy will be recruited; and if they will be exempt from the Department's proposed job cuts. [217343]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Mr. David Anderson to Mr. Paul Holmes, dated 21 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how the employment advisers pledged in the Department's Five Year Strategy will be recruited: and if they will be exempt from the Department's proposed job cuts. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Whilst external recruitment may be required in some locations, many of the Personal Adviser posts, which will help Jobcentre Plus continue to deliver services to jobless customers, are already occupied by our skilled staff. In other cases, as an important element of the Department's approach to seek to avoid compulsory redundancies, vacant Adviser posts will be filled by re-trained, surplus staff from Jobcentre Plus, or from elsewhere within the Department.

It is not possible to say that any individual staff member will be exempt from the staffing reductions which will be implemented. The particular circumstances of, for example, a voluntary early release scheme could lead to a current Personal Adviser deciding to leave Jobcentre Plus to be replaced by a surplus person. However, given Jobcentre Plus will increase the proportion of our staff in active roles which support customers into work, it is likely that this group of staff will be affected less than those providing support roles which do not involve contact with the public.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library a list of the wards referred to in paragraph 30, page 29, of his Department's Five Year Strategy, broken down by constituency. [215530]

Jane Kennedy: The requested information has been placed in the Library.

Generators (Accidents)

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of accidents involving low voltage single phase generators since 1996–97 *(a)* in total and *(b)* in fair and amusement park sites; and if he will make a statement. [215703]

Jane Kennedy: Accident data collected by the Health and Safety Executive is not collected in this level of detail. It is therefore not possible to provide these estimates.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what assessment he has made of the impact that implementation of the Verification Framework has had on the processing of housing benefit by local authorities; [215130]

(2) how his Department measures the impact that the Verification Framework has had on the performance of housing benefit delivery. [215131]

Mr. Pond: We monitor processing times for new claims and change of circumstance across all local authorities, but we have not specifically assessed the impact of the Verification Framework (VF) since 2002. The assessment was inconclusive but suggested that there is an initial dip in performance followed by an improvement in some groups of local authorities.

Local authority performance is affected by a multitude of factors, but using the most recent data, the average processing times for new claims for VF and non-VF local authorities are currently 45 days and 52 days respectively. The average processing times for changes of circumstances are 13 days and 15 days respectively. In some other recent quarters, however, these differences have been smaller.

It is our conclusion that this recent data provides no evidence that VF currently has a significant effect on the performance of housing benefit delivery.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were claiming housing benefit in Blyth Valley on the latest date for which figures are available. [217189]

Mr. Pond: As at May 2004 there were 6,200 people in receipt of housing benefit in the Blyth Valley borough council area.

Notes:

1. The figure is rounded to the nearest hundred
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. The figure excludes any Extended Payment cases

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed housing benefit in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available. [217380]

Mr. Pond: As at May 2004 there were 446,900 people in receipt of housing benefit in Scotland.

Notes:

1. The figure is rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. Figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
4. The figure excludes any extended payment cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people leaving incapacity benefit in each year since 1995 had received the benefit for *(a)* less than six months, *(b)* less than 12 months, *(c)* less than two years and *(d)* more than five years. [216044]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the table.

All incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance terminations in the quarters shown, by duration of claim.

Quarter ending	All	Up to 6 months	Over 6 months up to 1 year	Over 1 up to 2 years	Over 2 up to 5 years	Over 5 years
May 1995	201,500	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
August 1995	245,200	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
November 1995	272,300	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
February 1996	266,300	127,400	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
May 1996	277,400	117,600	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
August 1996	251,500	116,800	31,200	n/a	n/a	n/a
November 1996	235,000	121,400	29,700	n/a	n/a	n/a
February 1997	244,000	118,100	30,600	n/a	n/a	n/a
May 1997	257,100	116,500	33,600	n/a	n/a	n/a
August 1997	241,800	115,700	31,000	22,600	n/a	n/a
November 1997	245,300	115,100	32,700	21,500	n/a	n/a
February 1998	230,400	105,200	32,100	21,900	n/a	n/a
May 1998	238,500	107,000	34,900	22,700	n/a	n/a
August 1998	215,900	94,200	30,800	21,600	n/a	n/a
November 1998	242,400	104,900	31,700	23,300	n/a	n/a
February 1999	193,800	95,000	24,900	17,700	n/a	n/a
May 1999	214,500	95,600	29,300	18,900	n/a	n/a
August 1999	217,400	93,400	28,000	18,600	n/a	n/a
November 1999	214,500	94,300	29,100	18,100	n/a	n/a
February 2000	213,300	93,500	27,600	18,800	n/a	n/a
May 2000	193,400	89,700	25,800	17,300	n/a	n/a
August 2000	174,900	84,600	25,500	16,300	22,500	26,000
November 2000	180,500	85,000	27,400	16,500	23,400	28,200
February 2001	183,500	80,800	27,800	17,800	22,700	34,400
May 2001	187,400	81,700	30,100	17,600	25,500	32,400
August 2001	175,300	77,500	28,600	17,300	22,000	29,800
November 2001	188,400	82,500	30,800	19,100	22,700	33,300
February 2002	176,300	74,700	27,400	17,500	22,700	33,900
May 2002	181,200	76,700	27,600	17,500	25,100	34,400
August 2002	176,600	74,200	27,200	17,300	23,500	34,400
November 2002	186,100	80,700	27,700	17,400	24,400	35,900
February 2003	170,700	72,000	26,500	15,900	21,900	34,300
May 2003	166,300	72,800	29,800	17,300	23,200	23,000
August 2003	183,400	75,200	28,000	17,100	24,600	38,500
November 2003	187,500	76,100	30,200	15,700	24,600	40,900
February 2004	173,900	70,000	28,100	15,500	22,500	37,800
May 2004	178,100	69,000	29,300	17,200	25,700	36,800
August 2004	125,300	51,600	22,000	12,700	20,000	19,100

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Information is not available on claims which commenced prior to April 1995.
3. "n/a" not available.
4. Figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance and credits-only cases.

5. These figures have been updated to include late notified terminations, including terminations for retirement pension. Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters. For illustration purposes, total terminations for August 2003 increased by 34 per cent. in the year following their initial release.
Source:
Information Directorate, 5 per cent. sample.

Angela Eagle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each ward of Wallasey constituency claim incapacity benefit. [217115]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) claimants in Wallasey, by ward

Ward name	*Number*
Moretown	890
Leasowe	1,325
Wallasey	650
New Brighton	1,195
Liscard	1,230
Seacombe	1,610

Notes:
1. All wards based on census wards—those current as at April 2003.
2. Figures include all IB, SDA and IB credits-only cases.
3. IB and SDA figures are taken at August 2004.
4. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of five to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.
Source:
IAD Information Directorate, Department for Work and Pensions.

Income Support

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many families with children have been in receipt of income support for more than one year. [217358]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Families with children/dependents who have been in receipt of income support for more than one year in Great Britain

	Number of families
Families with children	843,000
Families with dependants	880,600

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and quoted in thousands.
2. The figure for families with dependants includes families with children.
3. Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
4. Children are defined as aged 0–15 years.
5. Dependants are defined as aged 0–19 years.
Source:
DWP information centre, 5 per cent. samples.

Lie Detectors

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 59W on lie detectors, what plans he has to make a formal assessment of the value of voice stress analysis technology with particular reference to benefit delivery. [216042]

Mr. Pond: We have no plans to make a formal assessment of the value of voice stress analysis technology in respect of benefit delivery.

MIG

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many pensioners in the Bridgwater constituency were in receipt of the minimum income guarantee in September 2004; [217352]

(2) how many pensioners in the Bridgwater constituency are *(a)* eligible for pension credit and *(b)* in receipt of pension credit. [217398]

Malcolm Wicks: The minimum income guarantee was replaced by pension credit in October 2003. Information on the number of pension credit recipients in Bridgewater in September and December 2004 is given in the following table. Information on the number of people likely to be eligible for pension credit is not available at constituency level. However, we estimate that approximately 350,000 households in the south-west region, corresponding to approximately 450,000 individuals (rounded to the nearest 50,000), are likely to be eligible for pension credit in 2004–05. This is an indicative estimate, subject to a significant margin of error. At the end of December 2004, 219,810 pensioner households in the south-west region, comprising approximately 268,430 individuals, were in receipt of pension credit.

Pension credit recipients in Bridgewater

	Households	*Individuals*
30 September 2004	4,615	5,740
31 December 2004	4,680	5,810

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Individual recipients comprise claimants and partners and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
3. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS directory.
4. The figures for December 2004 are the latest available.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 100 per cent. sample.

New Deal

Andy Burnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many women in Leigh constituency have participated in *(a)* the new deal for lone parents and *(b)* the new deal for partners since 1997; how many lone parents have gained work through the new deal programme; and if he will make a statement. [214584]

Jane Kennedy: 1,180 women have started new deal for lone parents in the Leigh constituency since the beginning of the programme in October 1998. Information on the number of women who have started the new deal for partners is not available at constituency level.

Information on the number of lone parents who have gained work through the new deal for lone parents programme nationally and in the Leigh constituency is in the table.

Number of lone parents gaining a job through the new deal for lone parents

	Leigh constituency
Male	40
Female	700
Total	740

Notes:
1. Information on the number of people who have participated in the new deal for partners is not available at constituency level.
2. Figures for lone parents who have gained work through other new deal programmes are not available.
3. Totals include those for whom gender is not recorded. For this reason, and because of rounding, components will not necessarily sum to totals.
4. Data is to September 2004.
Source:
New Deal Evaluation Data Base

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of people who have entered the new deal for lone parents have started jobs since the programme was launched; and how many and what percentage of those who have *(a)* entered the programme and *(b)* started jobs were in receipt of income support (i) in the UK and (ii) broken down by constituency. [215500]

Jane Kennedy: The available information for Great Britain broken down by constituencies has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobs have been created in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley by the new deal. [216305]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal is not a job creation scheme. It is designed to help unemployed and disadvantaged people into work or training. It has already been successful in helping more than 1.2 million people into employment, including 28,520 people in Lancashire and 1,580 people in the Chorley constituency.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* lone parents and *(b)* young people have gained work through the new deal programme. [216884]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is in the following table.

Lone parents and young people helped into work through new deal

	Individuals into work
Lone parents	296,410
Young people	580,760

Notes:
1. Lone parent data relates to the number of lone parents who have gained a job through the new deal for lone parents programme. Information on the number of lone parents who have gained a job through the other new deal programmes is not available.
2. Young people data relates to the number of people who have gained a job through the new deal for young people programme and people aged 24 and under gaining a job through the new deal for lone parents, new deal for disabled people and new deal for partners programmes.
3. Information on new deal for young people is from January 1998 to September 2004; Information on new deal for lone parents is from October 1998 to September 2004; Information on new deal for disabled people is from July 2001 to September 2004.
4. Information on new deal for partners is from April 2002 to March 2004. new deal for partners information is not available from May 1999 to March 2002 as information broken down by age is not available for this period.
5. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
DWP Information Directorate

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much each organisation contracted to deliver the new deal for disabled people receives in respect of each person they support into work. [217342]

Jane Kennedy: The funding structure of the new deal for disabled people provides the organisations who deliver it, the job brokers, with an initial payment, usually of £304 for each person who registers with them. Further payments are then made for each entry into a job and for each job that is sustained for at least 13 weeks. There is no standard rate for these latter payments. They vary from broker to broker and are consequently commercial in confidence.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobs have been created in Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East under the new deal. [215887]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal is not a job creation scheme. It is designed to help unemployed and disadvantaged people into work or training. It has already been successful in helping more than 1.2 million people into employment, including 2,890 in the Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants, in the Department in each year since 1997. [213809]

Maria Eagle: DWP was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service (ES). Information for the period prior to June 2001 refers only to the former DSS.

DWP currently occupies approximately 1,800 buildings, of which there are only nine where the cost of car parking can be readily identified. For all other buildings car parking costs are not recorded separately from other occupancy costs.

The available information is in the following table.

	Cost (£)
1998–99	163,900
1999–2000	61,400
2000–01	58,700
2001–02	61,100
2002–03	167,000
2003–04	243,000

Notes:
1. The information is not available for 1997.
2. The increase in costs in 2002–03 and 2003–04 is due to the inclusion of expenditure on car park rental by HSE. This parking is in addition to the parking provided at any DWP site.

The Department does not incur any costs relating to parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants.

Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Payments

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are in receipt of pension credit; and what the average value is of awards. [216772]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit at national level and in each Government Office Region and constituency at 31 December 2004, with the average award, is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Angela Eagle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each ward of Wallasey constituency claim pension credit. [217314]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the following table.

Pension credit recipients, Wallasey

Ward	*Pension credit recipients (households), December 2004*
Leasowe	960
Liscard	935
Moreton	730
New Brighton	1,020
Seacombe	1,050
Wallasey	615

Notes:
1. All wards are based on census wards, current as at April 2003.
2. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of five, to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 100 per cent. sample.

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Rochdale constituency have received pension credit in each year since it started. [217378]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the table. Further information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit and average awards at 31 December 2004 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report, which was published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Pension credit recipients, Rochdale, 2003–04

Date	*Households*	*Individuals*
December 2003	4,510	5,465
December 2004	5,485	6,710

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Figures relate to the end of the month.
3. Individuals comprise claimants and partners and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
4. Pension credit replaced minimum income guarantee from 6 October 2003.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS directory.
6. The figures for December 2004 are the latest available.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 100 per cent. sample

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in each ward in Blyth Valley were receiving *(a)* pension credit and *(b)* winter fuel payments on the latest date for which figures are available. [217152]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is given in the table.

Pension credit and winter fuel recipients, Blyth Valley

Ward	*Pension credit recipients (households), 31 December 2004*	*Winter fuel payments, winter 2003–04*
Cowpen	435	945
Cramlington East	390	1,110
Cramlington Eastfield with East Hartford	70	285
Cramlington North	35	380
Cramlington Parkside	60	365
Cramlington South East	160	925
Cramlington Village	255	1,125
Cramlington West	185	540
Croft	360	895
Hartley	275	1,290
Holywell	230	750
Isabella	255	725
Kitty Brewster	215	720
Newsham and New Delaval	195	740
Plessey	405	1,265
Seaton Delaval	285	1,020
Seghill	175	640
South Beach	60	510
South Newsham	35	455
Wensleydale	245	805

Notes:
1. All wards are based on census wards, current as at April 2003.
2. Winter fuel payment data for winter 2003–04 is the latest available. No figures are currently available for 2004–05.
3. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of five, to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library, from successful applications to the Pension Service Partnership Fund for *(a)* one year contracts and *(b)* two year contracts, anonymised information on how each applicant would (i) measure the progress and (ii) evaluate the success of their initiative; what each applicant listed as its expected outcome; and how many of the successful applications made reference to the number of people the proposed initiative aimed to target. [216759]

Malcolm Wicks: All one year and two year contracts awarded by the Pension Service Partnership Fund require successful applicants to provide monthly statistical returns to the DWP on the progress of their activity for the purpose of informing both the evaluation of the individual schemes and the fund as a whole.

We anticipate that increased benefit take-up will be an end result of activity resourced through the fund and all successful applicants provided information on the potential numbers of benefit applications they expected to generate through their activities.

The variation in the scale of the contracts awarded through the fund is significant with national and countywide schemes expecting to contact in excess of 50,000 individuals, and the smallest scale neighbourhood schemes intending to reach around 150–200 potential benefit customers.

Information on the expected outcomes of each successful applicant and their specific proposals for measuring progress and evaluating success is only available by individual scrutiny of their application and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Sir John Butterfill: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will restore the indexing of pensions to British subjects living in overseas countries where uprating no longer takes place; and if he will make a statement. [217031]

Malcolm Wicks: We have always uprated State Pensions for British citizens living overseas where there is a legal requirement or a reciprocal social security agreement to do so.

However, the uprating of State Pensions outside this arrangement is the subject of an appeal to the House of Lords from a decision of the Court of Appeal which found in favour of the Government. We will respond accordingly at the hearing which is set for 28 February and 1 March this year.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) when the last pension order book was issued; [217101]

(2) how many pension order books are in circulation. [217102]

Mr. Pond: The last pension order book was issued on 9 February 2005 and all order book production for the Pension Service ceased on 10 February. Information available at 2 February suggests that the total number of pension order books in circulation at that date was 1,016,908.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211563]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security, parts of the former Department for Education and Employment and the Employment Service. Information on costs for 1996–98 is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Details on spending on advertising and publicity in 2003 to 2004 are in the table:

£

2003–04 campaign	*Advertising expenditure*	*Total publicity expenditure*
Future pensioners/Informed Choice	—	2,450,000
Second State Pension	215,590	304,090
Pensioners Guide	—	952,890
Pension Credit	10,378,380	15,580,000
The Pension Service	74,000	522,000
Direct Payment	11,044,000	12,474,000
Direct Payment roadshow	—	480,000
Fraud	8,383,000	9,339,000
New Deal	5,800,000	7,500,000
Jobcentre Plus Awareness	—	557,170
Jobcentre Direct	1,593,200	1,700,330
Age Positive	66,000	882,000
DDA Awareness and Disability Rights	775,220	2,450,000
Council Tax Benefit	556,230	673,000
Winter Fuel Payments	627,000	938,000
Total	39,512,620	56,802,480

For 2004 to 2005 estimated total expenditure is in the table:

£

2004–05 campaign	Advertising expenditure	Total publicity expenditure
Future pensioners/Informed Choice	—	854,400
State Pension Deferral	200,000	300,000
Pensioners Guide	—	1,000,000
Pension Credit	4,023,810	6,500,000
The Pension Service	—	559,000
Direct Payment Information Campaign	8,808,000	9,500,000
Direct Payment roadshow	—	3,000,000
Fraud	6,450,000	7,150,000
New Deal	—	1,650,000
Jobcentre Plus employer marketing	443,000	1,300,000
Jobcentre Plus Awareness	—	275,740
Age Positive	—	600,000
DDA Awareness	1,122,000	2,000,000
Council Tax Benefit	661,640	850,000
Winter Fuel Payments	514,910	815,000
Total	22,223,360	36,354,140

Notes:
1. All costs exclude VAT.
2. All figures have been rounded.
3. Advertising costs are total media costs excluding all production costs.
4. Information campaigns costing under £250,000 and details of highly localised publicity activity by the Department's customer-facing businesses have generally not been included as a disproportionate cost would be incurred in compiling these figures.

Decisions have not yet been made on future expenditure for 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions departmental Ministers have used the Queen's flight in each of the past five years. [213449]

Maria Eagle: Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 of more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/private charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

There is no record of any Ministers from DWP or its predecessor departments using the Queen's flight in the last five years.

Social Fund

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library a copy of the guidance given to Social Fund staff covering crisis loan applications from those in receipt of tax credits. [216804]

Mr. Pond: A copy of the Social Fund Guide is available in the Library. Additional guidance for Social Fund staff contained in Social Fund Bulletin 11/04 released on 12 July 2004 has been placed in the Library.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average processing time for Social Fund *(a)* community care grants, *(b)* crisis loans and *(c)* budgeting loans has been in each year since 2002, broken down by region. [216922]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Actual average clearance times for Social Fund community care grants (CCGs), crisis loans (CLs) and budgeting loans (BLs) for the period April to December 2004

Government office region	CCGs	CLs	BLs
East of England	9.1	1.4	2.6
East Midlands	9.3	1.3	3.5
London	10.8	1.3	3.7
North East	6.1	1.2	3.2
North West	7.3	1.3	2.5
Scotland	8.4	1.3	3.2
South East	8.3	1.3	3.7
South West	9.2	1.3	3.0
Wales	6.8	1.4	2.2
West Midlands	8.8	1.2	3.1
Yorkshire and the Humber	8.6	1.3	2.9

Notes:
1. Data by GOR are not available for 2002–03 or 2003–04 due to boundary changes that occurred during this period.
2. A small area of the East Midlands GOR is currently administered for Social Fund purposes from a district within the North West GOR. Regional data are built up from district data, therefore the data for these two GORs may be slightly inaccurate.
3. The actual average clearance times for individual applications are measured in whole working days from the date the application is received until the date the decision is made.
4. When a loan offer is made, the number of whole working days from receiving the applicant's reply to the recording of that reply is added to the clearance time.
5. The minimum clearance time that can be recorded is one day.

Source:
Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System (PBMIS).

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date

for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215083]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information that is available is detailed as follows.

The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) including the former Employment Service. The ex DSS part of the DWP Estate has been occupied under the terms of the PRIME PFI contract since April 1998. The PRIME contract was expanded in December 2003 to include former Employment Service properties.

The Department pays a Facilities Unit Price (FUP) to Land Securities Trillium for such accommodation which includes costs of providing staff identity passes for the majority of DWP staff. Information on the costs of producing such passes is not separately identifiable. No central records are kept of passes that have been lost or stolen. Where records are kept they do not differentiate between cards that require replacement because they have been lost or stolen, because a name needs changing or because they have been broken.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) joined DWP in July 2002. The cost of producing identity passes for HSE staff averages out at £4.15 per pass. The number of passes lost since 1997 is 284; an annual breakdown is not available.

The Rent Service joined DWP in April 2004. The cost of producing identity passes for Rent Service staff is £4.80 per pass. 18 passes have been reported lost or stolen since April 2004.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997. [213663]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is available only since 2002.

The costs paid to consultants for the departmental staff survey was £244,000 in 2002 and £196,000 in 2003. The survey cycle for 2004 is not yet complete. These costs include the printing of survey related materials.

The use of consultants provides an economy in terms of speed of analysis and also reassurance to staff as to the confidentiality of their responses. The consultants used by DWP manage an extensive benchmarking database, allowing results to be compared to other public and private sector organisations.

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much the Department spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213840]

Maria Eagle: The information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Sure Start

Andy Burnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many mothers in Leigh constituency have received the Sure Start maternity grant. [214586]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested; the available information is in the table.

Sure Start maternity grant (SSMG) awards for Wigan and Leigh Social Fund District/Wigan Jobcentre plus district

	Awards
2000–01	1,055
2001–02	1,209
2002–03	1,405
2003–04	1,385
2004–05 to January	1,168

Notes:
1. SSMGs were introduced on 27 March 2000.
2. Data is not available by parliamentary constituency, but only by district.
3. Leigh parliamentary constituency is part of Wigan Jobcentre plus district, which was previously called Wigan and Leigh social fund district.
4. Data is given for all awards, irrespective of whether the award was made to the mother or her partner.

Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Telephone Claims Lines

Anne Picking: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures the Government are taking to ensure that telephone claims lines are adequate to cope timeously with crisis loan applications; and if he will make a statement. [211089]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mrs. Anne Picking, dated 21 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the measures the Government is taking to ensure that telephone claims lines are adequate to cope timeously with crisis loan applications. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Legislation was changed in 2002 to allow crisis loan applications to be taken by telephone. Since then, a varying level of service has been offered in different parts of the country, due to factors such as the telephony equipment available in different areas. While the telephone service has generally proved popular and efficient, in the few areas where there have been problems dealing with the high volume of calls, urgent local management action has been taken to improve the service for customers. Irrespective of the level or adequacy of the telephone service, customers retain a right to apply for a loan in person at a Jobcentre Plus office.

For the future, we plan to reduce the number of offices processing Social Fund applications from 142 to around 20, and to implement a standard operating model for the Fund. We are piloting the new model in two Welsh district offices and aim to roll it out nationally from April 2005 onwards. The model includes a standard telephone service for crisis loans, supported by the

appropriate telephone technology. The increased size of the processing units will give much greater staffing flexibility and allow us to assign staff as necessary to meet fluctuating customer demand. Although the telephone will become the normal and preferred method of taking crisis loan applications, we will retain the option of face to face interviews for people who require them.

I hope this is helpful,

Winter Fuel Payments

Andy Burnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many senior citizens in Leigh constituency have received the winter fuel allowance since 1997. [214583]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of senior citizens who have received a winter fuel payment in Leigh in each year for which figures are available is in the Library.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Morecambe and Lunesdale have received each level of the winter fuel allowance in 2004–05. [216771]

Malcolm Wicks: Information is not yet available for winter 2004–05. Information on the number of payments made at each level in Morecombe and Lunesdale for winter 2003–04 is in the Library. We would expect the numbers to be similar for this winter.

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Rochdale constituency received the winter fuel allowance in 2004–05; and what total amount of payments this represented. [217377]

Malcolm Wicks: Information is not yet available for winter 2004–05. Information about the number of payments at each rate to people in the Rochdale constituency for winter 2003–04 is in the Library. We would expect the number to be similar for this winter.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the winter fuel payment is treated as a recurring item of pension income expenditure in his Department's budget. [211992]

Malcolm Wicks: Expenditure on the winter fuel payment is included in each year of the DWP's benefit expenditure forecasts. The latest medium-term forecast was published following the pre-Budget report, and continues to 2007–08. Long-term spending projections also include the winter fuel payment.

Benefit expenditure forecast information is published on the internet at: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate his Department has made of the cost of overpayment of the winter fuel payment in each of the last three years; [216544]

(2) if he will make it his policy to recover overpayments of the winter fuel payment. [216583]

Malcolm Wicks: It is departmental policy to recover all overpayments that arise from misrepresentation or fraud. If a customer receives an excess amount because of official error they may in some circumstances be invited to repay it. Information about the total cost of overpayments of the winter fuel payment is not collected centrally.

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* people and *(b)* households in (i) Leicester, South and (ii) the City of Leicester were (A) eligible to receive and (B) received winter fuel payments in each year since 1997. [216942]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to provide an estimate of the number of people or households that were eligible for a winter fuel payment. Information on the number of winter fuel payments made in Leicester, South and City of Leicester in each year for which figures are available is in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Crime

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1526–27W, on alcohol-related crimes, what the level of alcohol-related crime was; and how many fixed penalties were issued in each of the 92 participating basic command units. [209252]

Ms Blears: Data on whether alcohol was involved in the commission of an offence is not collected centrally. The number of fixed penalty notices issued as part of the campaign is set out in the table.

Force	*BCU*	*Total FPNs issued for alcohol related offences in summer campaign*
Avon and Somerset	Bath and North East Somerset	20
	Bristol	72
Bedfordshire	C Division—Luton	37
Cambridgeshire	Southern division	5
Cheshire	Macclesfield	19
City of London	Bishopsgate	0
	Snow Hill	0
Cleveland	Middlesbrough	29
Cumbria	Barrow and South Lakeland	99
	North	41
	North Cumbria	1
	West Cumbria	4
	Southern Division	0
Derbyshire	A Division	18
	B Division	4
	Chesterfield	30
	Derby division	37
Devon and Cornwall	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	24
	Plymouth	29
	Plymouth East	0
Dorset	Bournemouth	25
Durham	Durham City	35
	South	32
Dyfed Powys	Powys division	41
Essex	Southend	42
Gloucestershire	Cheltenham and Tewkesbury	16
	Cotswolds and Stroud	25
	Forest and Gloucester	26
Greater Manchester Police	Bolton	32
	North Manchester	16
	Wigan	53
	North Manchester	28

Force	BCU	Total FPNs issued for alcohol related offences in summer campaign
	Rochdale	60
Guildford	Surrey	1
Hampshire	Basingstoke	28
	NE Hants	5
	Portsmouth	31
	Solent East	41
	Southampton	66
Hertfordshire	Western Area	17
Humberside	A Division	34
	B Division	19
	C Division	96
	Grimsby Cleethorpes	15
	Hull	125
Humberside	B Division	12
Kent	Area 7 Thanet	2
	SE Kent	13
Lancashire	Blackpool	167
	Pennine Division (Burnley)	110
	Preston	89
	Western	39
Leicestershire	Central Area	116
	East	19
Merseyside	Knowsley	5
	Sefton	38
	Wirral	74
Metropolitan	Barnet	94
	Camden	131
	Havering	43
	Hillingdon	80
	Islington	114
	Kingston	44
	Lewisham	29
	Newham	0
	Twickenham	42
	Westminster	147
	Richmond-upon-Thames	3
North Wales	Western	16
	Central	2
	Eastern	2
	Wrexham	47
North Yorkshire	Eastern	50
Northamptonshire	Northampton	17
	Northern	52
Nottinghamshire	A Division	41
	Bassetlaw Newark and Sherwood	30
	C Division	37
	D Division	2
	Nottingham City	25
	South Notts	3
South Wales	Bridgend	18
	Cardiff	1
	Swansea	38
South Yorkshire	Sheffield central	19
Staffordshire	Cannock Chase	1 23
	North Staffordshire	30
	Stafford	3
	Stoke on Trent	59
	Trent Valley	39
Suffolk	Southern Area (Ipswich)	30
Surrey	Guildford	12
Sussex	Brighton and Hove	64
Thames Valley police	Maidenhead	3
Warwickshire	South	61
West Mercia	E Division Hereford	27
West midlands	Dudley North	23
	F1 Birmingham City Centre	54
	M1 OCU Coventry	67
West Yorkshire	Bradford south	90
	Calderdale	99
	Leeds	99
	Wakefield	48
	Huddersfield	47
Total		4,068

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in each district in Lancashire since they were introduced, broken down by age group and sex. [215327]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the following table.

Number of ASBOs issued in Lancashire, as notified to the Home Office by all courts, where restriction are imposed within local authorities within the county of Lancashire by sex and age group of recipient from 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2004

County/local authority area	Total persons	Male			Female		
		Aged 10 to 17	Aged 18 and over	All ages	Aged 10 to 17	Aged 18 and over	All ages
Lancashire	109	57	42	99	5	5	10
Blackburn with Darwen BC	8	4	2	6	0	2	2
Blackpool BC	13	10	1	11	2	0	2
Burnley BC	26	10	13	23	2	1	3
Chorley BC	5	3	2	5	0	0	0
Fylde BC	3	2	1	3	0	0	0
Hyndburn BC	10	2	7	9	0	1	1
Lancaster CC	3	2	1	3	0	0	0
Pendle BC	5	5	0	5	0	0	0
Preston BC	10	5	5	10	0	0	0
Ribble Valley BC	3	2	1	3	0	0	0
Rossendale BC	10	9	1	10	0	0	0
South Ribble BC	4	0	4	4	0	0	0
West Lancashire DC	6	3	2	5	1	0	1
Wyre BC	3	0	2	2	0	1	1

Note:

ASBOs were introduced under The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 , however data from 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 are not available as they were collected on aggregate numbers only at police force area level. The number of ASBOs issued during the period within Lancashire police force area was five.

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* criminal antisocial behaviour orders and *(b)* antisocial behaviour orders have been secured by courts since the introduction of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 in (i) Birmingham, (ii) Bristol, (iiii) Leeds, (iv) Liverpool, (v) Manchester, (vi) Newcastle, (vii) Nottingham and (viii) Sheffield.[214015]

Ms Blears: The Anti-social Behaviour Act received royal assent in November 2003. antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) were introduced under The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and have been available since April 1999. ASBOs following conviction were introduced under The Police Reform Act 2002 and have been available since December 2002.

Available information, including the availability of ASBOs since the introduction of the Anti-social Behaviour Act, is given in the table.

Number of ASBOs issued, as notified to the Home Office, from 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2004 (latest available) by type of ASBO and local authority area where restrictions have been imposed

	Local authority where restrictions have been imposed							
	Birmingham	*Bristol*	*Leeds*	*Liverpool*	*Manchester*	*Newcastle-Upon-Tyne*	*Nottingham*	*Sheffield*
ASBOs issued on application								
2000	3	2	2	1	0	0	3	0
June[1]	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
July to September	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	0
October to December	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
2001	13	9	8	4	13	4	8	4
January to March	2	2	4	1	2	0	0	0
April to June	8	5	0	2	1	0	8	0
July to September	2	1	4	0	4	0	0	3
October to December	1	1	0	1	6	4	0	1
2002	10	5	5	17	41	4	1	9
January to March	0	0	1	3	4	2	0	0
April to June	5	2	3	6	8	1	0	0
July to September	1	2	0	2	16	0	1	4
October to December	4	1	1	6	13	1	0	5
2003	6	2	51	21	69	2	2	5
January to March	0	0	9	3	6	1	0	0
April to June[2]	6	0	8	2	15	1	0	0
July to September	0	2	14	10	22	0	2	5
October to December	0	0	20	6	26	0	0	0
2004	2	3	77	9	61	1	0	6
January to March[3]	1	3	50	6	32	1	0	2
April to June	1	0	27	3	29	0	0	4
ASBOs issued following conviction								
2002	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
October to December[4]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2003	19	7	3	3	7	2	6	2
January to March	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
April to June	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
July to September	6	5	1	0	2	0	2	0
October to December	8	1	1	3	3	1	4	1
2004	20	10	11	13	11	1	16	3
January to March	10	1	4	7	8	1	8	0
April to June	10	9	7	6	3	0	8	3
All ASBO issued								
Total	73	38	157	68	202	14	36	29

[1] Introduced under The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ASBOs were made available to the magistrates courts, acting in their civil capacity, on application, from 1 April 1999. However data from 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 are not available as they were collected on aggregate numbers only at police force area level.

[2] The Police Reform Act 2002 authorised application to the county courts, as from 1 April 2003, where there are existing proceedings, for an ASBO to be issued.

[3] As from 31 March 2004 the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 added housing action trusts (HATS) and English county councils to the list of relevant authorities who can apply for an ASBO or an order in county court proceedings.

[4] As from 2 December 2002 The Police Reform Act 2002 gave authority to the magistrates courts acting in their criminal capacity, and the Crown Court to issue ASBOs following conviction.

Anti-terrorism Measures

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to institute anti-terrorism measures in inner-city schools, with particular reference to *(a)* the replacement of glass in windows with laminated glass, *(b)* the installation of anti-bomb litter bins and *(c)* increased patrol security. [215348]

Derek Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

My Department has issued guidelines for schools on the use of laminated glass or safety film to maintain the integrity of windows, and on the use of security patrols. We have also issued guidance on school security overall, and the Security Service has issued advice on protective security for organisations. The Government is always looking at ways of protecting people and works hard to strengthen our defences against terrorist attacks by having proportionate protective and preventative security in place. In schools, employers are responsible for security measures as part of their responsibility in law for health and safety at work.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his oral statement of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1181–98, on the Five Year Asylum Strategy, what abuses he has identified in relation to the operation of family visit appeals. [215827]

Mr. Browne: 'Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain' is the product of a review of the whole immigration and asylum system, including appeal rights and the appeals system. The strategy sets out proposals to remove appeal rights for student and employment routes into the United Kingdom, but states that we will retain the right of appeal for family visitors because we recognise the importance of family life. We are, however, confronted with rising numbers of family visit applications and appeals. We recognise that family visit appeals need to be considered quickly, if they are to be of value to appellants. We also have a duty to ensure that the asylum and immigration appeals system as a whole is able to function effectively. We have decided, in order to make the best use of available resources, and to provide a fair and efficient appeals process for appellants, that family visit appeals should be dealt with on the papers only and to limit the right of appeal to close family members.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated public cost of supporting asylum seekers in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Northern Ireland has been in each year since 1996–97. [216230]

Mr. Browne: The answer is not available in the precise format requested. It is only possible to provide information on the direct costs (financial support and accommodation) for the whole of the United Kingdom.

Costs of providing support to asylum seekers

Financial year	*£ million*[1]
1996–97	413
1997–98	375
1998–99	475
1999–2000	589
2000–01	747
2001–02	1,046
2002–03	1,070
2003–04	1,007

[1] All figures rounded to nearest million.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his oral statement on 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1190, what his estimate of the number of asylum seekers resident in Kent is. [216248]

Mr. Browne: Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives.

At the end of September 2004 there were 265[1] asylum seekers in Kent[2] recorded as in receipt of National Asylum Support Service (NASS) support.

Corresponding figures for those not in receipt of NASS support are not available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Numbers of asylum seekers receiving MASS accommodation support and numbers receiving NASS subsistence only support, are published on a quarterly and annual basis. The next publication, providing information relating to the end of the fourth quarter of 2004 (October to December), will be published shortly.

[1] This figure is rounded to the nearest five and covers both those receiving NASS accommodation support and those receiving NASS subsistence only support

[2] Kent is defined as the 12 local authorities (Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, Shepway, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells) and one Unitary Authority (Medway).

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to be able to authorise outstanding monies due from his Department to Kent county council in respect of payments for costs arising for provision for asylum seekers. [216249]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate does not readily agree with the claim by Kent county council that any additional payments are outstanding. Officials from the Immigration and Nationality Directorate are working with officials from Kent county council to reconcile the claim that money remains owing. If it is found that money is owing, consideration will be given to payment.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people arrived in Britain seeking asylum in 2004. [216316]

Mr. Browne: The available information relates to when asylum applications were made, rather than when applicants arrived in the UK.

25,465 principal applicants (30,180 including dependants) sought asylum between January and September 2004 in the United Kingdom. Applications have fallen by two thirds from their peak level in 2002.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication, covering the last quarter of 2004 (October to December), and including provisional 2004 totals, will be published shortly.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to return unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to their countries of origin; and what consultation will be carried out on those plans. [216515]

Mr. Browne: We have been developing a returns programme for some time for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASCs) who are under 18 years of age and whose asylum or Humanitarian Protection claims have been refused.

Only those UASCs for whom an appropriate package of reception care and support has been put in place, or whose families have been traced, will be returned. The programme will be piloted in Albania. We set out our intentions in this area in "Controlling our borders: Making Migration Work For Britain, Five year strategy for asylum and immigration" (Cm 6472, February 2005, paragraph 76).

Other Government Departments, non-governmental organisations and local authorities have been closely consulted throughout the development of the programme. We have also engaged formally with the Albanian Government both in Albania and the UK.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government are planning to return unaccompanied asylum seeker children to their countries of origin. [217173]

Mr. Browne: We have been developing a returns programme for some time for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASCs) who are under 18 years of age and whose asylum or Humanitarian Protection claims have been refused.

Only those UASCs for whom an appropriate package of reception care and support has been put in place, or whose families have been traced, will be returned. The programme will be piloted in Albania. We set out our intentions in this area in "Controlling our borders: Making Migration Work For Britain, Five year strategy for asylum and immigration" (Cm 6472, February 2005, paragraph 76).

Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* civilian personnel were assigned to each basic command unit of the Avon and Somerset constabulary in each year since 1997. [214651]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* Police officer strength by basic command unit was not collected centrally prior to 31 March 2002 and police staff prior to 31 March 2003.

The available information for Avon and Somerset constabulary is given in the table.

	Police officers			*Police staff*	
	2002[1]	*2003*[1]	*2004*[1]	*2003*[1]	*2004*[1]
Bath and North East Somerset	228	224	224	43	56
Central Bristol	367	378	385	51	71
North Bristol	263	255	270	42	49
North Somerset	203	213	227	49	61
Somerset East	255	257	266	66	89
Somerset West	295	295	308	65	99
South Bristol	251	251	258	46	52
South Gloucestershire	265	263	267	55	61

[1] As at 31 March.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the full-time equivalent head count for Avon and Somerset constabulary was in each of the last eight years. [214652]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* Information on police service strength is published annually in a Home Office statistical bulletin and half-yearly in an online report. The latest figures were published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 13/04, "Police Service Strength England and Wales, 31 March 2004".

Full-time equivalent strength for Avon and Somerset constabulary is given in the following table.

	Police officers	*Police staff*	*Community support officers*	*Traffic wardens*	*Total strength*
31 March 1997	2,989	1,439	—	108	4,536
31 March 1998	2,976	1,393	—	114	4,483
31 March 1999	2,999	1,425	—	115	4,539
31 March 2000	2,934	1,436	—	59	4,429
31 March 2001	2,994	1,452	—	48	4,494
31 March 2002	3,096	1,611	—	44	4,751
31 March 2003[1]	3,149	1,767	—	43	4,959
31 March 2004[1]	3,401	1,952	45	34	5,432

[1] Comparable strength with previous years. Excludes staff on career breaks and maternity/paternity leave.

Bail

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have broken their bail conditions in each year since 1997; and what offences they had committed. [210017]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible from data collected via the Home Office Court Proceedings database to identify the number of people who have skipped bail nor the offences they had committed.

However, statistics of persons proceeded against at magistrates' courts and convicted at all courts for the offence 'absconding by person released on bail' is as follows:

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts and found guilty at all courts for offences under S.6 Bail Act 1976, England and Wales 1997 to 2003[1]

	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*
1997	44,245	26,068
1998	45,495	26,669
1999	45,203	26,750
2000	41,847	24,271
2001	45,047	24,559
2002	52,187	27,704
2003	57,562	30,025

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Statistics for 2004 will be available in the autumn.

CCTV

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grant schemes are available for CCTV in *(a)* villages in Lancashire and *(b)* railway stations at (i) Coppall, (ii) Acklington, (iii) Astley Village, (iv) Clayton and (v) Euxton. [215328]

Ms Blears: All Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) within Lancashire receive the following grants, which could potentially be used to purchase and install CCTV cameras within each district:

The Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) (including funding for an anti-social behaviour co-ordinator); and

The Basic Command Unit (BCD) Fund.

It is for the CDRP in each area to decide, as a partnership, what the priorities for that area are and what interventions will be used to tackle them.

All of the railway stations identified are within Chorley and, so, the Building Safer Communities and Basic Command Unit Funds are all potential funding streams.

Child Curfew Orders

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Child Curfew Orders have been made under the scheme introduced by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. [214932]

Paul Goggins: No applications have been received to establish a local child curfew scheme under section 14 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The powers in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 for the dispersal of groups and the removal of persons under 16 to their place of residence have been used in preference to this power.

Community Sentences

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to increase public confidence in community sentences as an alternative to prison. [216754]

Paul Goggins: The Government believe that prison should be reserved for serious, violent and seriously persistent offenders. For all other offenders, alternatives to prison can often be more effective in addressing offender behaviour than short custodial sentences. The new generic community sentence, provided by the Criminal Justice Act 2003, will be commenced on 4 April 2005. This will give the courts a flexible range of tough community punishments suitable for dealing with a wide range of offenders whose offence is too serious for them to be fined but who do not fall into the serious, violent or seriously persistent category.

The Government recognise that there is a lack of public knowledge and understanding of community sentences.

That is why the National Offender Management Service has launched a major communications campaign which aims to demonstrate that community sentences are both tough and demanding whilst providing the opportunity for offenders to give something back directly to the community. It will target national, regional and local media to secure the broadest public audience.

There is a national visibility scheme in place to identify community work done by offenders. In the next few weeks a 'Clean Up' campaign will start in 10 regions, which will give local people the opportunity to have a say in the unpaid work to be done by offenders as part of their community punishment.

Community Support Officers (London)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the 20,000 community support officers the Government proposes to recruit by 2008 are to be posted in Greater London; and if he will make a statement. [216426]

Ms Blears: Community support officers are a key element of neighbourhood policing. We have made provision of £50 million available for the first phase of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund by enabling forces to commence recruitment of an additional 1,568 community support officers (CSOs). The Metropolitan police were allocated 250 of these CSOs. The City of London police applied for their first allocation of CSOs and received 16 in this funding round. These CSOs will help to build the total number in England and Wales to 5,500 by 31 March 2005.

Decisions about further allocations will be made in the coming months to assist forces in reaching the target of 24,000 CSOs in 2008. We are currently discussing the criteria for investment under the Neighbourhood

Policing Fund with the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Police Authorities and other stakeholders.

Contempt Laws

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to reform the laws of contempt. [215895]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

The law of contempt plays a vital role in safeguarding the administration of justice and there are no plans to reform it. The Attorney General issued guidance to the media on the publication of articles amounting to contempt in his keynote address to the Law for Journalists Conference in November 2003 (available at www.lslo.gov.uk) and in his speech to the Weber Shandwick Contempt Seminar in November 2004 (available from the Attorney General's press office).

Coroners' Inquests

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances a delay of over three years might occur between a suspicious death and a coroner's inquest. [203834]

Paul Goggins: Such a delay would be highly unusual. It may be difficult to obtain all the evidence required by the coroner, particularly if the death occurred abroad. Or the coroner may be awaiting the outcome of criminal proceedings or investigations by other bodies.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to answer the letter dated 30 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Amanat Ullah. [217045]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 2 February 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 6 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Jim Holloway. [217049]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 16 February.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of violent crime in Ribble Valley and Fulwood was in each year since 1997. [205071]

Ms Blears: The available information relates to the Ribble Valley Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area and is given in the table. Data at CDRP level is only available from 1999–2000. Since 1997, there have been two major changes to the way crime is recorded. The effect of the change in the counting rules in 1998 was to artificially increase recorded violent crime nationally by more than 80 per cent. while it is estimated that the effect of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002 caused a further 20 per cent. increase in recorded violent crime in its first year.

Table 1: Recorded offences of violent crime in the Ribble Valley Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area—1999–2000 to 2001–02

Period	*Number of violent crimes*
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	n/a
1999–2000	161
2000–01	194
2001–02	334

n/a = Not available

Note:
The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Recorded offences of violent crime in the Ribble Valley Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area—2002–03 and 2003–04

Period	*Number of violent crimes*
2002–03	330
2003–04	473

Note:
The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the recorded level of *(a)* crime and *(b)* violent crime was in Surrey in each year since 1997. [214197]

Ms Blears: The information requested is given in the tables.

Since 1997, there have been two major changes to the way crime is recorded. The effect of the change in the counting rules in 1998 was to artificially increase recorded violent crime nationally by more than 80 per cent. while it is estimated that the effect of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002 caused a further 20 per cent. increase in recorded violent crime in its first year.

Table 1: Total and violent crime recorded by the police in Surrey, 1997–98 to 2001–02

	Number of offences	
	Total crime	*Violent crime*
1997–98[1]	38,015	3,447
1998–99[2]	42,467	4,914
1999–2000	46,288	6,099
2000–01[3]	63,321	9,014
2001–02	61,970	7,908

[1] The number of crimes recorded using the coverage and rules in use until 31 March 1998.
[2] The number of crimes recorded using the expanded coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.
[3] Surrey experienced boundary changes in April 2000 which increased the size of the force area.'

Note:
The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2. Total and violent crime recorded by the police in Surrey, 2002–03 and 2003–04

	Number of offences	
	Total crime	*Violent crime*
2002–03	68,452	9,718
2003–04	73,252	10,858

Note:
The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to allow colleges and universities to have access to the Criminal Records Bureau for the vetting of potential students. [214989]

Ms Blears: All colleges and universities have access to the Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure service to enable them to apply for criminal records checks for members of staff whose duties involve looking after children and/or vulnerable adults. The service can also enable criminal records checks to be conducted against students whose studies would, through placements, bring them into contact with children and vulnerable adults; for example student nurses and those studying for teaching qualifications.

There have been no requests made by the Department for Education and Skills nor are there any plans by the Home Office to extend the checks to other students.

Departmental Establishment

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time equivalent jobs *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its executive agencies had in (i) Yorkshire and the Humber and (ii) the City of York in (A) 1997 and (B) the latest year for which figures are available. [199548]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend the former Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 25 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1053W. The following is an extract from the information placed in the House of Commons Library.

Permanent staff in Yorks and Humberside, and York from 1997 to 2004 by Department

	Full-time equivalent As at 1 April:		
Department/Location	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Home Office			
York	0	0	0
Elsewhere in Yorks and Humberside	170	160	160
Total	170	160	160
HM Prison Service			
Elsewhere in Yorks and Humberside	3,540	4,250	4,260
Total	3,540	4,250	4,260
Combined Home Office and Prison Service Agency			
Total	3,710	4,410	4,420

Deportation

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect on prison overcrowding for each category of prison of foreign nationals who, having completed their sentence, continue to be detained, awaiting deportation. [209453]

Paul Goggins: No study has been made of the effect of overcrowding on each category of prison holding foreign nationals who are detained after their sentence and awaiting deportation. The numbers however are relatively small and do not have any significant effect on prison accommodation.

European Public Bodies

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the activity of the European monitoring centre for drugs and drug addiction in the UK in the last 12 months; and if he will list its publications and newsletters published over that period. [215230]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

The European monitoring centre for drugs and drug addiction (EMCCDDA) collects, analyses and disseminates information on drugs and drug addiction based on data supplied by the United Kingdom and other member states of the European Union. Its publications aim to provide an evidence-based picture of drug misuse and addiction across Europe for a range of audiences including policy-makers, professionals and the general public.

In the past 12 months, the EMCCDDA has published:

Annual Report 2004—The state of the drugs problem in the European Union and Norway.

"Drugs in Focus", EMCDDA policy briefings (three issues).

"Drugnet Europe", EMCDDA newsletters (four issues).

"An overview of cannabis potency in Europe", EMCDDA insights 6.

"Hepatitis C and injecting Drug use: impact costs and policy option", EMCDDA monographs 7.

Report on the risk assessment of TMA-2 in the framework of the joint action on new synthetic drugs.

Report on the risk assessment 2C-I, 2C-T-2 and 2C-T-7 in the framework of the joint action on new synthetic drugs.

European Refugee Fund

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on UK participation in the European Refugee Fund. [215235]

Mr. Browne: The European Refugee Fund has been for some years an important source of support for Britain's programmes for the integration of refugees and the voluntary return of asylum seekers to their own countries. The UK will participate in the new phase of the Fund which began in January 2005. Actions carried out in the UK will be implemented on the basis of guidelines which will be issued by the Commission on the basis of two phases of Multi-annual Programmes, each lasting three years (2005–07 and 2008–10).

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the application of Article 8*(c)* of the European Refugee Fund in the United Kingdom; and what rules have been drawn up to assure balanced representation of views in such projects. [215236]

Mr. Browne: Article 8*(c)* of the Council Decision establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2005–10 (13086/84) envisages the possibility of the expenditure of such funds on multi-national awareness raising-campaigns relating to the situation of refugees, stateless persons, and people otherwise in need of protection. It will be for member states to draw up, after consultation, proposals for the expenditure of the Fund within their countries. The process of consultation will take place later this year and the Government would not propose to pre-empt it by taking a firm view at this stage on whether rules would be needed in respect of expenditure under Article 8*(c)* ".

Female Prisoners

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of women were homeless on leaving prison in the last period for which figures are available. [206287]

Paul Goggins: Recorded information on the discharges of female prisoners between April and December 2004 shows that 19 per cent. had no address on release. All prisoners who are discharged with no address to go to are referred for a Local Authority Homelessness Assessment.

Gurkhas

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1738W, on Gurkhas, what criteria were used to determine the cut-off date of 1 July 1997 for eligibility. [217387]

Mr. Browne: The date of 1 July 1997 recognises when the Brigade of Gurkhas moved their headquarters from Hong Kong to the UK. Settlement is normally granted on the basis of residence in the UK and so it was considered appropriate to enable all those discharged after this date, and who would have developed close physical ties with the UK through being based here, to be able to apply for settlement. However, applications from Gurkhas discharged before 1 July 1997 will be considered on their individual merits, and discretion will be exercised in appropriate cases. Factors such as time spent in the UK, the presence of close family members here, or a chronic medical condition will be taken into account in reaching a decision on applications that are outside the rules.

High Visibility Policing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with chief constables concerning high visibility policing. [215325]

Ms Blears: Neighbourhood policing, of which high visibility is an important element, is a key priority for Government for the next five years. We see effective and responsive policing at the neighbourhood level as essential to sustaining the trust and confidence of the public. However, unlike previous community policing initiatives, neighbourhood policing is about more than just public reassurance and high visibility—it does not stand in isolation from other levels of policing, but is essential in tackling the 21st century challenges of crime and antisocial behaviour.

We are working closely with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on a programme to embed a neighbourhood policing approach in all forces by 2008, and my officials meet regularly with the ACPO lead for neighbourhood policing—the Chief Constable of Leicester—to discuss progress. I have regular bilaterals with the president of ACPO to discuss policing priorities, and I met with Chief Constables from all 43 forces in England and Wales on 12 January to discuss progress on a range of police reform issues, including the approach to neighbourhood policing set out in the Police Reform White Paper, Building Communities, Beating Crime.

Home Detention Curfews

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offences were committed by prisoners while released on the home detention curfew scheme since January 1999; what the category of each offence was; and on how many occasions the offence committed was similar in character to that for which the prisoner had originally been sentenced. [203518]

Paul Goggins: As of 31 October 2004, 101,806 prisoners have been placed on home detention curfew since the scheme was introduced in January 1999. Up to 31 October 2004, 2,107 of those prisoners have been reported to the Home Office as having been cautioned, convicted or awaiting prosecution for an offence committed while they were subject to the scheme. This represents around 2 per cent. of the offenders placed on the scheme.

The following table gives a breakdown of these figures into offence category for the last five years up to 31 October 2004. These figures will be subject to constant change as further data is provided, such as when court proceedings on outstanding charges are completed.

	Total breakdown of all further offences from January 1999 to 31 October 2004	*Total further offences committed that are similar to the index offence*
Violence against the person	471	60
Sexual offences	10	0
Burglary	161	68
Robbery	44	8
Theft and handling	906	288
Fraud and forgery	119	14
Drug offences	313	54
Motoring offences	1,023	120
Other	701	7
Total	3,748	619

Identity Cards and Passports

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 472W, on the Identity Cards Programme, what issues were under discussion at the meetings held with *(a)* the Football Association and *(b)* Idenex; and what conclusions were reached. [214952]

Mr. Browne: The topic of discussion at the meeting between the Identity Cards Programme and TMG.TV Ltd. which was representing the Football Association was the potential use of ID Cards for those organisations who either currently or may in the future require certain employees to undertake Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. In this instance, the discussion focused around local football teams and volunteers and the potential requirement on coaches for children's football teams to undertake CRB checks and how this may work with the introduction of ID Cards. The purpose of the meeting was to inform both parties' understanding of the issues, rather than to reach any specific conclusions.

This meeting was with Identix and I apologise for the typographical error in the original answer. The meeting was part of market sounding process to inform the Programme Team's knowledge of capability and capacity in the biometrics technology sector. The company provided insight on the experience of large scale deployments of biometric technology. Following the meeting the company provided the team with further information on the international structure of relevant standards setting bodies together with various case studies and product brochures.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the UK Passport Service biometrics trial has included groups who by reason of their disabilities are unable to provide biometric data. [210158]

Mr. Browne: A sample of 750 people with disabilities was included in the United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) trial. In making these arrangements the UKPS engaged with organisations representing people with disabilities to ensure that issues relating to difficulty in providing biometric data were identified. These issues were recorded during the trial for analysis in order to seek resolutions.

Immigration

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce *(a)* a green card system and *(b)* an independent body to handle immigration requests. [215893]

Mr. Browne: The Government's proposals for a new system to manage the admission of non-EEA nationals coming to the United Kingdom for the purpose of work are set out in the five year strategy for asylum and immigration announced by my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary on 7 February 2005. Under those proposals, Tier 1 of the employment scheme would provide for the admission of the most highly skilled without an advance offer of a job. Applications for admission to work under the new system would continue to be handled by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate and UK Visas. However, it is proposed to establish an independent skills advisory body to advise on labour market and skills shortages.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* immigration officers and *(b)* senior immigration officers (i) are in post and (ii) form a full complement at the docks in (A) Hull, (B) Harwich, (C) Portsmouth, (D) Poole, (E) Plymouth and (F) Dover. [216502]

Mr. Browne: I refer the hon. Member to the information in the table.

Port	*Number of FTE[1] immigration officers in post*	*Target FTE immigration officer staffing figure*	*Number of FTE senior immigration officers[2] in post*	*Target FTE senior immigration officer staffing figure*
Humber Ports[3]	19	20	4	5
Harwich	25.8	26.8	5.8	5.8
Portsmouth	48.6	49.6	9	9
Poole	20.7	20.8	3.8	3.8
Plymouth	13.4	13.6	2	2
Calais[4]	249.3	237	37.5	51

[1] FTE = Full-time equivalent.
[2] Senior immigration officers have been defined as chief immigration officers and HM inspectors.
[3] Staff at Humber Ports are deployed to Hull port, Humberside airport and other areas including Immingham docks.
[4] Following the establishment of the juxtaposed controls in France, immigration officials operating the control for passengers arriving in Dover are based in Calais.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training members of staff in the front line services of immigration in the UK receive. [216315]

Mr. Browne: In depth training is provided to front line immigration staff, including Immigration Officers and caseworkers, specific to their role. This is supplemented by mentoring and coaching in the workplace, and by a range of broader learning activities, covering diversity, management and IT for example.

Inquests

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether inquests can be adjourned indefinitely; and if he will make a statement. [216687]

Paul Goggins: Yes, a coroner has the power, and in certain circumstances is obliged, to adjourn an inquest indefinitely. These are cases where any criminal proceedings arising out of the death are pending or envisaged and cases where a public inquiry is to be held

into the events surrounding the death. The coroner has discretion to resume the inquest on conclusion of the criminal proceedings or public inquiry. Cases involving a member of the visiting forces must also be adjourned and can only be resumed on the direction of the Secretary of State.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is a limit on the amounts of money that can be spent by coroners' offices on legal fees in opposing the re-opening of an inquest; and if he will make a statement. [216906]

Paul Goggins: The costs of such proceedings shall be met by the coroner's local authority, subject to those costs being reasonable and also that the authority agrees to indemnify the coroner in advance. The coroner may appeal to the Secretary of State against any decision made by the authority in these circumstances. There is no legal limit as to the costs of the proceedings.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he expects the *(a)* role and *(b)* function of the National Offender Management Service to be by April 2007; and what percentage of those functions will be run by the statutory services of the National Offender Management Service. [209387]

Paul Goggins: By April 2007, budget allocations for offender management on probation areas and prisons will be agreed by Regional Offender Managers (ROMs), the common offender database (NOMIS) will be on line and the Criminal Justice Act 2003, including custody plus provisions, will have been implemented. ROMs will continue to oversee and influence the work of offender managers and, with the National Offender Manager, to develop the commissioning and contestability of services for offenders.

As announced on 20 July 2004, offender managers will remain employed by Probation Boards at this stage. As the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) develops, the end state will involve changes to the role of Boards and to the management relations between ROMs and offender managers. Detailed feasibility work and consultation will be undertaken before final decisions are made.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether comments are being sought on the Vision Statement for the National Offender Management Service from stakeholders. [215999]

Paul Goggins: Yes. The Vision and Blueprint for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), dated 24 January, was circulated to trade unions via the NOMS Joint Consultative Council and to probation and prison staff on 1 February through their respective internal communications networks. The documents are a record of the agreed view of the NOMS board. Staff were invited to comment and offer views via e-mail.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any members of the National Offender Management Service Performance Board have resigned during the last three months. [216000]

Paul Goggins: During the last three months Judy McKnight (NAPO) and Colin Moses (POA) have withdrawn from the National Offender Management Board.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he will ensure that probation boards continue to maintain probation accountability to local communities under the National Offender Management Service structure. [216116]

Paul Goggins: The final structure of the National Offender Management Service is still the subject of detailed planning and consultation. Links with local communities is a key consideration. The Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill, which is currently before Parliament, does not alter the principle upon which Boards currently operate.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he received from *(a)* individuals and *(b)* organisations in favour of dividing the Probation Service into Offender Management and Interventions, during the 2004 consultation process. [216118]

Paul Goggins: Representations were published in the summary of responses to two Government consultation exercises in 2004. A copy of the document is in the Library.

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what role partnership between the probation service and the voluntary sector will have under the National Offender Management Service structure. [216369]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) offers opportunities to expand voluntary sector work with offenders and develop new areas for partnership and voluntary sector involvement. Funding has been secured from the Home Office Change Up Public Sector Programme to provide training, advice and support to help the voluntary sector respond to partnership opportunities as well as prepare for contestability. A draft strategy entitled "The role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the National Offender Management Service" was published on 31 January 2005, and has been sent to probation areas and voluntary and community groups for consultation.

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how career training and professional development of staff will be conducted under the National Offender Management Service structure. [216370]

Paul Goggins: Planning has begun on the creation of a learning and development strategy for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). Working closely with Skills for Justice (the Sector Skills Council for the justice sector) and regional probation training consortia, this strategy will identify new learning programmes and qualifications needed to support the development of NOMS.

As the offender management model is now being developed, a particular priority is to define the occupational standards and competencies needed to undertake this critical new role, and hence to develop supporting learning programmes.

The Prison Service and National Probation Service are also developing proposals for an integrated approach to leadership and management development for managers across NOMS. An early output has been the creation of an induction and development programme for the 10 Regional Offender Managers.

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the planned budget is for *(a)* the National Offender Management Service, *(b)* the National Probation Service local area boards, *(c)* the Probation Headquarters and *(d)* private sector prisons for each of the next three years. [216660]

Paul Goggins: The budget for the National Offender Management Service for 2005–06 is £4.035 billion resource and £321 million capital.

Of this, the National Probation Service budget for 2005–06 is £945 million resource and £32 million capital of which £620 million resource is the main Probation Boards grant.

Of the other 3325 million a further £173 million goes to boards and the remaining amount is centrally managed including headquarters costs and a significant amount for electronic monitoring (£79 million). The budget for Probation Headquarters will be subject to revision following the current structural review.

The provisional private sector prisons budget for 2005–06 is £231 million resource.

Budgets for 2006–07 and 2007–08 have not yet been finalised.

Pieter Minnaid

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reports his Department has received on the current whereabouts of Pieter Minnaid. [216572]

Paul Goggins: Inquiries are continuing and I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as these are complete.

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a request has been made to the Netherlands Government for the extradition of Pieter Minnaid; and what steps his Department have taken to secure his return to prison in the UK. [216573]

Paul Goggins: Inquiries are continuing and I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as these are complete.

Police

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables will attend the National Special Constables Weekend on 25–27 February, broken down by constabulary; and if he will make a statement. [215524]

Ms Blears: Special constables are volunteers. Forces in England and Wales are inviting all their special constables to make themselves available for duty over the weekend but it is not known at this stage how many will be available for deployment.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimated cost for the National Special Constables Weekend from 25 to 27 February is; and if he will make a statement. [215525]

Ms Blears: Special constables are volunteers who can claim allowances to cover out of pocket expenses incurred in connection with their police duties . There may be some marginal increase in the cost of allowances claimed as a result of having greater numbers of specials on duty over the weekend. These costs and the cost of organising events, marketing, advertising and so on, will be met from within existing force budgets.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are taken into account by police forces before suspending a police officer from duty. [215931]

Ms Blears: Regulations 4 and 5 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2004 define the circumstances in which an officer may be suspended. The decision to suspend officers up to and including the rank of Chief Superintendent is taken by the chief officer of the force; for officers ranked higher than Chief Superintendent the decision lies with the police authority.

Home Office guidance states that the decision to suspend should be taken only when the presence of an officer on duty may be detrimental to criminal or disciplinary investigations or proceedings, or when it is in the public interest to do so. This will normally apply only in cases where the complaint or allegation is of a serious nature likely to result in disciplinary or criminal conviction, and an officer is likely to be dismissed, required to resign or reduced in rank.

Prison Overcrowding

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons in England and Wales were considered to be overcrowded, as at 1 February. [215161]

Paul Goggins: The latest available data on overcrowding in prisons relates to the end of December 2004. The list shows prisons holding prisoners in excess of their certified normal capacity.

Establishment

Altcourse
Bedford
Birmingham
Blakenhurst
Blundeston
Brinsford
Brixton
Buckley Hall
Establishment
Bullingdon
Camp Hill
Canterbury
Cardiff
Mannings Wood
Chelmsford
Coldingley
Cookham Wood
Dartmoor
Doncaster
Dorchester
Dovegate
Durham

Eastwood Park
Elmley
Erlestoke
Everthorpe
Exeter
Featherstone
Forest Bank
Garth
Glen Parva
Gloucester
Guys Marsh
Haverigg
High Down
Highpoint
Holme House
Hull
Lancaster
Lancaster Farms
Leeds
Leicester
Lewes
Lincoln
Littlehey
Liverpool
Low Newton
Maidstone
Manchester
Moorland
Mount
New Hall
Northallerton
Norwich
Nottingham
Parc
Parkhurst
Pentonville
Preston
Ranby
Reading
Risley
Rye Hill
Shepton Mallet
Shrewsbury
Stafford
Stocken
Stoke Heath
Styal
Swaleside
Swansea
Usk\Prescoed
Verne
Wandsworth
Wayland
Wellingborough
Whatton
Winchester
Wolds
Woodhill
Wormwood Scrubs
Wymott

In total, 81 of 138 prisons were considered to be overcrowded at the end of December 2004. No prison exceeded its operational capacity which is the total number of prisoners that can be held in an establishment without serious risk to good order, security and the proper running of planned regimes.

Prison Service

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to establish the independent monitoring of *(a)* performance and *(b)* market testing in the Prison Service; and if he will make a statement. [209399]

Paul Goggins: Performance testing is used by the Prison Service as a means of improving the performance of underperforming public sector prisons. Market testing is a delegated responsibility of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and can be applied to all prisons, whether publicly or privately managed. Under market testing the bids made in each competition are assessed by an evaluation panel which includes independent members. Performance testing and market testing processes are liable to be the subject of regular scrutiny by Parliament, the National Audit Office, and other independent bodies and there are no plans to establish any additional independent monitoring of these processes.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to extend *(a)* performance and *(b)* market testing within the Prison Service; and if he will make a statement. [209401]

Paul Goggins: There are no plans to extend performance testing wider than underperforming prisons.

I plan to make an announcement on the market testing of prisons in due course.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the progress made by each prison under *(a)* performance and *(b)* market testing. [209402]

Paul Goggins: Those establishments that have successfully completed performance tests have delivered substantial improvements in performance and value for money. The improvements are evident across a range of indicators, including better regimes with more positive outcomes for prisoners, progression in published performance ratings and in reports from HM Chief Inspector of Prisons.

The progress of the five prisons market tested since 1999 is continuously assessed through the operation of the relevant contract or Service Level Agreement. The role of the public sector controllers in monitoring contracts with the private sector and that of the public sector monitors in monitoring Service Level Agreements with public sector prisons is central to the assessment process.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the Prison Service to be staffed to its operational staffing requirement. [216749]

Paul Goggins: Prison governors keep staffing levels under regular review. During the last two years, the public sector Prison Service has been successful in attracting new prison officer recruits. 2,420 new officers were recruited in 2003 (an increase of 50.5 per cent. on 2002), and 1,983 officers were recruited in 2004. Leaving rates are currently less than four per cent per year across the service. There are a range of reasons why vacancies may occur in individual prisons, including retirements, exits, promotions and transfers, and the time taken for the recruitment and training processes.

It is not realistic to expect staffing levels to exactly match the operational staffing requirement at any particular time. However, at 31 January 2005, the difference between the total operational staffing availability in the public sector Prison Service (including officers working contract supplementary hours) and the operational staffing requirement for prison officers, senior officers, principal officers and operational managers was just one per cent (269 full-time equivalent officers against an operational staffing requirement of 25,704). The Director General considers this to be an acceptable operating margin.

Prisons

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what expenditure was incurred by the Prison Service in providing faith-based offending behaviour courses at Dartmoor prison in the latest year for which figures are available. [216435]

Paul Goggins: There are currently no faith-based offending behaviour courses running at Dartmoor prison and hence no expenditure has been incurred.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of prisoners have been denied visitation rights in each of the last five years. [217109]

Paul Goggins: This information is not centrally collated. Prisoners have a statutory entitlement to social visits, which are managed locally at each establishment. There may be a number of reasons why a social visit does not take place. Some prisoners choose not to take advantage of their full entitlement or are unable to do so owing to factors beyond their, or the prison's control.

Governors have the authority to prohibit or restrict visits to a prisoner, or to bar a particular visitor for such periods of time as is considered necessary in the circumstances. For example, restrictions may be placed on the prisoner or a visitor for public protection reasons, or where there is a specific threat to the security or good order of an establishment.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government takes to tackle *(a)* racism and *(b)* violence in prisons. [217175]

Paul Goggins: Race equality is a core standard for the Prison Service that must permeate everything that it does. The Service works hard to ensure that all aspects of current and future policy, functions and activities take full account of race equality issues and promote good race relations, adopting a zero tolerance approach of anyone who holds racist views. The Service has dismissed a number of staff for their actions and was the first public sector employer to prevent staff being members of racist organisations.

The joint CRE/Prison Service Action Plan "Implementing Race Equality in Prisons: A shared agenda for change" represents a milestone for race relations in the Service. It specifically focuses on the key areas of work identified by the Commission for Racial Equality in its formal investigation, and sets out the work which the Service will undertake to meet its commitment to race equality by making race equality an integral part of all that the Service does.

The Prison Service is currently reviewing its Race Equality Scheme for 2002–05, and is drawing up plans to deliver race equality in 2005–08.

The Prison Service has a responsibility to keep prisoners and staff safe. A Service-wide Violence Reduction Strategy has been developed through the work of the Safer Custody Group. Prison Service Order 2,750 directs every public sector prison to have in place a local violence reduction strategy.

Each establishment is required to undertake regular analysis of the problem areas and provide an action plan to improve personal safety.

An intranet toolkit supports the violence reduction PSO and guides establishments to develop practical solutions, including environmental and physical measures as well as alternatives for behaviour management. Specific issues such as racism, are covered with good practice examples.

Prisons are audited against a violence reduction standard, and work towards a Key Performance Target on the rate of serious assault.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what records are kept of *(a)* violent and *(b)* racially motivated behaviour in prisons. [217176]

Paul Goggins: HM Prison Service keeps detailed records of all violent incidents through a national incident reporting system. All establishments must enter any violent incident on to the system. These are collated centrally. The rate of serious assault is a key performance indicator for the Violence Reduction Strategy.

Following a review, a dedicated form for registering racist incidents is now available across the whole of the Prison Estate. This form can be completed by anyone who is a victim or a witness to an incident within the prison. The purpose of the revised form is to improve:

The recording of racist incidents;

Responses to individual reports in order to increase the confidence of victims in the system; and

Monitoring, to enable prisons to improve the implementation and practice of good race relations.

Information on racist incidents is broken down into the following categories:

Prisoner on prisoner

Prisoner on staff

Staff on prisoner

Staff on staff

Establishments record this information locally and submit it to Headquarters on a quarterly basis.

As well as the racist incident reporting form, the Prison Service has revised its prisoner complaints system and the Request and Complaints form now includes a tick box to indicate whether the prisoner feels the incident was racially motivated.

The new system is supported by a central unit that holds and monitors information on all formal investigations commissioned across the Prison Service. This information includes the source, location and type of investigation, its causes, and its outcome, enabling the Service to monitor trends and identify areas of concern.

Probation Inspectorate

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the expenditure of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation was in each year since 1997–98. [213572]

Paul Goggins: The budget of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation in these years has been:

	£ million
1997–98	[1]
1998–99	[1]
1999–2000	1.522
2000–01	1.530
2001–02	1.981
2002–03	2.749
2003–04	3.229
2004–05	3.352

[1] Information prior to 1999–2000 has been archived and will need some time to retrieve. I will write to the hon. Member with the information when it is available.

The overall pattern of inspections undertaken each year has changed radically since 2000 in response to the creation of the National Probation Service (NPS) and other related developments.

The budget figures reflect additional work that has been undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

From 2001–2003 this included an additional programme examining accredited groupwork programmes delivered by the NPS.

From 2003–04 onwards this also includes the joint inspection of Youth Offending Teams, a major new programme of inspections, led and fully resourced by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. This programme now takes up more than 40 per cent. of the Inspectorate's deployable resources on a continuing basis.

This additional work and other recent changes have resulted in a substantial increase in the output of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation.

Probation Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the role is of the Probation Service in England and Wales in working locally with other criminal justice agencies on public protection issues. [216119]

Paul Goggins: Working purposefully with other criminal justice agencies to protect the public from harm remains a key priority for the National Probation Service (NPS). Together with the local police and prison services, the NPS is responsible for reviewing and monitoring arrangements for assessing and managing the risks posed by sexual and violent offenders within multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA). This involves working with other criminal justice organisations, including the youth offending teams, together with local providers of health, housing, education and social services.

Chief officers of probation sit on local criminal justice boards (LCJBs) which are responsible for the local delivery of criminal justice system (CJS) objectives, improvement in the delivery of justice, the service provided to victims and witnesses, and securing public confidence in the system. In addition, the responsible authority for each crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs) is required to co-operate with local probation boards in developing and implementing strategies to tackle crime and disorder and misuse of drugs in their area.

Working together with partners under each of these headings the NPS will continue work to improve child protection arrangements, enhance the service to victims, and develop a co-ordinated response to domestic abuse. It will also prioritise work with prolific and priority offenders to help reduce their re-offending by ensuring swift assessment, priority access to interventions, intensive supervision and prompt enforcement of any breach of licence or court order.

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much of the increase in the probation service budget will be allocated to frontline services. [216373]

Paul Goggins: The probation service budget is increasing in 2005–06 by £61 million. The whole of this is being allocated to front-line services.

Fire and Rescue Services (Race Relations)

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fire and rescue services have *(a)* complied with their statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, *(b)* published a race equality scheme and action plan and *(c)* carried out race impact assessments. [216584]

Mr. Raynsford: I have been asked to reply.

This information is not currently held centrally. However, under the requirements of the best value performance indicator (BVPI) 2B for local government, all fire and rescue authorities are in the process of providing the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with information relevant to their compliance with their statutory responsibilities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RR(A)A) 2000. This information will be reported in our publication "The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Best Value Performance Indicators 2003–04" which will be available this spring.

This report will be published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website and copies will be available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Additionally the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is gathering more in-depth information on the service's compliance with the requirements of the RR(A)A 2000, in particular with regard to action planning and impact assessment. The results of this exercise will be reported to the Fire and Rescue Service Practitioners' Forum in June.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sexual assault referral centres are located in or adjacent to hospitals. [215572]

Paul Goggins: There are 13 Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) currently operating in England and Wales. 12 are based on single sites, with one based in two separate locations. Of the one-site SARCs, nine are located in or adjacent to hospitals. A further two are located in primary care centres. One occupies police premises in a residential area removed from any police station. The two-site SARC has one centre within a hospital, and one centre in police premises in a residential area.

The following list shows the location of the 13 SARCs:

	Location
St. Mary's, Manchester	St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester
The Haven Camberwell	King's College Hospital, London, SE5
The Haven Paddington	St. Mary's Hospital, London, W2
The Haven Whitechapel	The Royal London Hospital, London E1
REACH Centre, Northumbria	This SARC is based in two sites. One is within the Sunderland Royal Hospital, the other in a converted police house in a residential area
SAFE Centre, Lancashire	Royal Preston Hospital, Preston
Juniper Lodge, Leicestershire	Leicester General Hospital, Leicester
Milne Centre, Bristol	Bristol Royal Infirmary, Bristol
Renton Clinic, Kent	Darent Valley Hospital, Dartford
Rowan Centre, West Midlands	Within premises of Manor Hospital, Walsall
The Swindon Sanctuary, Wiltshire	Taw Hill Medical Practice, Swindon
Cambridgeshire SARC	Rivergate Primary Care Centre, Peterborough
Millfield House, Derbyshire	Converted police house in a residential area

Student Visa Extensions

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the evidential basis is for his calculations of the cost of processing a visa extension application made by an international student studying at a British university. [214048]

Mr. Browne: The new fees I announced on 7 February expand the principle of full cost recovery to include the costs of providing the appeals system for leave to remain applicants, including students. We have calculated the fees using the full cost recovery formula, which has been approved by HM Treasury.

The basic fee represents the full administration costs of delivering the decision up to and including the appeals process and outstanding deficits for providing the service. All elements have associated overhead costs.

The £250 postal charge for student leave to remain includes recovery of appeals costs. However, the fee set for students will mean we will not recover the full administrative cost of processing student applications.

Suicides

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female suicides there have been in (i) prison and (ii) police custody in England in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [216155]

Paul Goggins: The numbers requested are shown in the following tables:

Table 1: Male and female self-inflicted deaths in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales

Calendar year	*Male self-inflicted deaths*	*Female self-inflicted deaths*
1997	65	3
1998	81	3
1999	86	5
2000	73	8
2001	67	6
2002	86	9
2003	80	14
2004	82	13

The Prison Service employs the term "self-inflicted death" rather than "suicide". This includes all those deaths where it appears the person may have acted specifically to take his/her own life.

Table 2: Male and female suicides during or following police contact in England and Wales

	Female	*Male*
1997–98	3	31 (11)
1998–99	1	31 (16)
1999–2000	None	21 (7)
2000–01	None	7 (5)
2001–02	None	7 (3)
2002–03	1	12 (8)
2003–04	1	8 (4)

Note:
The figures in brackets show the numbers of those (both male and female) that died in police cells. The Home Office records this information on a yearly basis; 1 April to 31 March.

Every death that occurs in prison or following contact with the police is a tragedy and is treated with the utmost seriousness by the Government, and the Prison and Police Services. On 31 March 2004, I announced the outline suicide prevention strategy for prisons that can be summarised as, 'Reducing distress and promoting the well-being of all who live and work in prisons.' This follows extensive consultations including those with the Howard League, Prison Reform Trust, Inquest, the Youth Justice Board, Prisons and Probations Ombudsman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, Samaritans and the Department of Health.

This builds on the three-year Safer Custody strategy that ran from April 2001, which was geared towards making progress in resettlement, detoxification, health, and purposeful activity, as well as staff outlooks, leadership and training. Key achievements were the placement of Suicide Prevention Co-ordinators (or equivalents) operating in all prisons, an investment of over £21 million at six 'Safer Local' pilot sites, and the development of safer prison design, including 'safer cells.'

Police forces are also working hard to ensure that all possible measures are in place to minimise the risks relating to suicide and self-harm. The care, assessment and monitoring of detainees are a top priority, custody facilities have been made safer and training and CCTV monitoring has been improved.

The Home Office, Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE) have set up a Project Group to develop and disseminate policy and best practice on the safer handling of detainees in order to prevent deaths in custody. The Project Group hopes to publish this guidance in January 2006, following consultation with practitioners within the CJS and health/medical disciples.

Tackling Intruders

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people have been charged in connection with people tackling intruders in *(a)* residential properties and *(b)* retail properties in each year since 1990; [214323]

(2) how many people have been convicted of an offence in connection with people tackling intruders in *(a)* residential properties and *(b)* retail properties in each year since 1990. [214324]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to identify those persons prosecuted or convicted for offences arising out of the intruders entering their property, as the circumstances surrounding an offence are not centrally collected on the Home Office Court Proceedings database. However the Director of Public Prosecutions would look for clear evidence of very excessive force before considering a prosecution.

Women Remand Prisoners

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of women remand prisoners did not receive a custodial sentence in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [217165]

Paul Goggins: The table gives the estimated percentages of women remand prisoners who were not given a custodial sentence in each of the last five years.

Percentage of women remanded in custody who did not receive a custodial sentence 1999–2003, England and Wales

	Percentage
1999	64
2000	62
2001	57
2002	58
2003	59

Work Permits

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken in the last 12 months to grant further leave to remain status to a work permit extension that has already been approved is. [216654]

Mr. Browne: The information requested is not specifically identifiable on the database used to record Leave to Remain decisions.

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken in the last 12 months to grant approval to a work permit extension application is. [216655]

Mr. Browne: The average time taken to grant an approval for a work permit extension was four working days during the calendar year 2004.

This is the time taken from receipt of the work permit application in Work Permits (UK) to dispatch of a decision.

Yukos

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government of the Russian Federation has made representations to the UK Government regarding Yukos employees or executives currently residing in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [216474]

Mr. Browne: The UK Government have received no representations from the Government of the Russian Federation regarding Yukos employees or executives currently residing in the UK.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 22 February 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Kazakhstan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the Government of Kazakhstan concerning *(a)* human rights and *(b)* the implementation of good governance practices. [215768]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

We continually raise, bilaterally and with our EU partners, the importance of respect for human rights and good governance in Kazakhstan. When I met the Kazakh Minister for Justice last May I raised democratic reform and human rights issues, including the death penalty and conditions in Kazakh prisons. Following the parliamentary elections in September/October 2004, the EU released a statement reflecting the concerns of the OSCE Election Observers that the elections had failed to meet international standards. The concerns were also raised by our Ambassador with the Foreign Minister in October 2004. More recently, in February, along with our EU partners we raised human rights issues at an EU-Kazakhstan sub-committee meeting. This month, we supported an EU statement in Vienna expressing concern at the new law on Extremism and the recent banning of an opposition party.

Wherever possible we also look to work with the Kazakh authorities to improve the human rights situation and have funded projects aimed at improving the conditions in prisons, preventing torture in places of detention and encouraging the abolition of the death penalty. We have an on-going dialogue with the government of Kazakhstan on transparency issues and are working closely with NGOs on this too.

We will continue to stress the importance of human rights and good governance with the Kazakh authorities and look for opportunities to provide suitable assistance. Kazakhstan has recently been identified as a priority country under the sustainable development strand of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Global Opportunities Fund. This will provide further scope for the UK Government to support rule of law, torture prevention and death penalty abolition initiatives.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213604]

Hilary Benn: DFID currently owns 11 domestic properties overseas, in Zimbabwe (3), Solomon Islands (1), and Malawi (7). DFID also provides approximately 450 UK-based staff posted overseas with commercially leased accommodation. DFID does not pay for flowers and plants, food, wine, or domestic staff, all of which are the responsibility of the occupier. Individuals receive a cost of living allowance, and where appropriate a gardening allowance, in respect of the additional costs incurred of living overseas, and these allowances vary depending on location.

Official expenditure on business phone calls and utilities are met from individual delegated budgets but are not separately identifiable and this detailed information cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost. Similarly, information on the individual occupancy of each of the overseas properties, and the overall cost to DFID, are not held centrally and cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211660]

Hilary Benn *[pursuant to the reply, 10 February 2005, Official Report, c. 1642W]:* The correct figure for expenditure on advertising for 2003–04 was £676,649 and the estimated figure for 2004–05 is £663,591.

It was originally stated that the expenditure on advertising for 2004–05, which was then believed to be higher than that for 2003–04, reflected a higher number of posts being advertised in 2004–05. On re-examination this is incorrect. The number of recruitment competitions for which advertisements were placed was in fact slightly more in 2003–04 than the number to date in 2004–05.

TREASURY

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211663]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury's spending on external consultants was as follows:

£ million

	Revenue	Capital	Total
1996–97	1.03	n/a	1.03
2003–04	6.16	0.44	6.60
2004–05[1]	6.04	0.60	6.64

n/a = not available
[1] estimated

Until the introduction of resource accounting from 2001–02, all expenditure was classed as revenue.

Estimates for future years are not available.

It has come to my attention that the answer I gave to the hon. Members for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis) and Stratford on Avon (Mr. Maples) on 25 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1055W, was inaccurate in the following respect. The answer stated that the capital consultancy spend of the Treasury was £0.78 million in 2002–03 and £1.40 million in 2003–04. The correct figures are £0.84 million in 2002–03 and £0.44 million in 2003–04. I apologise to the hon. Members for the error.

Death Rates

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the death rate from suicide and undetermined injury has been in each year since 1986 for *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* in total. [216167]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr Andrew Lansley, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the death rate from suicide and undetermined injury has been in each year since 1986 for *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* in total. (216167)

The most recent available figures on suicide and undetermined injury are for the calendar year 2003. The figures in the attached table show the age-standardised mortality rate for suicide and undetermined injury by sex among those aged 15 and over for the calendar years 1986 to 2003.

Age-standardised mortality rate[1] for ages 15 and over from suicide[2] and injury and poisoning of undetermined intent,[3] (a) men, (b) women and (c) persons, England and Wales, 1986 to 2003[4]

Rate per 100,000

Calendar year	(a) Men	(b) Women	(c) Persons
1986	19.7	8.5	13.9
1987	19.6	8.0	13.6
1988	21.1	8.0	14.3
1989	19.2	7.0	12.9
1990	20.4	6.8	13.4
1991	20.5	6.5	13.3
1992	20.4	6.4	13.2
1993	19.4	6.1	12.6
1994	19.3	5.6	12.3
1995	19.1	5.9	12.3
1996	18.0	5.6	11.7
1997	18.4	5.7	11.9
1998	19.4	5.5	12.3
1999	19.2	5.7	12.3
2000	17.8	5.7	11.6
2001	17.1	5.1	11.0
2002	16.7	5.3	10.9
2003	16.5	5.2	10.7

[1] Directly age-standardised to the European standard population.
[2] The cause of death for intentional self harm was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950-E959for the years 1986 to 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2003, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84.
[3] The cause of death for injury and poisoning of undetermined intent was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980-E989 excluding E9 88.8 for the years 1986 to 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2003, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes YJO-Y34 excluding Y33.9-where the Coroner's verdict was pending.
[4] Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year from 1986 to 1992 and for deaths occurring in each calendar year from 1993 onwards.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Gill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were in full-time employment in Leicester, South constituency in each year since 1997. [216940]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Parmjit Singh Gill, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment. (216940)

The attached table gives estimates of those people resident in the Leicester, South parliamentary constituency who are in full-time employment for the 12-month periods ending February each year from 1997 to 2004.

As with any sample survey, estimates from the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling variability.

Full-time[1] employed people resident in the parliamentary constituency of Leicester, South

12-month period ending February each year	Full-time employment[2]
1997	29,000
1998	33,000
1999	28,000
2000	27,000
2001	29,000
2002	34,000
2003	29,000
2004	24,000

[1] Full-time is based on respondents self assessment.
[2] LFS estimates for local areas are particularly subject to sampling variations. Changes from year-to-year should be treated with caution.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Angela Eagle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each ward of Wallasey constituency are *(a)* employed and *(b)* unemployed. [217334]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Ms Angela Eagle, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment and unemployment in each ward of Wallasey Parliamentary Constituency. (217334)

Regular statistics of employment and unemployment are compiled from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) on the basis of standard international definitions. For individual wards the LFS sample size is too small to provide estimates, but information at ward level is available from the 2001 Population Census. Table 1 shows the information requested for people aged 16 to 74 from these sources.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics by ward of residence for people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Table 2 gives the number of JSA claimants resident in each of the wards of Wallasey Parliamentary Constituency in January 2005.

Table 1: Employment and unemployment among people aged 16–74 resident in wards of the Wallasey parliamentary constituency, 2001

Number

	All people	Employment	Unemployment
Wallasey PC	59,479	32,928	2,983
Leasowe	8,793	4,374	565
Liscard	10,146	5,499	547
Moreton	9,123	5,385	311
New Brighton	10,324	5,883	516
Seacombe	10,243	5,109	675
Wallasey	10,850	6,678	369

Source:
2001 Census of Population

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the wards of Wallasey parliamentary constituency January 2005

	Claimants
Wards of Wallasey PCA[1]	1,854
Wallasey	195
Leasowe	373
Liscard	341
Moreton	169
New Brighton	326
Seacombe	450

[1] Based on 1991 frozen wards

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were unemployed in the Bridgwater constituency in each year since 1990. [217349]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Ian Liddell-Grainger, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (217349)

Table 1 gives estimates of the numbers of unemployed people who were resident in the Bridgwater Parliamentary Constituency, for the 12-month periods ending February 1997 to 2004, the latest period for which figures are available. Data prior to 1997 are not available.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of people claiming Jobseeker's allowance who are resident in local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants resident in the Bridgwater Parliamentary Constituency for the years 1990 to 2004.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in the parliamentary constituency of Bridgwater

12-month period ending February	Unemployed
1997	3,000
1998	3,000
1999	3,000
2000	2,000
2001	2,000
2002	1,000
2003	3,000
2004	1,000

Note:
These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the parliamentary constituency of Bridgwater

Annual average	Claimants
1990	2,279
1991	3,171
1992	4,006
1993	4,214
1994	3,917
1995	3,446
1996	3,109
1997	2,398
1998	1,942
1999	1,734
2000	1,549
2001	1,233
2002	1,057
2003	1,074
2004	971

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* people aged 16 to 24 years, *(b)* men and *(c)* people of working age in Bridgwater constituency were economically inactive in each year since 1997. [217397]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Ian Liddell-Grainger, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about Economic Inactivity. (217397)

The attached table gives the information requested for groups of people resident in the Bridgwater Parliamentary Constituency who were economically inactive for the twelve month periods ending in February from 1997 to 2004.

As with any sample survey, estimates from the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling variability.

Economic inactivity[1] among people resident in Bridgwater parliamentary constituency

Number

12 months ending February each year	*Inactive 16–24 year olds*	*Inactive men aged 16 and over*	*Inactive population of working age[2]*
1997	2,000	12,000	12,000
1998	2,000	10,000	12,000
1999	3,000	10,000	15,000
2000	3,000	12,000	14,000
2001	2,000	11,000	13,000
2002	1,000	11,000	9,000
2003	2,000	9,000	8,000
2004	1,000	10,000	8,000

[1] People who are neither In employment nor unemployed
[2] Working age refers to men aged 16 to 64 and women 16 to 59.
Note:
These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution
Source:
ONS-Labour Force Survey

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of unemployment was in *(a)* Chorley, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* the North West in (i) 1997, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2005; what percentage were (A) male and (B) female; and what percentage were under (1) 21, (2) 30 and (3) 60 years. [216306]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in Chorley, Lancashire and the North West.

Table 1 gives estimates of the levels of all unemployed people resident in the Chorley Parliamentary Constituency, County of Lancashire, and the North West Region. Proportions are given by gender, and who were: aged under 20; aged under 30; and aged under 60 for the 12-month periods ending November 1997, 2002 and 2004. Estimates have not been given for people aged under 21, as this breakdown is not available for all years.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of people resident in each of the areas specified claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) benefits. The table also shows the proportions of these totals who were aged under 20, aged under 30; and aged under 60 analysed by gender. Estimates are not available for people aged under 21.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in the Chorley parliamentary constituency, Lancashire and the North West

12-month period ending February	*Chorley PCA[1]*	*Lancashire*	*North West*
1997			
Total unemployment	3,000	40,000	155,000
Male unemployment	50.7	62.8	62.4
Female unemployment	49.3	37.2	37.6
Under 20	[2]—	14.9	15.8
Under 30	49.4	51.9	49.9
Under 60	100.0	95.6	97.6
2003			
Total unemployment	[2]—	28,000	106,000
Male unemployment	[2]—	55.0	64.3
Female unemployment	[2]—	45.0	35.7
Under 20	[2]—	19.5	20.0
Under 30	[2]—	50.3	48.3
Under 60	[2]—	99.5	98.8
2004			
Total unemployment	1,000	29,000	94,000
Male unemployment	[2]—	60.7	62.7
Female unemployment	[2]—	39.3	37.3
Under 20	[2]—	26.3	23.6
Under 30	[2]—	47.0	46.8
Under 60	100.0	98.5	97.3

[1] These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.
[2] Estimates not shown as they are potentially disclosive.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in Chorley parliamentary constituency, Lancashire and the North West

Annual average	*Chorley PCA*	*Lancashire*	*North West*
1997			
Total claimants (number)	1,680	21,645	193,065
Percentage			
Male claimants	77.1	77.3	78.2
Female claimants	22.9	22.7	21.7
Under 20	9.3	9.8	9.9
Under 30	44.0	45.3	46.4
Under 60	99.3	99.1	99.4
2003			
Total claimants (number)	910	13,070	112,335
Percentage			
Male claimants	74.2	75.9	77.0
Female claimants	25.8	24.1	23.0
Under 20	13.6	12.8	12.5
Under 30	44.7	44.8	45.1
Under 60	98.5	98.8	99.1
2004			
Total claimants (number)	820	11,980	99,940
Percentage			
Male claimants	73.2	75.1	76.1
Female claimants	26.8	24.9	23.9
Under 20	13.0	13.0	13.0
Under 30	45.1	45.1	45.8
Under 60	98.6	99.0	99.1

Note:
Age breakdown is analysed by computer.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system claims only.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of unemployment has been in Morecambe and Lunesdale in each year since 1997. [216768]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Ms Geraldine Smith, 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (216768)

Table 1 gives estimates of the numbers of unemployed people who were resident in Morecambe and Lunesdale Parliamentary Constituency, for the 12-month periods ending February 1997 to 2004, the latest period for which figures are available.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance who are resident in local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants resident in the Morecambe and Lunesdale Parliamentary Constituency for the years 1997 to 2004.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in Morecambe and Lunesdale parliamentary constituency

12 months ending February	*Number*
1997	4,000
1998	3,000
1999	4,000
2000	4,000
2001	4,000
2002	4,000
2003	2,000
2004	2,000

Note:
These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.
Source:
ONS—Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in Morecambe and Lunesdale parliamentary constituency

Annual average	*Claimants*
1997	2,695
1998	2,306
1999	2,162
2000	1,926
2001	1,765
2002	1,592
2003	1,573
2004	1,342

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system.

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of unemployment was in *(a)* Rochdale and *(b)* the North West in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2004; and what percentage were (A) female and (B) male. [217300]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Ms Lorna Fitzsimons, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (217300)

The attached table gives estimates of the number and percentage of unemployed people who were resident in Rochdale and the North West, for the 12-month periods ending February 1997 and 2004.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Unemployment among residents of Rochdale UA and the North West,12 months ending February 1997 and 2004

12 months ending February	*Rochdale unitary authority*[1] *Level*	*Rochdale unitary authority*[1] *Percent*[2]	*North west region Level*	*North west region Percent*[2]
1997				
Total unemployed	7,000	100	246,000	100
Male	5,000	72.5	157,000	64.1
Female	2,000	27.5	88,000	35.9
2004				
Total unemployed	6,000	100	155,000	100
Male	4,000	61.6	95,000	61.6
Female	2,000	38.4	59,000	38.4

[1] These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.
Source:
ONS-Labour Force Survey

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* unemployed people and *(b)* unemployed young people there are in the constituency of Wellingborough; and if he will make a statement. [216685]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Paul Stinchcombe, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (216685)

It is estimated that for the 12-month period ending February 2004, there were 2,000 people resident in the Wellingborough Parliamentary Constituency who were unemployed. Of those an estimated 1,000 were aged 16–24 years old. These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling variability and rounded to the nearest thousand.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for local areas. In December 2004, there were 1,085 residents of the Wellingborough Parliamentary Constituency who were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. Of these, 305 were aged 18 to 24.

Regional Statistics

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which local authorities fall within Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics *(a)* 1, *(b)* 2 and *(c)* 3. [216560]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking which local authorities fall within NUTS *(a)* 1, *(b)* 2 and *(c)* 3. (216560)

The current relationships between local authority districts and NUTS levels 1, 2 and 3 are contained in the *Gazetteer of the old and new geographies of the United Kingdom* (ISBN 1 85774 298 2) published by the Office for National Statistics in 1999. The publication can be viewed on the National Statistics website, and can be downloaded in pdf format at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/gazetteer.asp

The relationships between the local authority districts and the NUTS 1–3 levels are shown in tabular form on pages 10–40, and the full NUTS 1–3 classification with maps, is shown on pages 88–113.

Since local government reorganisation in 1998, there have been minor changes to local authority district boundaries in Wales in April 2002 and April 2003, and in Scotland in June 2002. However, these have not impacted on the NUTS 1–3 areas because the NUTS boundaries moved to retain the relationships. There have not been any local authority district boundary changes in England since 1998 or in Northern Ireland since 1973.

The NUTS 1–3 areas were frozen by EU Regulation in July 2003 and, in consequence, the small change in the boundary between Powys and Neath Port Talbot, effective on 1 April 2005, will result in part of Powys falling within "Bridgend and Neath Port Talbot" NUTS 3 area, and within "West Wales and the Valleys" NUTS 2 area. There are no other local authority district boundary changes being effected in the UK in 2005.

The EU Regulation does not permit the NUTS classification to be amended to reflect small changes to administrative area boundaries more frequently than every 3 years but amendments can be made at lesser intervals if the administrative structure is substantially reorganised.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which statistics relating to England the Office for National Statistics *(a)* collates, *(b)* publishes and *(c)* aggregates at a Government Office for Region level. [216036]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 22 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question on which statistics relating to England, the Office for National Statistics *(a)* collates, *(b)* publishes and *(c)* aggregates at a Government Office for Regions level. I am replying in his absence. 216036

ONS's practice is to provide analyses by region where this is meaningful in terms of the statistics concerned, subject to the reliability of the figures and providing that release does not create a risk of disclosure of confidential personal information. Following the establishment of Government Offices in 1994, the decision was taken in 1996 that the Government Office regions should become the standard statistical regions for England.

It is standard practice in ONS data collection to include suitable geographic referencing in surveys of businesses and individuals, allowing statistics to be analysed and published at a variety of geographic levels including region. The bulk of ONS statistics can therefore be produced by region, including the Census of population and household and business surveys. A list of major statistical collections indicating the levels at which figures are available will be placed in the House of Commons library.

ONS also publishes a number of statistical reports—such as Regional Trends and Region in Figures—that include regional figures obtained from other Government departments. A list of the contents at regional level will also be placed in the Library. In addition, the Neighbourhood Statistics service includes a wealth of data relating to much smaller geographic areas which can be aggregated to regional level.

Following the 2004 report of the review by Christopher Allsopp of statistics for economic policymaking, the Office is looking to improve the information on its web site about the availability of regional and other sub-national statistics.

Pupil Absence Rates

Mr. Flook: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will ask the Office for National Statistics to publish pupil absence rates by local authority ward on the Neighbourhood Statistics website. [216923]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Adrian Flook, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking if the Office for National Statistics will publish pupil absence rates by local authority ward on the Neighbourhood Statistics website. (216923)

The Office for National Statistics is planning to publish information on pupil absence as part of the on-going development of the Neighbourhood Statistics website to support work on neighbourhood renewal. It is hoped that the data will be released in the second quarter of 2005.

A recent review, with representatives from the Department for Education and Skills, has confirmed that data on pupil absences has the highest priority. As a result the Office for National Statistics is working with the Department for Education and Skills to make available details of authorised and unauthorised absences in primary and secondary schools for the periods 2002–03 and 2003–04. The level of detail (including the geographical level) cannot be guaranteed at this time as it would depend on whether the information would be disclosive. To protect the confidentiality of information about identifiable individuals, information will be published in strict accordance with the National Statistics Code of Practice.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215078]

Mr. Timms: The cost of producing security access passes for Treasury staff is not separately identifiable. The number of passes reported lost or stolen in 2003 and 2004 was 128 and 120 respectively. Numbers for previous years are not available.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997; [213655]

(2) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213683]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury expenditure for staff surveys were:

	£
2002–03	24,000
2003–04	58,000
2004–05	38,000

For years prior to 2002–03 full details are not readily available. I refer the hon. Member to the responses given by my predecessor on 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column. 534W and on 26 February 2003, *Official Report*, column. 567W for further details.

The Treasury use consultants in carrying out surveys and all the expense relates to consultancy fees.

Suicides (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people committed suicide in Lancashire in 2003–04. [216895]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people committed suicide in Lancashire in 2003–2004. (216895)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. In that year there were 104 suicides[1] of usual residents of Lancashire.[2]

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84 (intentional self-harm) and Y10-Y34 (event of undetermined intent) excluding Y33.9 where the Coroner's verdict was pending.

[2] The figure provided relates to the current county of Lancashire. This excludes the unitary authorities of Blackburn and Darwen, and Blackpool, created in 1998, which were part of the former county. The figure is the number of suicides of those who normally lived in Lancashire, rather than the number of these deaths which occurred within the county.

Swimming Pool Accidents

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many fatal accidents have occurred to *(a)* adults and *(b)* children in domestic swimming pools in each of the last five years. [216789]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Alan Whitehead, 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many fatal accidents have occurred to *(a)* adults and *(b)* children in domestic swimming pools in each of the last five years. (216789)

The most recently available information is for deaths in 2003. Figures for deaths due to accidental drowning in adults and children are shown in the table below for each year from 2001 to 2003. Although accidental drowning deaths are available for years prior to 2001 it is not possible to say if these deaths occurred in domestic swimming pools.

Number of deaths from accidental drowning in domestic swimming pools[1] in (a) adults aged 16 and over, and (b) children aged under 16, England and Wales, 2001 to 2003[2]

	Number of deaths in Year	
	(a) Adults	*(b) Children*
2001	0	0
2002	2	1
2003	1	2

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes W67.0 and W68.0.
[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Tax Credits

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what monitoring his Department is carrying out to ensure that the Tax Credit Office liaises with those individuals who are required to repay overpayments and who await the outcome of their application concerning the reconsideration of recovery of tax credits, to ensure that the repayments are affordable; [216902]

(2) whether the Inland Revenue liaises with individuals who have accrued overpayments of tax credits in order to agree a level of affordable repayment. [216903]

Mr. Timms: The Inland Revenue regularly assesses and reviews its procedures for recovering tax credit overpayments. Their Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" explains that where a claimant has been paid too much they will normally be expected to pay back the overpayment. It describes a number of measures the Revenue has put in place to protect against hardship being caused by the recovery of an overpayment. A copy is available on the Inland Revenue website at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/leaflets/cop26.htm

Tax Exempt Savings

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list increases to the premium limit of tax exempt savings plans since 1992; [217171]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost to the Treasury of raising premiums of tax exempt savings plans to *(a)* £600 per annum and *(b)* £1,200 per annum. [217172]

Mr. Timms: The premium limit for tax exempt savings plans was increased from the 1992 level to the current level on 1 May 1995, the day on which the Finance Act 1995 was passed.

The estimated current cost of tax-exempt savings plans, with an annual premium limit of £300 is around £70 million per year and in recent years this cost has been increasing at an annual rate of about 10 per cent.

Increasing the limit to £600 or £1,200 per annum would potentially cost the Exchequer an extra £30 million or £120 million per year respectively in the long run. Doubling the limit would not necessarily double the cost because many tax-exempt savings plan customers do not save at the current maximum.

Women (Dismissals/Redundancies)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many women were *(a)* dismissed and *(b)* made redundant in each year between 1997 and 2004. [215474]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Keith Vaz, dated 22 February 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about redundancies and dismissals of women in the UK between 1997 and 2004. (215474)

The attached table gives estimates of those women dismissed or made redundant in the 12-month periods ending in November each year for the years 1997 to 2004. Estimates are from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) in which respondents are asked about whether they have been dismissed or made redundant in the three months prior to their survey interview.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

Women who were dismissed or made redundant[1]

Number

12 months ending November	*Dismissed*	*Made Redundant*
1997	50,000	216,000
1998	48,000	227,000
1999	52,000	250,000
2000	46,000	254,000
2001	36,000	246,000
2002	36,000	259,000
2003	35,000	222,000
2004	38,000	208,000

[1] Based on responses to the LFS about dismissals and redundancies experienced in the three months prior to being interviewed.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

HEALTH

General Practitioners

15. **Brian Cotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners in the NHS have lists closed to new patients. [216980]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not collect data on the number of practices with closed lists. Since 1997 there are 3,169 more GPs working in the NHS and spending on primary care is set to increase under the new GMS contract from £6.1 billion to £8 billion by 2005–06—a 33 per cent. increase.

19. **Mr. McCabe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines he issues on standardisation of computer equipment used by general practitioners. [216985]

Mr. Hutton: "Requirements For Accreditation" (RFA) specify a core set of requirements for primary care computer systems which all general practitioner systems must be capable of performing. The RFA process, first introduced in April 1993, is operated by the NHS Information Authority, which is the sole provider of accreditation testing services.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of general practitioners are women in *(a)* England and *(b)* the area covered by Durham and Tees Valley strategic health authority. [215569]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The latest figures available—30 June 2004—show that 38 per cent. of all general practitioners[1] in England are women. In the area covered by Durham and Tees Valley strategic health authority, 34 per cent. of general practitioners are women.

[1] All practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums) include general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other and flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

Source:
Department of Health GMS and PMS statistics.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to inform general practitioners about additional training requirements necessary to assist the delivery of patient choice; how this training will be organised; and from what sources the funding of this training will be drawn. [210819]

Mr. Hutton: The Department published a delivery framework for the implementation of choice and booking at the point of general practitioner referral in August 2004. The framework is intended to support primary care trusts (PCTs) in fulfilling their responsibility for implementing patient choice and booking in local health communities, including ensuring appropriate training and support for primary care staff. The delivery framework is available at www.chooseandbook.nhs.uk.

Material has been made available nationally at www.chooseandbook.nhs.uk to help PCTs deliver training. It is for PCTs to determine locally the funding for training from within the financial allocations made by the Department. The Department allocates revenue funding to PCTs on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. The Department has also made available an additional £44 million annually in 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 to support PCTs in implementing new booking systems that support patient choice.

Dentistry

16. **Dr. Palmer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on NHS dentistry. [216981]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are undertaking the most far-reaching reforms of NHS dentistry since 1948, supported by an additional £368 million. To ensure that more people can see a NHS dentist when and where they need to, the equivalent of 1,000 dentists will be recruited by October 2005.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were registered with a NHS dentist in *(a)* each Government office region and *(b)* each parliamentary constituency in each year since 1997. [211946]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested on registrations by Government regional office is shown in the table.

Registrations by Government regional office—September 1997 to September 2004

Regional code	*Regional office name*	*Data*	*GDS contract*	*PDS contract*
Y41	North East Cluster	1997	4,566,672	0
		1998	4,112,309	0
		1999	4,117,129	0
		2000	4,192,609	336
		2001	4,142,997	3,895
		2002	4,112,027	15,250
		2003	4,129,295	20,881
		2004	3,708,273	335,413
Y42	North West and West Midlands	1997	6,985,233	0
		1998	6,143,868	0
		1999	6,136,972	61,253

Registrations by Government regional office—September 1997 to September 2004

Regional code	Regional office name	Date	GDS contract	PDS contract
		2000	6,153,516	87,919
		2001	6,074,349	104,390
		2002	6,028,081	136,535
		2003	5,999,217	140,830
		2004	4,980,764	1,093,200
Y43	Eastern Cluster	1997	5,306,335	0
		1998	4,782,355	0
		1999	4,876,903	2,371
		2000	5,010,484	4,329
		2001	4,943,102	5,178
		2002	4,953,229	22,740
		2003	4,973,857	28,536
		2004	4,807,586	96,117
Y44	Southern Cluster	1997	6,631,532	0
		1998	5,823,594	0
		1999	5,873,973	3,261
		2000	5,971,245	6,686
		2001	5,927,497	16,261
		2002	5,844,976	52,218
		2003	5,844,315	56,428
		2004	5,259,470	326,183
Y45	London Cluster	1997	3,614,103	0
		1998	3,005,724	0
		1999	2,974,168	41,001
		2000	3,025,344	42,992
		2001	3,001,930	46,084
		2002	2,982,202	38,960
		2003	3,030,985	40,033
		2004	2,906,464	97,666
	Total	1997	27,103,875	0
		1998	23,867,850	0
		1999	23,979,145	107,886
		2000	24,353,198	142,262
		2001	24,089,875	175,808
		2002	23,926,515	265,703
		2003	23,977,669	286,708
		2004	21,662,557	1,948,579

Notes:

1. The drop in registrations between September 1997 and September 1998 is mostly attributable to the reduction in the re-registration period from two years to 15 months.

2. The figures excludes patients treated in dental access centres who are not registered. In 2004 there were some 375,000 episodes of treatment in dental access centres.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many dentists ceased providing NHS dental services in each of the last three years *(a)* in England and *(b)* within Durham and Chester-le-Street primary care trust; [214107]

(2) how many NHS patients were registered with a dentist in each of the last three years in *(a)* England and *(b)* Durham and Chester-le-Street primary care trust; [214333]

(3) how may NHS patients were unable to register with a dentist in each of the last three years in *(a)* England and *(b)* Durham and Chester-le-Street primary care trust. [214334]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not held on the number of dentists who ceased providing national health service dental services altogether. The Office of Fair Trading report, "The private dentistry market in the UK", published in March 2003, estimated that out of 11,000 dental practices nationally, only about 210 are totally private.

The following table shows the number of dental patients registered with a general dental service (GDS) or personal dental service (PDS) dentist in England, and Durham and Chester-le-Street primary care trust area, as at 30 September each year.

	England	Durham and Chester-le-Street PCT
2002	24,217,483	65,122
2003	24,295,652	65,504
2004	23,639,904	58,962

Registrations in the GDS lapse if the patient has not returned to the dentist within 15 months. These figures do not include patients who get dental treatment without registration, for example in dental access centres.

Information is not available on patients who are unable to register with a dentist, but we are undertaking a wide range of initiatives to improve access to NHS dentistry. In the Durham and Chester-le-Street PCT, a local dental access scheme has been developed at a cost of £65,770 from central funds. Under the scheme, 10 practices, which were not previously taking on new NHS patients, have been funded to provide an agreed number of new patient contacts. From September 2004, the scheme has delivered 1,000 additional NHS appointments and expects shortly to deliver a further 300 appointments. As a result, between late September and November, all patients seeking a NHS dentist should have been able to access occasional NHS dental treatment and, in addition, some were able to register with a NHS dentist.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many unfilled dental clinical academic staff vacancies there are in dental schools; how he plans to assist in filling them; and if he will make a statement. [216508]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The latest information available centrally is from a survey conducted in 2001, which found that, out of 476 academic posts in the 15 dental schools in the United Kingdom, 74, or 16 per cent., were unfilled. We are undertaking a major programme of investment in dental education. We are to fund an extra 170 extra undergraduate dental training places in English dental schools from October 2005. The funds, which build up to £29 million per annum by 2010–11, include provision for the creation of more clinical academic posts and enhancing the terms of service for staff working in dental schools. We are also working jointly with the Department for Education and Skills to address issues relating to the recruitment and retention of academic staff.

South Gloucestershire PCT

17. **Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the funding of South Gloucestershire primary care trust. [216983]

Dr. Ladyman: The latest round of revenue allocations covering 2006–07 and 2007–08 was announced on 9 February 2005.

South Gloucestershire primary care trust will receive funding of £250 million for 2006–07 and £275 million for 2007–08. These allocations include increases of £21 million, or 9.1 per cent., for 2006–07 and £25 million, or 10 per cent., for 2007–08.

New Community Hospitals

18. **Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his Department's policies on the construction of new or replacement community hospitals. [216984]

Mr. Hutton: Decisions on service provision are best made at a local level, which is why "Keeping the NHS Local" was published in February 2003. This guidance covers service expansion and redesign. The NHS will need to follow it when considering the role of community hospitals.

21. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the criteria for establishing community hospitals. [216987]

Mr. Hutton: Decisions on establishing community hospitals are a local matter. The Department has not therefore set any criteria for their establishment.

Foundation Hospitals (England)

20. **Mr. Hendrick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many three star hospitals there are in England; and how many have applied for foundation status. [216986]

Mr. Hutton: 76 acute and specialist trusts were awarded three stars in the 2003–04 national health service performance ratings last July.

Of these, 24 trusts submitted a preliminary application for NHS Foundation Trust status last November as part of wave two For the first time, invitations for foundation status were also extended to Mental Health trusts and eight out of 10 eligible three star rated trusts submitted a preliminary application.

Private Sector Services

22. **Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the proportion of NHS funding which was spent purchasing private sector services in 2003–04. [216988]

Mr. Hutton: The national health service spent £3.3 billion on independent sector healthcare services in 2003–04. This represents approximately 5 per cent. of the £61 billion planned NHS expenditure for 2003–04.

Wycombe Hospital

23. **Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received about Wycombe hospital. [216989]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since October 2004, the Department has received several written representations from the hon. Member and members of the public about Wycombe hospital.

Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority

24. **Mr. Walter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the number of people employed directly by the Dorset and Somerset strategic health authority. [216990]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1124W by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne).

Ambulances

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* ambulances and *(b)* paramedic staff the Lancashire Ambulance Trust has; and what the average time taken to respond to a 999 call was in each Lancashire district in the last period for which figures are available. [215497]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Performance information is available by ambulance service and may be found in the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance Services, England: 2003–04", a copy of which is available in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0411 .htm.

Information relating to the numbers of paramedic staff is shown in the table.

	Headcount
Total qualified ambulance staff	552
Manager	23
Paramedic	198
Ambulance personnel	331

Source:
Department of Health non-medical workforce census.

Burns Unit (Kent)

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision he has planned for specialist burns unit provision for patients in Kent; and if he will make a statement. [217232]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national burn care group, which is considering options for reconfiguration of specialist burns services across England and Wales, is being led by the national health service. Decisions have not yet been made regarding the development of burn care centres; any proposals for change will be submitted' to a full public consultation process, probably in the summer of 2005. This is a process is being developed by and for the NHS and the Department has no formal role at this time, though we are kept in touch with developments.

Currently, people in Kent have access to specialised burn services at the Queen Victoria hospital, East Grinstead, Sussex, which has historically served the population of Kent, although, since the Dartford Crossing has been open, it is now easier for people from some parts of Kent to go to Chelmsford.

There are also specialised burn services in the following locations in South East England:

Chelsea and Westminster hospital (the only specialist service within London).

Broomfield hospital, Chelmsford, Essex.

Mount Vernon hospital, Northwood, Middlesex.

Stoke Mandeville hospital, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

Catering Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215050]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Expenditure arises on hospitality and entertainment only in the context of promoting the Department's business objectives. All such expenditure is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in "Government Accounting".

There has been no expenditure on entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests. The amount spent by the Department on working lunches since 1997 is shown in the table.

	Amount (£)
1997–98	379,089
1998–99	493,024
1999–2000	607,370
2000–01	580,449
2001–02	523,338
2002–03	633,875
2003–04	863,404

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in the roll-out of the liquid-based cytology system for cervical cancer screening in each of the strategic health authority areas since April 2004. [216099]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Following the evaluation of a Government-funded pilot study of liquid based cytology (LBC), National Institute for Clinical Excellence concluded in October 2003 that this new technology should be rolled out across the NHS cervical screening programme. It will take five years to implement LBC across England as all staff, who read the tests or take the tests will have to be retrained. The Department is providing £1.2 million for 2003–04 and £6 million for 2004–05 to kick-start this process. The nine regional cytology training schools in England are being converted to train the rest of the programme. As of January 2005, eight out of the nine training schools in England had been trained or had a specific date to begin their retraining. The ninth is awaiting a local decision on which system they will use.

Children's Burns Unit (Newcastle)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the capacity is of the children's burns unit at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle; and what the patient throughput was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [216492]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Co-Proxamol

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what alternative drugs will be available for prescription in place of co-proxamol following its withdrawal by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. [216049]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are a number of alternatives for managing painful conditions and the committee on safety of medicines (CSM) has issued advice on pain management options to assist prescribers, together with individual patients, in choosing appropriate pain management strategies. This guidance also refers to a number of sources of additional advice, including the British National Formulary, which is sent to all doctors and pharmacists.

The CSM's overview of alternative analgesic options was communicated through the Chief Medical Officer's Public Health Link to all health care professionals accompanying the communication on the withdrawal of co-proxamol and is available on the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's website www.mhra.gov.uk Copies have been placed in the Library.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Prosser: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the South Thanet constituency, the effects of changes to the Department's policy since 1997 on the South Thanet constituency; [216793]

(2) if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the Dover constituency, the effects of changes to the Department's policies since 1997 on the Dover constituency. [216794]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the South Thanet and Dover areas.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for inpatient treatment within East Kent Coastal Primary Care Trust (PCT) has fallen to zero from 834 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for outpatient treatment within East Kent Coastal PCT has fallen to 341 from 1,033 in June 2002.

Between September 1999 and June 2004, the number of consultants at East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 201 to 254. The number of nurses increased from 2,151 in September 1999 to 2,461 in September 2003.

Figures for December 2004 show that 100 per cent. of patients within East Kent Coastal PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days.

In the South Thanet local authority (LA) area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen from 214.2 in 1997 to 210.1 in 2003. In the Dover local authority area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 have fallen from 204.1 in 1997 to 198.1 in 2003.

In the South Thanet LA area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 149.3 in 1997 to 122.5 in 2003. In the Dover LA area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 149.8 in 1997 to 122.5 in 2003.

East Kent Coastal PCT has received an allocation of £256.5 million in 2004–05. In the recently announced PCT allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08, East Kent Coastal PCT will receive an increase of £27.4 million in 2006–07 and 32.1 million in 2007–08. This is a total increase of 18.7 per cent. over the two years. By 2007–08, East Kent Coastal PCT will receive an allocation of £362.5 million.

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215614]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Blackpool South constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Blackpool Primary Care Trust (PCT) has fallen to zero, from 342 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Blackpool PCT has fallen to 260, from 724 in June 2002.

In June 2003, at Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust, 87.9 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 93. per cent.

The latest figures, September 2004, show that all urgent general practitioner referrals with suspected cancer are seen by a specialist within two weeks.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Blackpool PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a GP within two working days and a primary care professional within one working day.

In 1997–98 the Lancashire Ambulance Service was able to attend 66.1 per cent. of category A emergency calls within eight minutes. During 2003–04, 77.7 per cent. of category A emergency calls were attended within eight minutes.

Work has started on a 5.8 million twin theatre day case unit at Blackpool Victoria hospital. This is due for completion in March 2006. The new facility will enable the hospital to increase the number of operations it carries out as day cases and will help cut waiting times for patients.

A new £45 million regional cardiac centre is being developed at the Blackpool Victoria hospital, which is scheduled to open in 2006. This will increase the number of beds by 38 and provide three additional operating theatres. There will also be a new 10-bed high dependency unit.

A second computed tomography scanner became operational at the Blackpool Victoria hospital in April 2004, enabling an extra 4,600 scans to be undertaken each year.

Fleetwood hospital is to undergo a £2.6 million redevelopment, providing additional x-ray equipment, treatment rooms, a new endoscopy unit and a new main entrance to the hospital. This is due to be completed in June 2005.

Digital Hearing Aids

Sir John Butterfill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effects on patients of waiting times for assessments for digital hearing aids in Bournemouth west; what proposals he has to help the Bournemouth teaching primary care trust to reduce this time; what steps he is taking to increase the number of audiologists; and if he will make a statement. [217041]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information relating to the waiting times for patients waiting for assessments for digital hearing aids is not collected centrally.

In line with our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", it is now for primary care trusts (PCTs,) in partnership with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and other local stakeholders, to plan, develop and improve services for local people including audiology services.

I am advised by Dorset and Somerset SHA that the Bournemouth PCT is making good progress with reducing waiting lists by increasing in-house activity, and using private providers under the public private partnership scheme.

More generally, the modernising hearing aids services (MHAS) project is being managed on behalf of the Department by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. Since September 2000, the MHAS project has been retaining audiologists and generally modernised services in a phased way to enable them to offer digital hearing aids to people who would benefit from them. The fourth and final wave should be complete by the end of March 2005.

Drug Addiction/Treatment

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has gathered on the relative addictiveness of *(a)* nicotine, *(b)* heroin and *(c)* methadone; and if he will make a statement. [214279]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has not commissioned any specific research to gather information on the relative addictiveness of these drugs. Relative addictiveness depends on dose, route of consumption and other factors, and varies for each drug across the components that make up the syndrome of dependence.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were treated by the Somerset drugs service in each of the last eight years. [214474]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data is not available prior to 2003–04.

Data published by the National Drug Monitoring System, indicates that 1,118 people were in contact with structured drug treatment services in Somerset in 2003–04.

Enbrel

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1117W, on Enbrel, if he will refer the drug Enbrel to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence in relation to its prescription in cases of juvenile arthritis. [217166]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued appraisal 2002/016 on 22 March 2002, which addressed the use of Etanercept (Enbrel) for the treatment of juvenile idiopathic arthritis and Etanercept and Infliximab for rheumatoid arthritis. Further information is available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Pharmaceutical Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214308]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The pharmaceutical committee met on 19 January 2004 and 8 and 9 November 2004, under the Irish and Netherlands presidencies. There were no meetings during the Italian presidency from 1 July to 31 December 2003. On both occasions, the meetings were held in Brussels and the United Kingdom was represented by at least one senior official from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the European Union—Cm 6174 laid in April 2004, Cm 6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm 6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Forensic Medical Examiners

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many female doctors are forensic medical examiners at the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust. [216203]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): medical staff in Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust within the pathology group of specialties—as at 30 September 2003

Number (headcount)

	All staff	*of which: Male*	*Female*
All staff	18	9	9
of which:			
Consultant	13	7	6

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will exempt HIV treatment and care from the regulations applying charges to those not entitled to free NHS care. [216473]

Mr. Hutton: Diagnostic testing for HIV and associated counselling is free to all, but the national health service (charges to overseas visitors) Regulations 1989 (as amended) have always specified that subsequent treatment for HIV, should the test prove positive, is chargeable if the patient is a chargeable overseas visitor. There are no plans to change that.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 883W, for what reasons only initial diagnostic testing and associated counselling given to those suffering from HIV/AIDS are exempt from charges made to those who are not ordinarily resident in the UK. [216179]

Mr. Hutton: It has always been the case that only diagnostic testing for HIV and associated counselling is free of charge to all under the provisions of the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989 (as amended). Subsequent treatment should be charged for if the patient is a chargeable overseas visitor. The greatest public health risk is from those who are unaware that they are infected with HIV, so it makes sense that diagnosis, and the advice that needs to go with it, should be free to all.

Hospital Infections

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what is his Department's procedure for the use of new infection control technologies in the NHS following a recommendation from its Rapid Review Panel; [208995]

(2) what plans he has to publish the minutes of the meetings of the Rapid Review Panel; [208996]

(3) how many products have been recommended to his Department by the Rapid Review Panel for *(a)* development for use in the NHS or *(b)* trial in an NHS clinical setting; [208997]

(5) if he will publish a list detailing the number and name of all products which have submitted applications to the Rapid Review Panel for use in fighting infection in the NHS since the Panel's establishment; [209000]

(4) if he will publish the list of those products and treatments reviewed by the Rapid Review Panel since December 2003 that are now being used for infection control or cleaning purposes in NHS facilities; [208999]

(6) how many submissions the Rapid Review Panel has received for its review of products to aid cleanliness and fight infections in the NHS; when each submission was received; and for each submission, when the Rapid Review Panel reported its results. [209001]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Protection Agency rapid review panel assesses all products for which

applications have been received from companies, provided the product falls within the panel's remit. There are currently 58 product reports available on the Health Protection Agency's website, together with the minutes of the panel meetings and a list of products reviewed by the panel. This information can be found at www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/rapid_review/. A further 25 applications received since 13 January will be reviewed later this month. Information on those products awaiting review is not publicly available as information provided by applicants is regarded as commercial in confidence until the applications have been assessed.

Of the 58 reports available on the panel's website so far, 19 contain recommendations for further research and development before the product is ready for evaluation and 10 contain recommendations for in-use evaluation/trial in a national health service clinical setting. Two products have been identified as showing benefits that should be available to NHS bodies to use as appropriate. These products are being considered for inclusion in future workplans for the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (PASA) and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Information on which products are currently used in NHS facilities is not collected centrally.

Where the rapid review panel suggests further work, it is generally the company's responsibility to organise this; the panel itself does not organise product evaluations. Some evaluations may be performed as part of normal PASA tendering exercises. Also, some products may be included in the Department's research and development programme for healthcare associated infection if it is thought they may have a particular impact in a priority area.

Lancashire Teaching Hospital

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacancies for *(a)* doctors, *(b)* consultants and *(c)* nurses there are at the Lancashire teaching hospital; and for how long each vacancy has been unfilled. [215496]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

Three month vacancy rate and number for all doctors (excluding doctors in training) in Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust, March 2004

RXN	*Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust*	*Three month vacancy rate percentage*	*Three month vacancy number*	*Staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
	All	0.0	0	234	265
	Consultant	0.0	0	165	169
	Other doctors (excluding doctors in training)	0.0	0	68	96

Notes:

1. Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole-time equivalents).
2. Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
3. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
4. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.
5. * where the sum of the staff in post and number of vacancies is less then 10.
6. — where the sum of the staff in post and number of vacancies is 0.

Source:

Department of Health Medical and Dental vacancy survey.

Department of Health vacancies survey, March 2004—NHS three month vacancies in the Lancashire teaching hospital NHS trust for qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff: three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

		March 2004		*September 2003*	
		Three month vacancy rate percentage	*Three month vacancy number*	*Staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
	England	2.6	7,508	291,925	364,692
	Of which:				
RXN	Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust	0.0	0	1,533	1,928

Notes:

1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March each year.
2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents).
3. Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.
5. Staff in post data is from the Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Sources:

Department of Health Vacancies Survey

Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census

Incubators (North-east)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many baby incubators are available at each relevant hospital in the north-east; how many were available in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001; and what plans there are to increase the number. [216494]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Lancashire Ambulance Trust

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans Lancashire Ambulance Trust has to merge with other ambulance trusts in the North West. [216060]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are no plans for Lancashire Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust to merge with other ambulance trusts in the North West area.

Mental Health

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people he estimates suffer from Alzheimer's disease in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust; and which PCTs in Lancashire provide treatment with the drug Ebixa. [215508]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The number of people suffering from Alzheimer's disease is not collected centrally. Information on which primary care trusts (PCTs) are currently prescribing Memantine (Ebixa) is not held centrally. Ebixa is not currently covered by existing National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance. PCTs, when considering the funding of such treatment, are expected to use their existing prescribing arrangements and to consider all the evidence available to them on clinical effectiveness.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* medical staff and *(b)* non-medical staff employed in mental health services there have been in the NHS in England in each year since 1986, broken down by (i) general psychiatrists, (ii) child and adolescent psychiatrists, (iii) forensic psychiatrists, (iv) learning disabilities consultants, (v) old age psychiatrists, (vi) psychotherapists, (vii) psychiatric nurses, (viii) clinical psychologists, (ix) art, music and drama therapists, (x) occupational therapists, (xi) social workers and (xii) other. [216161]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): medical consultants[1] within the psychiatry group of specialities by speciality, England[2]

Number (headcount)

	1986	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*
Psychiatry group	1780	1,802	1,899	1,912	2,010	2,025	2,036	2,071	2,099	2,267
Of which:										
Child and adolescent psychiatry	348	339	349	343	373	364	340	363	358	377
Forensic psychiatry	47	40	68	50	72	71	80	82	82	93
General Psychiatry[3]	1147	1,186	1,225	1,190	1,215	1,215	1,246	1,230	1,246	1,322
Learning disabilities[4]	157	157	166	174	172	167	169	169	159	152
Old age psychiatry	0	0	0	65	83	104	112	136	164	214
Psychotherapy	91	80	91	90	96	104	89	91	90	109

	1996	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*June 2004*
Psychiatry group	2,306	2,447	2,627	2,808	2,904	2,959	2,979	3,229	3,483
Of which:									
Child and adolescent psychiatry	411	445	462	486	481	486	459	505	541
Forensic psychiatry	98	123	148	152	162	199	187	223	231
General Psychiatry[3]	1,293	1,365	1,464	1,569	1,647	1,649	1,700	1,778	1,911
Learning disabilities[4]	159	161	172	181	184	177	182	199	194
Old age psychiatry	234	244	268	311	328	348	351	414	484
Psychotherapy	111	109	113	109	102	100	100	110	122

[1] The data for 1986 shows consultants and shmo with allowance.

[2] Data as at 30 September each year except 2004 which is at 30 June.

[3] The figure for 1986 shows the number of consultants and shmo with allowance in the specialty of "Mental Illness".

[4] The figure for 1986 shows the number of consultants and shmo with allowance in the specialty of "Mental Handicap".

Source:

Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

MHS hospital and community health services: Non-medical staff working in the specified areas of work in England as at 30 September each year

	1986	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Total of specified staff[1]	95,301	94,779	96,552	97,525	60,013	61,646	61,882	58,641	57,567
Mental health nurses[2]	88,007	87,013	88,227	88,678	51,188	52,436	51,917	48,218	46,812
Qualified learning disabilities nurses	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	14,177	14,166	13,276	12,563	11,817
Qualified psychiatry nurses	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	37,011	38,270	38,641	35,655	34,995

MHS hospital and community health services: Non-medical staff working in the specified areas of work in England as at 30 September each year

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Psychotherapists	201	209	207	211	[3]—	223	289	280	290
Clinical psychologists[3]	1,848	1,985	2,120	2,263	1,325	1,919	2,186	2,381	2,493
Art/music/drama therapists[4]	206	228	355	381	389	425	450	468	482
Qualified occupational therapists	5,039	5,344	5,643	5,992	6,241	6,643	7,040	7,294	7,490
Qualified social services staff	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total of specified staff[1]	66,005	66,728	66,898	66,416	67,377	68,538	72,190	74,773	77,779
Mental health nurses[2]	50,994	50,932	50,220	48,877	48,922	49,026	51,315	52,204	53,678
Qualified learning disabilities nurses	12,504	12,105	11,111	10,736	9,923	9,497	9,776	9,550	8,950
Qualified psychiatry nurses	38,490	38,827	39,109	38,141	38,999	39,529	41,539	42,654	44,728
Psychotherapists	391	442	489	535	574	653	745	867	948
Clinical psychologists[3]	3,330	3,658	4,038	4,408	4,572	5,032	5,514	6,092	6,757
Art/music/drama therapists[4]	585	595	633	621	646	698	687	742	764
Qualified occupational therapists	10,705	11,101	11,518	11,975	12,663	13,129	13,914	14,749	15,391
Qualified social services staff	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	15	119	241

n/a = Not available.
[1] Includes unqualified staff which cannot be separately identified.
[2] Includes unqualified staff for 1986–89 which cannot be separately identified.
[3] Includes unqualified staff for 1986–89 which cannot be separately identified.
[4] Includes unqualified staff for 1986–1994 which cannot be separately identified.
Note:
A new system of occupation coding for NHS non-medical staff was introduced in 1995. The new codes classify staff according to what they do rather than the terms and conditions under which they are employed i.e. national payscales. Figures based on new occupation codes are not directly comparable with those based on the old payscale classification.
Source:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census

Midwives (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many midwives work at *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Preston hospital. [216238]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not available in the format requested. At 30 September 2003, there were 149 midwives working at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust.
Source:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census

Minor Injuries Units

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on minor injuries unit hours of opening. [216982]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Opening hours for minor injury units are a matter for local determination. It is up to primary care trusts to assess local need and demand for urgent care services and ensure that services respond to patient need.

MRSA

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* advice has been given and *(b)* precautions are taken against the spread of MRSA in ambulances; and if he will make a statement. [216396]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Advice on appropriate precautions to reduce the spread of infection has been published by the Department in the health service circular 2000–02 and in Winning Ways—Working together to reduce hospital acquired infection in England (December 2003). All healthcare organisations, including ambulance trusts, should have systems in place to minimise the risk to patients from healthcare associated infections as required by Standards for Better Health (July 2004). Infection control policies and any particular precautions for reducing the spread of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) are a matter for individual trusts.

The Ambulance Service Association published guidelines on infection prevention and control in June 2004. Additionally, the training and common core syllabus for ambulance personnel covers infection control, including reference to MRSA.

Multiple Myeloma

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether it is his policy that patients suffering from rare cancers, with particular reference to multiple myeloma, should receive equal priority within the NHS as those suffering from more common forms of the disease. [215826]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government are committed to providing high quality cancer services across the country, irrespective of cancer type. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has been commissioned to continue the improving outcomes series to ensure there is a comprehensive package of cancer services guidance covering all cancers.

The NICE improving outcomes in haematological cancers guidance was published in October 2003 and addresses multiple myeloma.

NHS Bank

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 556–7W, on the NHS Bank, how the budget of £732 million will be spent. [215992]

Mr. Hutton: The overall budget managed by the NHS Bank on behalf of the Department in 2004–05 has now increased to £746 million.

A breakdown of planned expenditure is shown in the table.

NHS Bank planned expenditure 2004–05

Area of expenditure	*Amount (£ million)*
Special assistance	70
Strategic health authority managed allocation	120
Impairments/accelerated depreciation funding	258
Private finance initiative revenue costs	15
General and personal medical services quality and outcomes framework achievement	283
Total	746

NHS Recruitment

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses have been recruited to work in the NHS from (i) Sub-Saharan Africa and (ii) India. [215507]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is not collected centrally. Healthcare professionals who work in the United Kingdom have to be registered with the relevant professional body. In this case, the professional bodies are the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the General Medical Council (CMC). Both professional bodies produce a statistical breakdown of their register, which can be found on their respective websites at www.nmc-uk.org and www.gmc-uk.org.

It is important to note that healthcare professionals registered with the CMC and the NMC may not come to work in the UK and those that do may not work within the national health service.

NHS Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost to the NHS of paying the salary of *(a)* a radiographer and *(b)* a radiologist was in the last year for which figures are available. [213927]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* The average cost of a radiographer in England is shown in the table. We cannot provide information regarding the earnings of radiologists as we do not hold medical and dental earnings data by specialty.

Average cost of a radiographer in 2002 in England

Mean cost of radiographer to national health service	[1]£30,000

[1] Figure rounded to nearest £100.

Note:

Average cost is the average earnings of a Radiographer grossed up by 12 per cent., to represent "on-costs". The NHS earnings information is based on payroll data taken from a sample of approximately 50 per cent. of trusts during August 2002.

Source:

Department of Health NHS Earnings Survey

NHS University Courses

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 24 January 2005 to the hon. Member for Aberavon (Dr. Francis), *Official Report*, columns 183–184W, on the NHS university, which of the NHS university courses are accredited; by which bodies they have been accredited; and what the length was of each course. [216372]

Mr. Hutton: The NHS university (NHSU) was set up to provide a range of learning opportunities for all levels of staff across the national health service. Its courses run to meet specific learning and skills needs.

The following table shows are the NHSU courses which are currently accredited, by which body and the length of each course.

Name of course	*Accredited by*	*Length of course*
1. First Contact Care	Sheffield Hallam university	i) Postgraduate Diploma—one year ii) M.Sc.—two years
2. Managing Patient Complaints	Middlesex university	180 hours of study
3. Managing Health and Social Care Certificate Programme	Programmes based on four modules of open learning, currently used and accredited locally by 12 higher education institutes (HEIs) and nationally by the Institute of Health Care Management	600 hours of study in 12–14 months
4. Managing Health and Social Care Diploma Programme	Programmes based on six modules of open learning currently used and accredited locally by 12 HEIs and nationally by the Institute of Health Care Management	1,200 hours of study over 18–24 months

Source:

NHSU February 2005.

Obesity

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many obesity clinics there are in England; [217267]

(2) what the waiting time to attend an obesity clinic in England is. [217268]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are seven adult and seven child national health service obesity clinics in England. Information on the waiting list to attend these clinics is not collected centrally.

Patient and Public Involvement Forums

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Patient and Public Involvement Forums since their inception; and if he will make a statement. [216454]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* It is the responsibility of the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health rather than the Department to review the effectiveness of patients' forums and to report to the Secretary of State on that effectiveness.

The Commission recently published a report, entitled "PPI Forum Activity Summary", which highlighted the valuable contributions made by patients' forums in their first year's activities.

Premature Babies

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will assess the merits of introducing a respiratory syncytial virus preventative treatment programme for premature babies who are most vulnerable to that virus. [215765]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Such a programme already exists. Recommendations on the use of paluvizumab were made by the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation at its November 2002 meeting. Details can be found at http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/jcvi/mins01nov02.htm.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the 88 spearhead primary care trusts referred to in his statement of 9 February. [216767]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The list of spearhead local authorities and primary care trusts was placed in the Library as part of the launch in November 2004. The list is also available to the public at: www.dh.gov.uk/healthinequalities.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what he deems to be *(a)* an appropriate and *(b)* a maximum period for a primary care trust to respond to correspondence from an hon. Member concerning problems which a constituent might have with healthcare or with a primary care trust. [215854]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* The Department does not set correspondence standards for primary care trusts or any other national health service organisation. We would expect them to have similar standards to those used in other public sector organisations. The Department's own standard for replying to correspondence is 90 per cent., of replies within 20 working days.

Research

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on research by his Department in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003 and *(e)* 2004. [215886]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The total departmental expenditure on research and development is shown in the table.

Total research and development spend

	£ million
2000–01	510
2001–02	538
2002–03	574
2003–04	Not available

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will ask the Rapid Review Panel to look into preventative treatments for respiratory syncytial virus as part of its programme to reduce hospital acquired infections; [217133]

(2) if he will invite the Rapid Review Panel to examine preventative treatments for respiratory syncytial virus as part of its programme to reduce hospital acquired infections. [217134]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The rapid review panel considers all applications that it receives provided the product falls within the panel's remit, that is, it should be a new or novel product which could help reduce healthcare associated infection. Any application submitted regarding a product specifically aimed at reducing respiratory syncytial virus would be considered as part of this process.

Applications for a marketing authorisation of any medicinal product for the treatment of this and other infections would be considered by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency rather than the panel.

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213793]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Temporary Nurses

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action has been taken by his Department to implement the recommendations on temporary nurses in the Audit Commission report Brief Encounters. [216389]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has issued guidance setting standards for the use of temporary staffing in the national health service. Agency framework agreements have been negotiated with external agencies providing temporary staff to NHS employers, to drive up standards and improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness. NHS Professionals has been established as a special health authority to bring greater co-ordination and consistency to the use of temporary staff within the NHS and in turn, offer better quality patient care and better value for money.

The provisional spend on temporary nursing staff has reduced by £65 million in 2003–04. This represents a reduction of more than 10 per cent.

Transplants

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been assessed and accepted for *(a)* heart, *(b)* lung and *(c)* heart and lung transplant waiting lists in each of the last three years; how many have received transplants; and how many have died while waiting for transplantation. [216667]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of people assessed and accepted for heart, lung and heart and lung transplant waiting lists in each of the last three years; the number who have received transplants; and the number who have died while waiting for transplantation is shown in the tables.

Registrations for a heart transplant, 2002–04, United Kingdom, by year of registration and outcome[1] of that registration

	Year of registration					
	2002		2003		2004	
Outcome[1]	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Still listed	17	9	35	17	53	37
Transplanted	136	71	123	59	80	56
Died	12	6	16	8	7	5
Removed	27	14	34	16	4	3
Total	192	(100)	208	(100)	144	(100)

Registrations for a lung transplant, 2002–04, United Kingdom, by year of registration and outcome[1] of that registration

	Year of registration					
	2002		2003		2004	
Outcome[1]	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Still listed	60	32	65	37	107	63
Transplanted	89	47	78	44	45	26
Died	32	17	27	15	16	9
Removed	8	4	6	3	2	1
Total	189	(100)	176	(100)	170	(100)

Registrations for a heart/lung transplant, 2002–04, United Kingdom, by year of registration and outcome[1] of that registration

	Year of registration					
	2002		2003		2004	
Outcome[1]	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Still listed	9	21	9	22	19	70
Transplanted	19	45	20	50	7	26
Died	12	29	11	27	1	4
Removed	2	5	—	0	—	0
Total	42	(100)	40	(100)	27	(100)

[1] As at 10 January 2005.

Travel Costs Scheme

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which part of his Department has the power to change the rules of the Hospital Travel Costs scheme. [216443]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Changes to the provisions of the hospital travel cost scheme are delivered through amendments to the statutory instruments for NHS (Travel Expenses and Remission of Charges) Regulations 2003, SI 2003/2382, which are approved by Parliament. The chief nursing officer's user experience and professional leadership directorate has the policy lead for the scheme.

Triage

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which NHS trusts have introduced orthopaedic triage systems using *(a)* general practitioners with a special interest, *(b)* physiotherapists and *(c)* multi-professional teams; and if he will make a statement; [213473]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the impact on orthopaedic waiting times of triage systems using *(a)* physiotherapists, *(b)* general practitioners with a special interest and *(c)* multi-professional teams. [213474]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not collected centrally. The Department is working with a range of external stakeholders to develop a framework for musculoskeletal services. This will include drawing on a number of existing examples of good practice in using triage services to reduce waiting times, improve co-ordination of care and promote quality, convenience and choice for NHS patients.

Waiting Times (Middlesbrough)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for surgery on the NHS was for patients in Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2005. [215885]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not available at constituency level.

The table shows the average (median) waiting time for elective patients where the patient was awaiting surgery at: South Tees Acute National Health Service Trust, South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust, Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Langbaurgh PCT for the years 1997–98, 2001–02 and 2003–04. Figures for 2004–05 are not yet available.

Elective (waiting list and booked) cases with an operation; median time waited—1997–98, 2001–02 and 2003–04

	Providers	*Median time waited (days)*
1997–98	South Tees Acute NHS Trust	41
2001–02	South Tees Acute NHS Trust	39
2003–04	Middlesbrough PCT, Langbaurgh PCT and South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust	50

Notes:

1. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. Data quality—hospital episode statistics (HES) are compiled from data sent by over 300 NHS trusts and PCTs in England. The Department liaises closely with these organisations to encourage submission of complete and valid data and seeks to minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data via HES processes. While this brings about improvement over time, some shortcomings remain.
3. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
4. Time waited statistics from HES are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

Working Tax Credit

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has made concerning entitlement to the child care element of working tax credit of a couple where one person is engaged in qualifying remunerative work and the other is a student nurse. [216645]

Mr. Hutton: The current NHS Bursary Scheme provides an allowance for health professional students who use a registered or approved child care provider during their period of training. Where the student, spouse or partner is in receipt of the child care element of working tax credit no allowance is payable to the student. Before the introduction of the allowance to meet child care costs within the NHS Bursary Scheme there was a public consultation.

TRANSPORT

Bus Services

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rural bus services in Morecambe and Lunesdale are supported by rural bus grants. [216778]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department provides specific funding to local authorities for rural bus services through the rural bus subsidy grant (RBSG), introduced in 1998. Lancashire's RBSG allocation for 2004–05 is £1.24 million rising to £1.28 million in 2005–06. Between 1998 and 2003 the Department's annual rural bus challenge (RBC) competitions also provided funds for innovative rural transport schemes. Lancashire has been awarded £3.74 million for eight different RBC schemes.

Local authorities are also able to support rural bus services through their general revenue support grant (RSG) funding. It is a matter for each individual authority to decide which services to support from their RSG and RBSG resources.

Lancashire county council advise us that there are six rural bus services that serve Morecambe and Lunesdale supported by the Department's two rural bus grant schemes as shown in the following table (RBSG unless indicated):

Service	*Description*
L1 (RBC)	Carnforth-Milnthorpe (Carnforth Connect)
33	Silverdale Shuttle
43/45/81A/81B	Lancaster-The Kellets-Carnforth/Kirkby Lonsdale
55A	Lancaster-Carnforth-Warton
21	Lancaster-Aldcliffe
556	Kendal-Lancaster-Kendal

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the costs of cleaning the Department and its predecessors were in each year since 1997. [213829]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002.

The total cost of cleaning in the central Department comprising DFT HQ in London and Hastings, The Air Accidents and Marine Accident Investigation Branches and Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service was £384,833 in 2002–03 and £405,480 in 2003–04. For the six departmental agencies, who by the nature of their businesses and operations have a large number of properties located throughout the country, the total costs were £2,772,182 in 2002–03 and £2,931,915 in 2003–04.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many departmental *(a)* canteens and

(b) bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213627]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002.

DfT HQ in London at Great Minster House has one canteen, which is provided without direct subsidy. The associated costs cannot be broken down in the detail requested but the overall catering costs were £12,776 in 2002–03 and £24,679 in 2003–04.

Elsewhere DfT's HQ staff at Ashdown House, Hastings have access to a canteen provided by the major occupier but catering costs are covered in the general service charge and are not identifiable separately. The Driver Vehicle and Licensing Agency have three canteens at their Swansea offices that are run on a nil cost basis. Driving Standards Agency have one canteen and a bar at their Cardington Training Centre but the individual costs cannot be broken out from the overall delegate charges levied by the company running the contracted out facilities management services at the site. VOSA provides a contracted out canteen service for delegates attending its training courses in Bristol which staff may use and the cost contribution for this service was £13,592 in 2002–03 and £19,002 in 2003–04

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214958]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department's records do not allow me to provide the information broken down to the level of detail requested by the hon. Member. However the combined cost of official ministerial business cards, headed paper and compliment slips is known. The combined costs of these three elements since the formation of the Department in May 2002, in each financial year is:

£

	Combined cost
29 May 2002 to 31 March 2003	3,994
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	2,198
1 April 2004 to 31 January 2005	2,602

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214897]

Charlotte Atkins: The information requested is not accounted for separately from the cost of other telecommunications throughout the Department, and so cannot be provided on grounds of disproportionate cost.

Motorway Cameras

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what purpose cameras are being placed on traffic message gantries on some sections of the M1 motorway; and what the total cost is thereof. [214176]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* The M1 motorway is equipped with cameras for traffic and incident management purposes such as comprehensive surveillance of accidents, traffic and weather conditions. They do not measure individual vehicle speed. However, some cameras measure the average speed of the traffic for the purposes of setting automatic queue-warning signs. These cameras are not used for speed enforcement. The provision of CCTV cameras is controlled by departmental standards and they can only be used for the purposes described. Most cameras are fixed to free-standing masts installed in the motorway verge. In Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, 12 cameras (installed early in 2004) have been fitted to traffic message sign gantries.

On the A1 just north of the end of the M1 near Wetherby, a number of traffic and incident management cameras are being provided on message sign gantries. These works are part of the ongoing A1 Darrington to Dishforth Design Build Finance and Operate (DBFO) scheme which is converting parts of the A1 into new motorway.

These cameras have all been provided as part of a much larger project, thus an accurate cost of camera only provision cannot be determined. However it is estimated that the typical cost of installing a single camera on a traffic message sign gantry and making it operational is around £15,000.

Noise Pollution (Maidenhead)

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies his Department has conducted of the effect at different times of day of noise pollution from Heathrow airport in Maidenhead and the surrounding area. [213495]

Charlotte Atkins *[pursuant to the reply, 8 February 2005, Official Report, c. 1450–1W]:* I am advised that noise at Heathrow is continually monitored by BAA using 10 permanent monitors. These are situated close to the airport, but none is situated in Maidenhead. Mobile monitors have been used for specific studies in the past at Dorney and Shurlock but there are no monitors in the surrounding area at present.

Rail Freight

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to continue the Strategic Rail Authority's policies towards large-scale Railfreight interchanges. [217265]

Mr. McNulty: The Government continue to believe that railfreight interchanges play an important role in supporting the sustainable transport of goods. Decisions about individual railfreight terminals will be taken at the regional and local level, but the Government have given guidance on the development of Regional Transport Strategies that says

> "Particular consideration should be given to the spatial issues, such as identifying the broad location of new multi-modal freight interchanges which include regional rail freight interchanges as set out in the SRA's Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Policy and distribution centres of regional or sub-regional significance to encourage modal shift of freight from road to rail".

Rail Services

Andrew Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains on the West Coast Main Line from Manchester to London *(a)* were cancelled, *(b)* broke down during the journey and *(c)* arrived over 30 minutes late during the first six weeks of 2005. [216517]

Mr. McNulty: In the first six weeks of 2005 (to 11 February), Virgin Trains planned to run 2,658 services on the Manchester to London route. Of these services 152 trains did not run or failed to complete their journey and 169 were late by 30 minutes or more. Precise data on trains breaking down mid-journey are not readily available.

Railway Stations

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many railway stations have closed since 1 May 1997. [216336]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Five stations have been permanently closed since 1997 (Sinfin North, Sinfin Central, Pendleton, Croxley Green and Watford West). Three other station closures (Filton, Wrexham Central and Mountain Ash) were associated with facilitating new stations. The Secretary of State is also considering a decision to close Etruria station, part of the West Coast Route Modernisation project.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997; [213654]

(2) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department and its predecessors was in each year since 1997. [213682]

Charlotte Atkins: Since the creation of the Department for Transport in May 2002, the costs incurred by the Department and its Executive Agencies for consultants conducting staff surveys are as follows:

£000

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
DfT(C)	0	34.2	0
HA	15.5	9.4	17.3
DVLA	0	0	40.0
15DSA	18.0	0	0
VGA	0	0	0
VOSA	2.4	0	0
MCA	3.4	47.2	15.6
Total	39.3	90.8	72.9

Internal costs arising from staff surveys are not identified separately and are included in the Department's and agencies' administrative budgets. Copies of the annual reports are deposited in the Library of the House.

Staff surveys are an important measure of how people feel about working in the Department. They help to provide focus on areas for improvement such as performance management, development and leadership. Surveys also allow a better overview when staff are spread over numerous locations, as with the agencies.

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Department and its predecessors spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213854]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department was formed in May 2002. The information for the central Department and its agencies is set out in the following table.

£000

	2002-03	2003-04
DfTc		
Stationery	240.0	307.3
Office supplies	109.4	182.1
DVLA		
Stationery[1]	11,110.0	12,111.0
Office supplies	[2]	[2]
DSA		
Stationery	374.4	478.5
Office supplies	[3]	205.6
VCA		
Stationery	19.4	20.7
Office supplies	4.5	5.9
VOSA		
Stationery	[4]	2,312.2
Office supplies	[4]	157.3
HA		
Stationery	91.6	395.7
Office supplies	305.1	582.8
MCA		
Stationery[5]	214.2	213.1
Office supplies	102.7	82.1

[1] This expenditure also includes the stationery which the Agency uses for its core business i.e. print on tax discs, V5s, V11s etc.
[2] Office supplies included in figure for stationery.
[3] Office supplies not recorded separately under previous accounting system.
[4] VOSA was created in April 2003.
[5] Figures exclude some IT and reprographics consumables as these had not been recorded separately from operating and capital costs.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215836]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer to the answer given by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Armed Services

Mr. Robathan: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral

Commission how much was spent by the Electoral Commission on raising voting awareness among service voters in each year since 2000. [216367]

Mr. Viggers: Section 13 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, under which the Electoral Commission acts to raise voter awareness, came into force on 19 January 2001. The Electoral Commission informs me that it has spent £11,000 in the current financial year on measures specifically aimed at raising awareness of registration among service voters, most of it on the production and distribution to Ministry of Defence units of a leaflet providing electoral information for members of the armed forces. The Ministry of Defence is responsible for all aspects of distribution within units. In 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 the Commission incurred only staff costs, which cannot be separately identified, in respect of media relations activity specifically to highlight registration amongst service voters.

Commission programmes aimed at raising voter awareness generally are also likely to have made some contribution to raising voter awareness among service voters.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Racial Hatred

Ross Cranston: To ask the Solicitor-General how many people have been charged with offences relating to the stirring-up of racial hatred; how many files on such cases have been put to the Attorney-General; in how many of those cases prosecutions were approved; in which years; how many of those prosecutions were successful; and what the nature was of the issues in successful cases. [215121]

The Solicitor-General: The Attorney-General's consent to prosecute a person for offences relating to the stirring-up of racial hatred has been sought, to date, on 80 occasions. In total, consent to prosecute was given in relation to 73 of those persons. A table showing those consent decisions is as follows.

	Consent given
1988	2
1989	1
1990	2
1991	3
1992	4
1993	2
1994	2
1995	7
1996	12
1997	9
1998	1
1999	4
2000	4
2001	8
2002	2
2003	0
2004	3
2005	7
Total	73

Seventy-two of those persons have been charged with offences relating to the stirring-up of racial hatred. One person absconded before charge.

The 72 prosecutions have resulted in 44 convictions, five acquittals, six cases dropped by the prosecution and 17 other outcomes.

The seventeen "other outcomes" are as follows: two cases in which the defendant was bound over, one case where the defendant absconded, 10 cases that are on-going, one case where the defendant died before completion of the proceedings, one case where a nolle prosequi was entered, one case where the proceedings were stayed on the ground that the defendant was medically unfit to be tried and one case where the outcome is unknown.

It is not possible to say what the nature of the issues was in the successful cases, as the prosecution statistics relating to incitement to racial hatred do not record information of this nature.

"Behzti"

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Solicitor-General whether the Attorney-General considered initiating a prosecution against the producers of the play "Behzti" on the grounds that it was allegedly offensive to Sikhs; and if she will make a statement. [215831]

The Solicitor-General: Prosecutions for the offences of incitement to racial hatred, under Part III of the Public Order Act 1986, are brought by the Crown Prosecution Service, who seek the consent of the Attorney-General to prosecute.

The Crown Prosecution Service has not sought the consent of the Attorney-General to prosecute any offence in relation to the play "Behzti".

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BBC

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to publish the Burns Report into the renewal of the BBC Charter. [217233]

Tessa Jowell: The independent panel, chaired by Lord Burns, which I appointed to advise me on matters relating to Charter review, issued its final advice on Friday 28 January. In line with previous commitments, I published it on the same day.

Free TV Licences

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pensioners have received a free television licence in North Durham.[214681]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the North Durham constituency in 2003–04 was 4,785, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Government Art Fund

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the works of art purchased by the Government art fund in each year since 1997; what the cost of each item was; and where each item is on display. [215807]

Estelle Morris: It is not possible to provide information on the activities of the Government art fund as there is no such organisation within the Department or elsewhere within Her Majesty's Government. The Government Art Collection, is responsible for purchases of works of art for display within certain United Kingdom Government buildings both in this country and around the world. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1724W for detailed information on purchases of works of art in the Government Art Collection from 1997–2005.

Licensing

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether guidance on licensing policy to local authorities allows local authorities to impose a requirement on licensed premises to display information on sensible alcohol consumption and typical drink unit content. [216486]

Mr. Caborn: In July 2004 we issued Guidance under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 to licensing authorities. Chapter 7 contains advice and recommendations on best practice regarding conditions attached to premises licences and club premises certificates. Conditions may be attached only where they are necessary for the promotion of one or more of the licensing objectives.

Peter Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued concerning the status of *(a)* parish and *(b)* town councils in relation to consultation under sections 13 and 69 of the Licensing Act 2003. [216477]

Mr. Caborn: No special guidance has been issued concerning the status of parish and town councils in relation to consultations under the Licensing Act 2003. Members of parish and town councils have the same rights as any other citizen. The Licensing Act 2003 provides that interested parties, including persons living or involved in a business in the vicinity of a premises or bodies representing them, may make representations about applications for provisional statements and about the grant or variation of premises licences or club premises certificates, except where a simple conversion of an existing licence or certificate is made under the grandfather rights provisions in Schedule 8 of the Act. Interested parties may also apply for a review of a licence or certificate at any time as well as make representations about a review once it has been applied for. Representations must be about the effects of the application on the promotion of the licensing objectives. Members of parish and town councils will be able to make representations if they are interested parties under the terms of the Act. They are not free to make representations in their own right unless they live in the vicinity of the premises concerned. However, there is nothing to prevent a council member acting on behalf of any resident living in the vicinity of the premises and making the representations that the resident would like to have made.

Public Service Publisher

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received on the role of a public service publisher. [217332]

Estelle Morris: Representatives of the broadcasting industry and other interested individuals have expressed a range of views on Ofcom's proposal for a Public Service Publisher (PSP). On 8 February 2005, Ofcom reported on the final phase of its review of Public Service Broadcasting which expanded on the PSP proposal. The Government is considering Ofcom's recommendation and will respond in due course.

Royal Parks Constabulary

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many police officers there were in the Royal Parks Constabulary in each year since 1994; and what projections there are for numbers of officers in the force in future years. [214289]

Mr. Caborn: The number of police officers in the Royal Parks Constabulary in each year between 1994 and 2004 is set out in the following table. The figures show uniformed staff numbers as at 31 March each year.

	Number
1994	176
1995	171
1996	163
1997	157
1998	164
1999	156
2000	158
2001	156
2002	149
2003	151
2004	140

From 1 April 2004 the Royal Parks have been policed by an Operational Command Unit of the Metropolitan Police Service, under a co-policing arrangement with the RPC. There are currently 144 police officers and 47 community support officers in the Operational Command Unit.

Clauses have been included in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill for the functions of the RPC to be taken over by the MPS in 2005–06. The projected number of MPS staff who will police the Royal Parks from 2006–07 is 135 police officers and 45 community support officers.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he plans to introduce to divert youngsters from antisocial behaviour. [213360]

Ms Blears: The Government have introduced a range of programmes to reduce crime committed by young people which also have an impact on antisocial behaviour.

The Home Office is supporting a wide range of schemes targeted at young people who are most at risk. These include:

Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPS), Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISP) and Positive Futures.

The Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs) and Youth Inclusion and Support Panels (YISPS) are part of the Government's wider programme to target young people at risk of getting involved in criminal and antisocial behaviour. These are essentially intensive intervention programmes that target the risk factors often associated with young people's offending.

Positive Futures programme was launched in March 2000 and is targeted at 10–19 year olds living in the most deprived neighbourhoods in England and Wales. Its objective is to have a positive influence on drug use and other negative behaviours of vulnerable young people. Since its launch over 51,000 young people have taken regular part in Positive Futures activities.

The Government will also be publishing in the near future a green paper on young people, which will consult on proposals for more places to go and things to do for teenagers, as well as on ways to improve advice and support on the choices and challenges they face. The proposals in the green paper are intended to contribute to the Government's efforts to divert youngsters from crime and antisocial behaviour, and more generally to contribute to positive outcomes for teenagers. There is evidence that a lack of things to do can lead people into offending. A 2003 MORI/Youth Justice Board Survey showed that 25 per cent. of offenders in mainstream education and 42 per cent. of school-excluded offenders said their motive for offending was they were bored. There will be a specific focus within the green paper on those who are at risk of crime and antisocial behaviour, and other poor outcomes.

Drug Crime (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many arrests of drug dealers Lancashire police have made in each Lancashire constituency in each of the last three years; [216832]

(2) how many people have been arrested in Lancashire for antisocial behaviour in each of the last three years. [216833]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not available centrally. Information on arrests collected centrally is based on persons arrested for "notifiable" offences by main offence group and police force area only and therefore does not identify individual offences, such as drug dealing, or whether the arrest is as a result of antisocial behaviour.

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to remove from the UK a higher proportion of failed asylum seekers; and whether asylum seekers are required to attend in person to receive their appeal decision. [216838]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration Service is undertaking a number of initiatives to remove a greater proportion of failed asylum seekers from the United Kingdom. These include among other things: securing re-admission agreements with other countries so that those without passports can be re-documented and removed more quickly, increasing the number of removals under the assisted voluntary returns scheme; increasing the number of returns to safe third countries through the increased use of ring fenced detention; increasing the number of removals in London by using flexible and mobile teams able better to support other agencies; re-evaluating the way in which we deal with family removals; maximising removals from our network of reporting centres and working to reduce disruptive behaviour designed to frustrate removal at the point of departure.

At present, first determinations in asylum appeal cases are served by post by the Immigration Appellate Authority, as the applicable procedure rules do not permit service by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). However the rules do permit the service in person by IND of the outcome of applications for Statutory Review, and these are, wherever possible, served in person.

From 4 April 2005 a new appeal system will come into force. The procedure rules governing this will allow us to serve a much higher number of determinations, at all stages of the appeal, in person, and work is in hand to ensure that where asylum seekers are reporting regularly to the Immigration Service, they receive their determinations, and are advised of their further options, when they report.

British Crime Survey

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the value of the British Crime Survey. [214825]

Ms Blears: The British Crime Survey (BCS) is the most reliable and robust measure of crime in England and Wales today. Although no formal evaluation of the BCS has been undertaken, both the criminological and policing communities respect it as an authoritative measure of crime trends. The overwhelming value of the BCS is that it provides the most reliable measurement of crime trends as it has measured crime consistently since 1981.

The BCS provides the best reflection of the true extent of crime because it also includes crimes that are not reported to the police. We have never claimed that the BCS counts all crimes that occur in England and Wales, but rather that it provides a reliable measure of trends in the crimes that it does count from one year to the next. The design of the survey ensures statistically robust data is obtained. The BCS count also gives a better indication of trends in crime over time than police recorded crime because it is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police and in police recording practices.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of public confidence in the British Crime Survey. [214826]

Ms Blears: There has been no research looking specifically at public confidence in the British crime survey (BCS). However, the Home Office are involved in a project conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Statistics Commission to look into the factors that affect public confidence in official statistics.

Control Techniques (Young People)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the terms of reference are of the review of control and restraint techniques in facilities for young people; and when he expects to announce the results. [216918]

Paul Goggins: The terms of reference for the review of physical control in care (PCC) in the secure training centres are:

To review the methods of physical control of trainees aged from 10 to 17 years presented by the Prison Service college including proposals for change to existing methods.

To comment on the suitability of these methods for use by custody officers performing either custodial duties at secure training centres or escort functions in respect of children placed in secure training centres and local authority secure children's homes. To comment on the suitability of these methods for use on pregnant young women and those who have had caesarean sections.

To recommend a preferred system of PCC restraints for use on young persons to the Youth Justice Board (YJB).

The PCC review panel is expected to meet in early March to make its recommendations. These will be considered by the YJB who expect to submit a report of the review, with recommendations, to Ministers in the spring.

The Youth Justice Board has also commissioned a wider review of physical restraint, including behaviour management, by a specialist in restraint techniques and a trauma surgeon. Recommendations from the draft report are currently being considered, with a view to determining an appropriate way forward.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answers of 25 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 268–69W, on crime, if he will make it his policy to record *(a)* alcohol-related violent offences, *(b)* youth offences, *(c)* internet crime and *(d)* domestic violence offences centrally; and if he will make a statement. [213868]

Ms Blears: The offences which form the recorded crime series are all indictable and triable-either-way offences together with a few closely related summary ones. As such these offences are defined by statute. Those referred to in the question are not. For example, a "domestic violence offence" would be recorded as more or less serious wounding or common assault depending on the severity of the violence used and in accordance with the relevant legislation.

The ability to produce police recorded crime statistics on the topics mentioned is dependent on the adoption of new IT systems in police forces and the Home Office. An exercise is under way to assess the costs and benefits associated with making this change.

Essex Police

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the responsibilities are of Essex police's mobile support unit; and which other constabularies have mobile support units. [216355]

Ms Blears: The chief constable is responsible for the day to day operational management of the force. This is not something on which we hold information.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee for the European Refugee Fund met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215410]

Mr. Browne: We have records of no meetings during the Italian Presidency, one during the Irish Presidency, and two during the Dutch Presidency. The UK was represented by officials from the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Directorate, or by the UK Permanent Representation as necessary.

Illegal Working

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department is taking to reduce illegal working. [216799]

Mr. Browne: The Government are firmly committed to tackling illegal migrant working. Our strategy involves increasing enforcing capacity, encouraging compliance by business, and developing joint working between agencies responsible for enforcing workplace regulations. In 2004, the UK Immigration Service carried out 1,600 enforcement operations against illegal work, a 360 per cent. increase on the previous year, and apprehended 3,330 illegal migrant workers.

During the course of 2004, we strengthened section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, the law preventing illegal migrant working, by adjusting the requirement on employers to check and copy certain documents for prospective employees, and by making

the summary offence under section 8 triable either way. Following conviction on indictment, there is no upper limit to the level of fine that can be imposed. We introduced a new, separate criminal offence of trafficking for the purpose of exploitation. We also provided monitored access to our labour market for EU accession state workers.

As we made clear in our five-year strategy for asylum and immigration, we are continuing to examine ways to develop joint working and the sharing of intelligence between workplace enforcement agencies. We will pilot a joint team from April this year to target the use of illegal migrant workers in the West Midlands and explore the scope for closer collaboration between departments. We are setting up a new authority to regulate gangmasters in the agricultural and shellfish gathering sectors. We will also introduce civil penalties for employers found to be using illegal workers. In the longer term, the establishment of a national identity card system will provide a simple and secure means of verifying entitlement to work in the United Kingdom.

Juvenile Offenders

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many juvenile offenders are currently held in *(a)* young offenders' institutions and *(b)* elsewhere within the Prison Estate; and if he will make a statement. [214364]

Paul Goggins: Data on the number of young people held in Young Offender Institutions (YOI) within the juvenile estate as at 2 February 2005, is set out in the table.

Establishment	*Number of juveniles on remand*	*Number of sentenced juveniles*	*Total*
Ashfield	50	235	285
Brinsford	69	132	201
Bullwood Hall	0	13	13
Castington	58	94	152
Downview	5	6	11
Eastwood Park	2	6	8
Feltham	141	116	257
Hindley	35	129	164
Holloway	n/a	2	2
Huntercombe	n/a	337	337
Lancaster Farms	83	120	203
New Hall	6	24	30
Parc	16	17	33
Stoke Heath	44	128	172
Thorn Cross	n/a	55	55
Warren Hill	25	171	196
Werrington	n/a	116	116
Wetherby	46	271	317
Total	580	1,972	2,552

In addition to the above, two juveniles are currently held on remand in the dedicated unit for category A juveniles at HM Prison Woodhill.

Lancashire Police

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women are training to join Lancashire police. [216213]

Ms Blears: Lancashire constabulary recruits do not commence training to be a police officer until they have actually joined the constabulary. The initial training period lasts for 15 weeks, although officers remain on probation for two years, during which time they undergo additional training.

On 10 February 2005 there were a total of 456 probationers in the Lancashire constabulary; 318 male and 138 female. Of these, 25 male and 15 female officers are currently undergoing their initial training course.

A further intake of recruits is scheduled for March 2005 when it is anticipated that 16 males and 10 females will join the Constabulary.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have joined Lancashire police in each year since 2001. [216214]

Ms Blears: The latest information on police officers joining the service was published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 13/04, "Police Service Strength England and Wales, 31 March 2004. Prior to March 2003, the numbers of support staff and traffic wardens joining were not collected centrally and community support officers were only introduced after 31 March 2002.

The available data for Lancashire[1] are given in the following table:

	Men				*Women*			
As at 31 March:	*Police officers*	*Police staff*	*Community Support officers*	*Traffic wardens*	*Police officers*	*Police staff*	*Community Support officers*	*Traffic wardens*
2001	118	n/a	[illegible]	n/a	46	n/a		n/a
2002	144	n/a	—	n/a	59	n/a	—	n/a
2003	[2]153	15	24	0	[2]71	42	17	0
2004	[2]208	158	1	5	[2]93	273	6	6

[1] headcount
[2] not comparable with previous years as it includes transfers from other England and Wales forces.

Paedophiles (Grooming)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the civil and criminal provisions in the Sexual Offences Act 2004 to tackle grooming by paedophiles on the internet and other media; and if he will make a statement. [215283]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 9 February 2005]:* The Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Sexual Offending, which is chaired by Baroness Scotland, has been charged with monitoring the implementation of the whole Sexual Offences Act 2003 which came into force on 1 May 2004. It is still too early to assess the use of the new grooming offence and the new risk of sexual

harm order but the Ministerial Group will be taking stock of the situation when data about a full year's operation of the provisions is available.

Police

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has given to police authorities on how the integrity of evidence would be protected in the event that custody officers are civilianised; and if he will make a statement. [210980]

Ms Blears: The integrity of evidence gathered during an investigation is the responsibility of the senior investigating officer. The role of the staff custody officer would be the same as that for a police custody officer as set out in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and accompanying codes of practice. Guidance would be issued to all relevant stakeholders in advance of the introduction of staff custody officers.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many searches of *(a)* persons and *(b)* vehicles under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 were carried out by each Metropolitan Police division *(a)* in each of the last five years and *(b)* in 2005 to date; and how many arrests were made as a result in each division for (i) offensive weapons and (ii) other reasons. [217413]

Ms Blears: Information from 1999–2000 to 2003–04 (latest available) for the Metropolitan Police area is given in the table. The information is collected centrally at police force area level only.

Data for 2004–05 will be published later in the year.

Searches of persons and vehicles under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994[1] within the Metropolitan police area by resultant arrests, 1999–2000 to 2003–04

Number

				Arrests for:	
	Total searches	*Vehicles only searched*	*Persons searched*	*Offensive weapons*	*Other reasons*
1999–2000	2,693	2	2,691	4	34
2000–01	2,813	7	2,806	3	64
2001–02	6,065	65	6,000	89	144
2002–03	8,606	117	8,489	88	338
2003–04	4,359	11	4,348	29	122

[1] Searches in anticipation of violence.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* community safety officers were based in Milton Keynes in each year since 1997. [217191]

Ms Blears: Information on strength at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level is collected annually and reflects the position at the end of March. Information on BCU strength is only available from 2002 and is set out in the table. The deployment of officers to BCUs is a matter for the chief constable (Mr. Peter Neyroud QPM) and within the Milton Keynes (D) Division deployment of officers is a matter for the Divisional Commander.

I am told by the chief constable that until 21 February there were no community support officers in Milton Keynes. From Monday 21 February, five community support officers will be patrolling in Milton Keynes.

Milton Keynes (D) Division

As at 31 March	*Number of police officers*
2002	343
2003	346
2004	371

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers there are in Morecambe and Lunesdale. [216774]

Ms Blears: I am told by the chief constable of Lancashire (Mr. Paul Stephenson QPM) that the northern (B) division currently has 25 community support officers (CSOs) and seven are deployed to the Morecambe area.

I announced on 24 November 2004 that, under the first phase of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund, the Home Office will support the recruitment of an additional 57 CSOs in Lancashire. This will enable the force to deploy a total of 185 CSOs by 31 March 2005. I understand from the Chief Constable that he plans to allocate a further eight CSOs to the northern division.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much public funding has been spent on CCTV security cameras in Morecambe and Lunesdale since 1997. [216775]

Ms Blears: The Home Office has provided a total of £83,692 to Morecambe and Lunesdale under the Closed Circuit Television initiatives, which formed part of the Crime Reduction Programme.

Since the completion of the Crime Reduction Programme, crime reduction funding has been allocated directly to the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership through the Building Safer Communities fund and to Basic Command Unit (BCD) Commanders through the BUG fund. These funding streams finance a variety of interventions, including CCTV, to tackle local crime priorities. Exactly how funding is allocated across the area is the responsibility of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Lancashire Constabulary.

Probation Service (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much will be spent on the probation service in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in 2005–06. [216830]

Paul Goggins: The Lancashire Probation Board has so far been allocated £19.547 million of Home Office funds for the financial year 2005–06. The amount of this that is allocated for services in Chorley is a matter for the Lancashire Probation Board.

Secure Sites (Young People's Deaths)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young people under 21 years have died in each of the last five years for which figures are available in *(a)* police custody, *(b)* prison and *(c)* other secure sites; and if he will make a statement. [213322]

Ms Blears: The table sets out the information requested. Of the deaths of young people who die following contact with the police, 89 per cent. (77 deaths out of 87) do so as a result of road traffic incidents. Operational measures to avoid pursuits or curtail them include the use of helicopters, the early deployment of tyre deflation devices across the carriageway and tactical pursuit and containment in which a number of police vehicles are deployed in a planned manner to box in the target vehicle and bring it safely to a halt. More widely, we are working with the Association of Chief Police Officers, the National Centre for Policing Excellence and other key stakeholders in developing guidance setting out minimum standards for safer custody practice. This is due for publication in January 2006 following consultation in summer 2005 on the draft guidance with practitioner groups.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is, within stakeholders, developing a suicide prevention strategy which includes specific provision for juveniles. This will focus on:

Increasing activity within regimes—better control of activities; more pertinent and constructive outdoor activity

Improved first night/ reception facilities

Recognising the innate vulnerability of the juvenile population

Child protection training

Improvements to healthcare centres—mental health nursing initiatives

Decreased use of segregation unit

Counselling, support groups, and specialised psychological interventions for those who self-harm

Promotion of peer support for juveniles through insider schemes.

	Police custody	*Prison*	*Young offenders institution*
1999–2000	18	1	15
2000–01	10	2	16
2001–02	12	0	12
2002–03	27	0	16
2003–04	20	2	8

Shannon Trust

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what support his Department gives to the Shannon Trust; and what plans there are for further support. [214318]

Paul Goggins: The Department for Education and Skills has commissioned an evaluation of the Toe by Toe scheme, run by the Shannon Trust. The evaluative exercise offers a structured analysis that will identify the success factors in the secure estate, determine the role of the learner/tutor relationship in the scheme's success, and consider its applicability to all learners. The evaluation will ascertain the potential for mainstreaming the scheme within the wider Skills for Life learning community and establishing stronger links with the overall Skills for Life initiative.

Under-age Drinking

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been in *(a)* south Yorkshire and *(b)* England of retailers for selling alcohol to people under 18 years in each of the last five years. [212264]

Paul Goggins: The available information, relating to England and south Yorkshire police force area, 1999 to 2003, is shown in the following table.

Defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for offences relating to the sale of alcohol to underage persons[1], England and South Yorkshire police force area: 1999 to 2003

Offence description	*Statute*	*Year*	*England*	*South Yorkshire PFA*
Selling etc., intoxicating liquor to persons under 18 for consumption on the premises	Licensing Act, 1964, section 169(1); Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983, schedule (sec.3) para. 4(1)	1999	185	5
		2000	116	14
		2001	166	20
		2002	149	—
		2003	561	—
Wholesaler selling intoxicating liquor to a person under 18	Licensing Act 1964, sec. 181 A(1) as added by Licensing Act 1988, sec. 17	1999	1	—
		2000	2	—
		2001	3	2
		2002	2	—
		2003	12	—

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

West Mercia Police

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was paid by West Mercia constabulary in out of court settlements in the last 12 months. [213313]

Ms Blears: The chief constable of West Mercia constabulary informs me that £72,483 has been paid in out of court settlements in the 12 month period to January 2005.

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints have been made against West Mercia Police Constabulary in the last 12 months. [213315]

Ms Blears: I am advised by West Mercia police that 790 complaints were made against the force between 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2004.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Waste

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which landfill sites in England are licensed to accept hazardous waste.[216901]

Mr. Morley: At the end of 2004, 16 landfills in England were permitted to accept hazardous wastes, with a further seven awaiting a decision (of those seven, some may be accepting hazardous wastes under the terms of a waste management licence). Also, the Environment Agency has received 47 applications to operate separate cells in non-hazardous landfills, for the disposal of stable non reactive hazardous waste, with 24 sites currently operational. Details on all the sites can be found on the Environment Agency website at http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444217/444663/landfill/

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Publications

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213647]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office in-house magazine "SCOOPS" was published from 1997 until December 2002.

Early production costs were minimal, excluding staff production costs. From October 1998 with the introduction of the first colour edition, until publication was discontinued in December 2002, costs rose to £2,500 per issue. "SCOOPS" was published ten times per year, at a cost of £25,000 per year between 1999 and 2002.

The staff newsletter, "The Weekly", has always been produced entirely in-house and has incurred no additional production costs.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214900]

Mr. Miliband: Information relating to mobile telephones and their cost is not held centrally and is not separately identifiable on the Department's accounting system. It cannot therefore be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) on how many occasions his Department's Ministers used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years; [213694]

(2) how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years.[213711]

Mr. Miliband: "Travel by Ministers" makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/private charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers."

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997; [213662]

(2) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213685]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office and its agencies carry out regular Staff Surveys as part of good management practice in developing people to deliver more efficient and better quality services. Staff Surveys are usually carried out by external consultants.

Consultant costs are set out in the table.

Consultant costs of staff surveys in the department from 1997

£

Year of staff survey	Cabinet Office	Central Office of Information	Government Car and Despatch Agency
1997	—	•	•
1998	—	—	—
1999	29,963	•	—
2000	26,554	—	—
2001	—	25,350	—
2002	27,833	25,873	—
2003	—	—	—
2004	35,973	32,900	—

Notes:
1. Survey not carried out in that year.
2. Fees inclusive of VAT.
3. A Staff Survey was developed, carried out and analysed internally. No external costs were incurred.

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Department spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213850]

Mr. Miliband: Detail of the Department's spend on stationery in each year since 1997 are shown in the table.

	Stationery expenditure (£000)
1997–98	392
1998–99	565
1999–2000	823
2000–01	756
2001–02	610
2002–03	712
2003–04	637

The cost of office supplies is not separately identifiable on the Department's Accounting System.

Swan Hunter

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Swan Hunter shipyard. [215820]

Mr. Miliband: My visit to the Swan Hunter ship yard was in my capacity as constituency MP for South Shields and not as Minister for the Cabinet Office.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adoption

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were adopted in the United Kingdom in each of the last three years. [209410]

Margaret Hodge: The tables show the number of adoptions in the UK for the last four calendar years for which numbers are available, and the number of looked after children adoptions in England for the last five years ending 31 March.

Number

Calendar year ending	2000	2001	2002	2003
United Kingdom	5,503	6,588	6,240	5,429
England	4,671	5,657	5,265	4,479
Wales	269	324	416	342
Scotland	391	468	385	468
Northern Ireland	172	139	174	140

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Adoptions of looked after children in the year ending 31 March[1]

England	Number
2000	2700
2001	3100
2002	3400
2003	3500
2003	3700

[1] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.
Source:
DfES

While the total number of children adopted in England has fallen between the calendar years 2001 and 2003, the number of looked after children adopted in England has increased by 37 per cent. between the years ending 31 March 2000 and 2004.

Children Act

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment the Government have made of the impact of the Children Act 2004 on the costs of local authorities. [216268]

Margaret Hodge: Details of the costs associated with the Children Act 2004 are set out in the regulatory impact assessment which is available on the Department's website. The resources which the Government will be providing to support the reforms introduced by Children Act 2004 are set out in Every Child Matters: Change for Children (paragraphs 4.16–4.25), a copy of which is in the Library.

Class Sizes

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in reducing infant class sizes for five, six and seven-year-olds in Leicestershire since 1997. [216932]

Derek Twigg: The age of individual pupils in classes is not collected centrally. The available information is shown in the table.

Maintained primary schools[1]: number of pupils in key stage 1 classes of 31 or more pupils taught by one teacher 1997 to 2004

Position in January each year
Leicestershire local education authority

	Total pupils in all classes	Number of pupils in classes of 31 or more: Number of pupils	Number of pupils in classes of 31 or more: Percentage of pupils[2]
1997[3]	30,324	7,098	23.4
1998	20,311	4,407	21.7
1999	19,696	3,497	17.8
2000	19,977	2,464	12.3
2001	20,560	1,033	5.0
2002	20,112	280	1.4
2003[4]	18,077	436	2.4
2004[4]	17,720	818	4.6

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Percentage of pupils in those classes expressed as a percentage of pupils in all classes taught by one teacher.
[3] Before local Government reorganisation.
[4] From 2003 reception classes were returned alongside nursery classes as foundation stage for the first time. Therefore, reception classes have been included in the key stage 1 figures to produce a coverage as close as possible to that available for previous years.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213821]

Derek Twigg: Since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme the Department has spent,

(a) £5,300 on registering two official vans;

(b) £368 in respect of one penalty charge for an official vehicle.

Departmental employees incurring congestion charges while on official business claim these on an individual basis. Information regarding this expenditure is not held centrally. Such information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. It is departmental policy that penalty charges are not reimbursed to individuals.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter dated 5 March 2004 sent to her predecessor by the hon. Member for Brent, East regarding Mr. Christopher McMahon. [215628]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend the then Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education replied to the hon. Member's letter dated 5 March on 30 March.

Early Years Education

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many free nursery and pre-reception class places have been created for three, four and five-year-olds in the constituency of Stockton, South since 1997. [215305]

Margaret Hodge: All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Stockton-on-Tees local education authority area and parliamentary constituencies within Stockton-on-Tees local education authority area since 1997 is shown in the tables.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up 3 and 4-year-olds—Stockton local education authority area

Position in January each year

	3-year-olds: Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	3-year-olds: Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	3-year-olds: Total 3-year-olds	4-year-olds: Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]	4-year-olds: Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	4-year-olds: Total 4-year-olds
1997	2,400	n/a	2,400	n/a	n/a	[4]2,500
1998	2,200	n/a	2,200	n/a	n/a	[4]2,400
1999	2,000	n/a	2,000	n/a	n/a	[4]2,200
2000	1,900	[5]70	2,000	n/a	n/a	[4]2,200
2001	1,800	[5]100	1,900	n/a	n/a	[4]2,300
2002	1,700	[5]220	1,900	2,100	[6]90	2,200
2003	1,600	[5]110	1,700	2,100	[6]120	2,200
2004	1,600	[5]220	1,800	2,100	[6]140	2,200

n/a = Not available.
[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31st December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up 3 and 4-year-olds by parliamentary constituency Stockton local education authority area

Position in January 2004

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[3]*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[4]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[5]*	*Total 4-year-olds*
Stockton North	760	70	830	940	60	1,000
Stockton South	860	150	1,000	1,100	80	1,200
Stockton LEA Total	1,600	220	1,800	2,100	140	2,200

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Changes in pupil figures may arise from changes to the underlying population in the local education authority area and other factors. However, my Department does not publish population figures for individual age cohorts at sub-national level because of the unreliability of the underlying population estimates. The Office for National Statistics publish sub-national population estimates in five-year age bands.

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many free early years education places were taken up in Bedford and Kempston in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [207222]

Margaret Hodge: All four year olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four year olds in Bedford parliamentary constituency and Bedfordshire local education authority area is shown in the tables. Information for private and voluntary providers is available for Bedfordshire but not for Bedford constituency.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by 3and 4year olds Bedfordshire local education authority area 1997 and 2004

Position in January each year

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[4]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total*
1997	1,300	0	1,300	n/a	n/a	[6]4,700
2004	1,250	[3]2,510	3,760	4,020	[5]770	4,790

n/a = Not available.
[1] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 places.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools Census.
[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools Census.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census data collection exercise and the Annual Schools Census.
[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

Number of free nursery education places[1,2] taken up by three and 4-year-olds in maintained nursery and primary schools, Bedford parliamentary constituency area 1997 and 2004

Position in January each year

	3-year-olds				4-year olds			
	Maintained nursery schools	*Maintained primary schools*		*Total*	*Maintained nursery schools*	*Maintained primary schools*		*Total*
1997	150	190	0	340	100	130	700	910
2004	100	250	0	340	50	130	640	820

[1] Headcount of children aged three and four at 31 December in the previous calendar year.
[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 places.
[3] Includes reception classes and classes not designated as nursery classes.
Source: Annual Schools Census.

Changes in pupil figures may arise from changes to the underlying population in the local education authority area and other factors. However, my Department does not publish population figures for individual age cohorts at sub-national level because of the unreliability of the underlying population estimates. The Office for National Statistics publish sub-national population estimates in five-year age bands.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Leonardo da Vinci Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [216284]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Leonardo da Vinci programme Committee met twice during the Italian presidency on 17 September 2003 and 17–18 November 2003. It met twice during the Irish presidency on13 February 2004 and 26 April 2004 and three times during the Dutch presidency on 17 September 2004, 11 November 2004 and 16 December 2004. All the meetings were held in Brussels apart from the last of the Dutch presidency which was held in Maastricht. The meetings were attended by officials from the joint international unit of my Department and the Department for Work and Pensions.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on the prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the community action programme concerning co-operation policy in the youth field, including European voluntary service and youth exchanges within the community and with third countries (YOUTH), met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217247]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The YOUTH programme committee met once in each of the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies. The meetings took place on 5 December 2003, 22 June 2004 and 15 October 2004 and all were held in Brussels. The meetings were attended by an official from the joint international unit of my Department and the Department for Work and Pensions and by a representative of the UK National Agency.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on the prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the advisory committee on medical training met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215924]

Mr. Hutton: I have been asked to reply.

The advisory committee on medical training was set up to advise the European Commission and member states on matters relating to the training of workers whose professions come under sectoral directives guaranteeing free movement and automatic recognition of qualifications.

The advisory committees have not met during the last three years and are not likely to do so again.

Marriage and Relationship Support

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding her Department has made available for *(a)* marriage and relationship support agencies and *(b)* parenting and family agencies in each year since 1997; how many (i) marriage and relationship support agencies and (ii) parenting and family agencies have received such funding in each year since 1997, broken down by agency; and if she will make a statement. [214783]

Margaret Hodge: As a result of the machinery of Government changes in June 2003, responsibility for marriage and relationship support policy and funding transferred to DfES from the Department for Constitutional Affairs, previously the Lord Chancellor's Department; and responsibility for parenting and family support policy and funding transferred to DfES from the Home Office.

In 2003–04 the DfES made £14.9 million available to voluntary and community sector organisations specialising in marriage and relationship support and/or parenting and family support. This has been distributed as follows:

Programme	*Grants*	*Budget (£)*
Marriage and relationship support grant	44 Projects delivered	5.0
Parenting and family support	125 grants, 132 projects	9.4

In 2004–05, the DfES made £24.9 million available to voluntary and community sector organisations specialising in marriage and relationship support and/or parenting and family support. This has been distributed as follows:

Programme	*Grants*	*Budget (£)*
Marriage and relationship support grant	33 Organisations to deliver 42 projects	4.9
Parenting and family support	100 grants; 139 projects	20

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding is available in 2004–05 to couples for relationship counselling *(a)* within marriage, *(b)* outside marriage and *(c)* where there are children in the relationship; and if she will make a statement. [214784]

Margaret Hodge: The Marriage and Relationship Support Grant (MARS) has provided funding of £4.9 million in 2004–05 to voluntary and community sector groups specialising in the provision of help, advice and information to support people to maintain successful relationships with their partners. The MARS Grant does not directly fund the provision of counselling services. It is used for work to prevent relationship problems and so to provide a stable environment for any children in the family.

The MARS Grant has now been amalgamated with the former Family Support Grant to form the Strengthening Families Grant. The same amount of money is available for relationship support. Adult relationship support services remain an important and integral element of the range of family support services funded by the Department.

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214938]

Derek Twigg: The cost of official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips comes out of the general stationery budget and we do not have a breakdown for these individual items. Such information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Offenders' Learning and Skills Service

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the creation of the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service will affect offender learning provision in Wales. [214990]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The new arrangements for offender learning and skills in Wales (and in England) will make the provision for offender learners considerably better. An early focus on advice, guidance and assessment will secure a tightly focused Individual Learning Plan that will accompany the offender learner through the Criminal Justice System. The Plan will ensure that learning needs continue to be met as he or she passes through the System's principal points of transition.

We will substantially enhance offender learners' chances of employment on release—and successful resettlement—through significantly greater planning and co-ordinated funding of learning. A particular focus on the needs of the labour market will make the provision much more relevant to the needs of employers.

The new learning offer is described in The Offender's Learning Journey". I have arranged for a copy of this document to be placed in the Library.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the projected budget for the offenders' learning and skills service is for the next three years; and what ring-fencing of these budgets will take place. [214991]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This Department currently has a ring-fenced budget for offenders' learning and skills of £152.5 million for each of the years 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213836]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills provides 660 car parking spaces at its four headquarter sites, all of which, form part of the physical estate and therefore incur no additional costs.

Parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants remain the responsibility of the individuals.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on postage by the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [215024]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has spent the following on postage since 1997:

	£
2003–04	607,497
2002–03	763,931
2001–02	654,160
2000–01	749,150
1999–2000	806,590
1998–99	[1]
1997–98	[1]

[1] This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The figures provided include first and second class postal/poundage charges and expenditure incurred through the use of business reply.

The departmental policy is that all outgoing mail is sent second class unless there is a business need for the item to be sent at premium rate.

Post-compulsory Education

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 16-year-olds were in post-compulsory education in England in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03, *(c)* 2003–04 and *(d)* 2004–05, broken down by region. [216484]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The latest published local participation estimates for 16-year-olds in education and Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded work based learning (WBL) in England are for end 2001 (2001–02 academic year). Local participation estimates for end 2002 and end 2003

(provisional) are due to be published in March 2005 together with a consistent historic participation time series.

Participation estimates of education and LSC funded WBL by 16-year-olds in England, broken down by region, for end 2001 are given in Table 1.

The data are taken from the Department's Statistical Bulletin entitled, "Participation in education and training by 16 and 17-year-olds in each local area in England, end 2001".

Table 1: Participation in education and LSC funded WBL by region in England for end 2001

Percentage

	Full-time education	*Education and LSC funded WBL*
England	71	82
North East	67	88
North West	67	81
Yorkshire and the Number	67	83
East Midlands	68	82
West Midlands	69	82
East of England	72	81
London	74	82
South East	74	82
South West	74	84

Pre-school Funding (Warrington)

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding has been provided for *(a)* nursery and *(b)* pre-school education in Warrington in each of the last seven years. [211406]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested. Funding for nursery and pre-school education has been provided through a mixture of nursery education grant and education standard spending (up till 2002–03) and education formula spending (from 2003–04). The new education formula spending system is not directly comparable with the old education standard spending assessments at sub-block level. This is because the coverage of the sub-blocks and the amount of resources allocated within them changed significantly in 2003–04. Therefore the figures are not comparable between 2002–03 and 2003–04.

The figures in the following table provide details of the resources provided for Warrington from 1998–99 together with estimated figures for 1997–98 (Warrington was part of Cheshire in 1997–98). Funding through education standard spending assessments and education formula spending shares is unhypothecated.

£ million

School spending assessments plus nursery education grant (vouchers in 1997–98) in cash terms	
1997–98	4.1
1998–99	5.9
1999–2000	5.5
2000–01	6.7
2001–02	6.8
2002–03	7.4
Nursery sub-block from education formula spending in cash terms including pensions	
2003–04	10.2
2004–05	10.4

Notes:
Price base: cash
1997–98 figures for LEAs subject to local Government reorganisation in that year have been estimated, pro-rata to their post LGR figures.
Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements and include the pensions transfer to EPS for 2003–04 and 2004–05
Total funding shown includes nursery education grant for 1998–99 to 2002–03 and nursery vouchers in 1997–98. Extra funding through schools standards grant and standards fund is not included as it is not possible to identify how much of these grants are spent on under fives.
Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £0.1 million.

Pupil Referral Units

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupil referral units there are in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each local education authority. [216866]

Derek Twigg: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Number of pupil referral units: January 2004—by local education authority area

	Number
England	426
North-east	20
Darlington	1
Durham	1
Gateshead	1
Hartlepool	1
Middlesbrough	4
Newcastle upon Tyne	1
North Tyneside	4
Northumberland	1
Redcar and Cleveland	1
South Tyneside	2
Stockton-on-Tees	2
Sunderland	1
North-west	67
Blackburn with Darwen	2
Blackpool	1
Bolton	11
Bury	2
Cheshire	0
Cumbria	3
Halton	2
Knowsley	2
Lancashire	16
Liverpool	1
Manchester	4
Oldham	0
Rochdale	1
Salford	4
Sefton	3
St. Helens	2
Stockport	3
Tameside	3
Trafford	2
Warrington	1
Wigan	3
Wirral	1
Yorkshire and the Humber	43
Barnsley	2
Bradford	4
Calderdale	1
Doncaster	6
East Riding of Yorkshire	2
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	5
Kirklees	2

Number of pupil referral units: January 2004—by local education authority area

	Number
Leeds	4
North East Lincolnshire	3
North Lincolnshire	2
North Yorkshire	2
Rotherham	3
Sheffield	3
Wakefield	2
York	2
East Midlands	29
Derby	1
Derbyshire	6
Leicester	3
Leicestershire	3
Lincolnshire	5
Northamptonshire	4
Nottingham	3
Nottinghamshire	4
Rutland	0
West Midlands	51
Birmingham	3
Coventry	4
Dudley	3
Herefordshire	3
Sandwell	5
Shropshire	1
Solihull	3
Staffordshire	5
Stoke-on-Trent	3
Telford and Wrekin	4
Walsall	3
Warwickshire	1
Wolverhampton	4
Worcestershire	9
East of England	37
Bedfordshire	1
Cambridgeshire	5
Essex	6
Hertfordshire	8
Luton	2
Norfolk	4
Peterborough	1
Southend-on-Sea	1
Suffolk	8
Thurrock	1
London	69
Inner London	27
Camden	2
City of London	0
Hackney	2
Hammersmith and Fulham	2
Haringey	1
Islington	5
Kensington and Chelsea	1
Lambeth	3
Lewisham	3
Newham	1
Southwark	3
Tower Hamlets	1
Wandsworth	2
Westminster	1
Outer London	42
Barking and Dagenham	1
Barnet	2
Bexley	2
Brent	6
Bromley	2

Number of pupil referral units: January 2004—by local education authority area

	Number
Croydon	5
Ealing	2
Enfield	3
Greenwich	2
Harrow	1
Havering	3
Hillingdon	1
Hounslow	4
Kingston upon Thames	2
Merton	1
Redbridge	2
Richmond upon Thames	1
Sutton	1
Waltham Forest	1
South-east	70
Bracknell Forest	2
Brighton and Hove	0
Buckinghamshire	5
East Sussex	2
Hampshire	7
Isle of Wight	2
Kent	10
Medway	4
Milton Keynes	4
Oxfordshire	1
Portsmouth	4
Reading	3
Slough	3
Southampton	2
Surrey	11
West Berkshire	5
West Sussex	2
Windsor and Maidenhead	2
Wokingham	1
South-west	40
Bath and North East Somerset	1
Bournemouth	1
Bristol, City of	5
Cornwall	0
Devon	6
Dorset	5
Gloucestershire	4
Isles of Scilly	0
North Somerset	3
Plymouth	3
Poole	1
Somerset	7
South Gloucestershire	1
Swindon	1
Torbay	1
Wiltshire	1

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Secondments

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the people working within the Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208628]

Derek Twigg *[pursuant to the reply, 26 January 2005, Official Report, c. 366–67W]*: My Department currently has two individuals on secondment from the private sector. Caroline Hughes from Edexcel is seconded to the Skills for Life Unit and working on

embedding skills for life qualifications into vocational qualifications. Ian Foyle is seconded for six months on a part time basis from Prospects Services Ltd., under the auspices of the CBI, and is currently contributing to the production of guidance for children's trusts on planning and commissioning skills.

Sure Start

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many families have received support from Sure Start in the constituency of Stockton, South. [215304]

Margaret Hodge: Stockton South has two Sure Start local programmes (Parkfield & Victoria and Mandale, Village & Stainsby) approved by the Sure Start Unit in December 2002 supporting around 1,560 young children and their families living in the area. They deliver a wide range of child, family health and parental support services seeing on average around 17 per cent. of these children. The Parkfield and Victoria local programme has visited 100 per cent. of families with newborn babies within the first two months of their child's life.

Linked to these programmes are two neighbourhood nurseries delivering a total of 100 full daycare places. Both programmes were designated as children's centres in September 2004 and are contributing towards achieving our goal of a children's centre in every community by 2010.

Peter Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the Sure Start programme on families in The Wrekin; and if she will make a statement. [216051]

Margaret Hodge: Telford and Wrekin local authority is served by two Sure Start local programmes: Sure Start Lawley Plus, which serves the communities in Lawley, Arleston and College, The Rock, Overdale and Newdale and Ketley Bank; and Sure Start Jubilee, which serves Madeley, Woodside and Cuckoo Oak. The programmes between them support over 1500 local young children and their families.

Prior to the establishment of Sure Start Lawley Plus at the end of 1999, the area was identified as an isolated area with no early years infrastructure. It now has a nursery closely integrated with the local primary school and with social care and health services. It has strong links with the Carpenter Family Centre which has a parent and toddler group and training sessions. The programme also supports mothers with post-natal depression. It had meaningful contact with over 95 per cent. of the children in its catchment area in the year ending 31 March 2004.

Sure Start Jubilee was approved in early 2003. It offers a range of services including family support through home visiting, parenting support, baby massage, home safety promotion and reading and early language development and support. It has had some success in reducing smoking during pregnancy and just under 19 per cent. of the mothers in the area gave up smoking prior to or during pregnancy. It is using its £1 million capital allocation towards two children's centres. One of these, Woodside children's centre will create a 64 place day nursery and family room in a building to which the PCT's health visiting team will relocate alongside the Sure Start team. The other, Sutton Hill children's centre will create 42 full day care places, training facilities and a health room. Although it was a very new programme at the time and had no dedicated building from which to deliver services, it had already had meaningful contact with some 17 per cent. of the children in its catchment area in the three months between its establishment and 31 March 2004.

In addition to these services, between April 2003 and March 2004, both programmes contacted all pregnant women in their areas to give ante-natal advice and support. They also both visited 100 per cent. of these families within two months of the baby being born. In the last annual satisfaction survey, some 92 per cent. of families who responded said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the local services for young children.

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the effects of the Sure Start programme in *(a)* Whitmore Reans and *(b)* Dunstall, Wolverhampton. [216227]

Margaret Hodge: One Sure Start programme serves both the Whitmore Reans and Dunstall areas. It was approved in 2001 and supports around 870 young local children and their families. It delivers a wide range of services to support local families including family support in partnership with the Primary Care Trust (PCT); a support group for single parents; the provision of healthy eating advice to families, provision of safety equipment on a loan basis to families at a subsidised rate; a toy library; a crèche; play and stay as well as play groups; additional home visits by qualified midwife and health visitors and early assessment and referral for children with development delay.

Since opening, this programme has helped to improve the quality of life for local families. For example it works closely with the smoking cessation programme run by the PCT and all staff have received training in ways to support parents and families who may want to give up smoking. All staff have been trained to be able to identify children with delayed language development and either apply strategies recommended by therapists or refer the families for specialist help.

Local health visitors report back to the local programme on all women identified with post natal depression—so that support can be offered.

Programme Monitoring shows that the programme has seen 700 of the 870 children in their catchment area since the programme opened (81 per cent.).

The programme has strong parental participation both on the management board, which has six parent representatives with a parent vice chair and in activities where parents act as volunteers. It has a volunteer policy which aims to match skills gaps within the programme to the skills of the parents within the catchment area. This is used as a stepping stone to further training and ultimately employment. Volunteer parents can access all the training available to the programme staff.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the impact of the Sure Start programme in the Dartford constituency. [214980]

Margaret Hodge: The Dartford Sure Start Local Programme has been running since September 2002 supporting 710 children and their families within Joyce Green, Littlebrook, Princes and Wilmington wards.

The Programme delivers a wide range of services to support local people including; antenatal support, breast feeding classes, home visits by qualified midwife and health visitors; speech and language therapy; smoking cessation groups; young parents groups; training courses for parents on a range of subjects including self esteem, women's health, nutrition and weaning workshops;

The programme has only been open for just over two years and has already made a real impact on the lives of the community. The Programme has provided the following information on its progress: they have seen— 95 per cent. of all babies have been seen within two months of their birth, the percentage of pregnant women contacted by SSLP during their pregnancies also increased from 18.6 per cent. to 31.48 per cent.; number of mothers breast feeding at birth increased from 31.84 per cent. to 49.07 per cent. and the number of mothers smoking during pregnancy has reduced from 50 per cent. to 29 per cent. In the short time the programme had been open to September 2004; the programme had made contact with 40 per cent. of the children in its catchments area.

The community has also got involved in the development of the Programme, there are six parents on the Management Board and parents have also been trained to work on the planned consultation and evaluation of the programme.

The programme is working towards developing children's centre status, and its proposals for Temple Hill children's centre (Joyce Green ward) have been approved.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215792]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W.

Vocational Education

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what strategy her Department is using to promote vocational education to those students not wishing to enter further academic study. [216243]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Students wishing to follow a vocational pathway are currently able to gain access through a number of routes. These are available to all students. The Department's increased flexibility for 14 to 16-year-olds' programme creates and promotes enhanced vocational and work related learning opportunities. Our young apprenticeships programme also offers well motivated 14 to 16-year-olds the opportunity to pursue industry specific vocational programmes outside of school in partnership with employers. In September 2004 work related learning at Key Stage 4 became a statutory requirement. 8 GCSEs in vocational subjects were introduced in September 2002. Apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships offer structured programmes of training in a wide range of occupations leading to a recognised qualification for learners of foundation degrees). We will shortly be publishing a White Paper which will set out our future plans for 14 to 19-year-olds.

Youth Education, Employment and Training

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people aged between *(a)* 16 and 18, *(b)* 18 and 21 and *(c)* 21 and 25 years in each parliamentary constituency were not in education, employment or training in 2004. [216423]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds and 20 to 24-year-olds who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) are given for each local education authority (LEA) in the table.

These figures have been produced by combining information from the local Labour Force Survey for the last three years, to reduce the error margins around the NEET percentages. However, sample sizes are still very small due to the narrow age bands and small geographic area. The rates are volatile and care should be taken when interpreting the figures. An estimate of the confidence interval is provided, to aid with interpretation. Where fewer than 10 people who took part in the survey in a given LEA were NEET, the information has been suppressed as it would be potentially disclosive or particularly unreliable.

Figures are not available for the specified age groups, nor for parliamentary constituency, as sample sizes are too small for these narrow groups.

Percentage of age group not in employment, education or training (NEET)

	16 to 19-year-olds		*20 to 24-year-olds*	
Local education authorities	*NEET (%)*	*Confidence interval*	*NEET (%)*	*Confidence interval*
City of London	[—]	[—]	[—]	[—]
Camden	15	6.3	14	4.6
Greenwich	18	5.9	21	6.0
Hackney	17	6.3	19	5.4
Hammersmith and Fulham	18	7.8	11	4.2
Islington	20	7.0	20	5.8
Kensington and Chelsea	12	5.9	8	4.4
Lambeth	13	5.8	13	4.9
Lewisham	20	7.2	20	5.4
Southwark	17	6.2	21	5.8
Tower Hamlets	16	4.5	25	4.3
Wandsworth	13	5.7	13	4.0
Westminster, City of	12	5.1	16	4.3
Barking and Dagenham	26	7.1	21	6.0
Barnet	9	5.0	14	5.2
Bexley	12	5.2	9	4.9
Brent	9	3.8	13	4.1
Bromley	14	6.6	10	5.5
Croydon	11	4.6	15	5.1
Ealing	9	4.9	13	5.0
Enfield	15	6.5	13	5.4
Haringey	20	6.9	24	7.0
Harrow	[—]	[—]	11	5.4
Havering	9	4.9	9	5.1
Hillingdon	10	5.0	11	5.0

Percentage of age group not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Local education authorities	16 to 19-year-olds NEET (%)	16 to 19-year-olds Confidence interval	20 to 24-year-olds NEET (%)	20 to 24-year-olds Confidence interval
Hounslow	11	4.6	13	5.0
Kingston-Upon-Thames	[1]	[1]	7	3.9
Merton	12	6.6	12	5.7
Newham	16	4.6	24	5.1
Redbridge	10	4.7	21	6.1
Richmond-Upon-Thames	[1]	[1]	14	7.5
Sutton	[1]	[1]	11	5.2
Waltham Forest	18	6.3	20	5.6
Birmingham	16	3.2	23	3.4
Coventry	13	3.4	13	3.3
Dudley	10	4.1	17	4.9
Sandwell	17	4.2	22	4.6
Solihull	10	3.4	9	3.4
Walsall	12	3.8	24	5.2
Wolverhampton	12	4.0	27	4.8
Knowsley	17	3.9	25	5.1
Liverpool	18	3.9	20	3.8
St. Helens	10	4.1	18	5.0
Sefton	9	3.1	21	4.7
Wirral	12	3.6	19	4.7
Bolton	11	3.5	16	4.6
Bury	14	4.3	16	4.9
Manchester	16	3.9	20	3.4
Oldham	14	4.4	28	5.6
Rochdale	15	4.4	24	5.0
Salford	20	4.7	19	4.2
Stockport	7	3.5	12	4.9
Tameside	11	4.1	15	4.4
Trafford	9	3.3	14	4.1
Wigan	16	4.5	16	4.3
Barnsley	19	4.3	26	5.2
Doncaster	15	4.0	25	4.9
Rotherham	16	3.9	17	4.3
Sheffield	12	3.8	16	3.7

Percentage of age group not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Local education authorities	16 to 19-year-olds NEET (%)	16 to 19-year-olds Confidence interval	20 to 24-year-olds NEET (%)	20 to 24-year-olds Confidence interval
Bradford	16	3.7	25	4.3
Calderdale	13	4.8	22	5.1
Kirklees	12	3.7	22	4.8
Leeds	10	2.8	9	2.5
Wakefield	15	4.1	15	4.1
Gateshead	15	4.2	19	4.4
Newcastle Upon Tyne	15	4.0	13	3.0
North Tyneside	15	4.1	20	4.8
South Tyneside	16	3.6	24	4.4
Sunderland	15	3.6	21	4.0
Cornwall	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
Bath and North East Somerset	5	2.4	10	3.0
Bristol	6	2.9	13	3.4
North Somerset	6	3.0	14	4.9
South Gloucestershire	[1]	[1]	8	3.3
Hartlepool	22	4.7	25	4.9
Middlesbrough	13	3.5	27	4.6
Redcar and Cleveland	21	4.3	27	5.2
Stockton on Tees	16	4.2	20	4.8
Kingston Upon Hull	19	4.3	21	4.0
East Riding of Yorkshire	7	3.1	15	5.2
North East Lincolnshire	15	4.0	25	4.9
North Lincolnshire	9	3.6	22	5.2
North Yorkshire	6	2.8	14	4.5
York	9	3.5	7	2.9
Bedfordshire	7	2.9	11	3.5
Luton	13	3.6	18	3.8
Buckinghamshire	7	3.2	13	4.2
Milton Keynes	7	3.2	14	3.7
Derbyshire	12	3.4	20	4.1
Derby	18	4.6	18	3.9
Dorset	7	3.2	11	4.6
Poole	13	4.5	12	4.2
Bournemouth	11	3.4	8	2.7

Percentage of age group not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Local education authorities	16 to 19-year-olds NEET (%)	16 to 19-year-olds Confidence interval	20 to 24-year-olds NEET (%)	20 to 24-year-olds Confidence interval
Durham	14	4.1	27	5.2
Darlington	15	5.0	18	4.7
East Sussex	8	3.2	15	4.9
Brighton and Hove	7	3.4	11	3.1
Hampshire	8	2.2	12	2.7
Portsmouth	10	3.5	12	3.4
Southampton	15	4.3	9	2.5
Leicestershire	7	2.6	10	3.4
Leicester	12	3.4	20	3.7
Rutland	[1]	[1]	21	10.1
Staffordshire	8	2.7	12	3.1
Stoke-on-Trent	17	4.0	16	4.0
Wiltshire	6	2.9	8	3.6
Swindon	7	3.7	10	4.0
Bracknell Forest	9	3.8	12	4.5
Royal Windsor/Maidenhead	8	3.9	14	4.5
West Berkshire	5	2.7	11	3.9
Reading	11	3.9	15	3.5
Slough	12	3.6	15	3.7
Wokingham	5	2.9	11	4.5
Cambridgeshire	9	3.4	12	3.9
Greater Peterborough	11	3.6	20	4.6
Cheshire	9	3.2	13	3.8
Halton	14	3.8	27	5.3
Warrington	11	4.1	15	4.9

Percentage of age group not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Local education authorities	16 to 19-year-olds NEET (%)	16 to 19-year-olds Confidence interval	20 to 24-year-olds NEET (%)	20 to 24-year-olds Confidence interval
Devon	6	3.0	14	4.1
Plymouth	17	4.2	16	3.5
Torbay	11	3.8	16	4.7
Essex	12	2.6	15	2.8
Southend	11	4.0	18	4.4
Thurrock	14	4.1	13	3.8
Hereford	10	3.3	13	4.6
Worcestershire	8	3.1	14	4.3
Kent	12	2.5	17	3.0
Medway Towns	13	4.0	17	4.5
Lancashire	9	2.4	15	3.0
Blackburn	12	3.6	23	4.7
Blackpool	15	4.4	19	4.7
Nottinghamshire	10	3.1	16	3.6
Nottingham	15	3.6	15	3.2
Shropshire	7	3.5	15	5.5
Telford and Wrekin	12	3.7	15	4.0
Cornwall	8	3.1	16	4.5
Cumbria	9	3.5	15	4.8
Gloucestershire	9	3.2	12	3.6
Hertfordshire	5	1.9	14	2.9
Isle of Wight	9	3.6	21	5.4
Lincolnshire	9	3.2	19	3.8
Norfolk	10	3.1	14	3.4
Northamptonshire	10	3.9	14	4.1
Northumberland	16	4.2	17	4.4
Oxfordshire	7	2.9	10	3.2
Somerset	9	3.5	7	3.6
Suffolk	9	3.3	18	4.3
Surrey	6	2.3	12	3.0
Warwickshire	15	4.7	13	4.2
West Sussex	9	3.1	12	3.4
Total	11	0.3	16	0.3

[1] The NEET estimate and Confidence Interval are not provided, as the number of people surveyed in the LEA is less that 10, and so results are potentially disclosive or particularly unreliable.

Note:

Figures for all three years have been combined to reduce the error margins around the NEET estimates.

Source:

Local Labour Force Survey for 2001, 2002 and 2003.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Autonomy plc

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contracts for which her Department is responsible have been awarded to Autonomy plc. [212205]

Ms Hewitt: The Department has not directly awarded any contracts to Autonomy plc.

Chartered Aircraft

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money her Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213689]

Ms Hewitt: "Travel by Ministers" makes it clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government has published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Where RAF/private charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government has also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

No costs have been incurred by the Department in the last five years on chartering aircraft for internal flights.

Civil Service Salaries

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average annual increase in gross salary was for the year 2003–04 for *(a)* staff below the senior civil service and *(b)* the senior civil service in her Department. [208108]

Ms Hewitt: The available information for average annual increases in salary for DTI staff is presented as follows:

Average annual increase per head 2003–04 for DTI staff, full time equivalents[1]

	Gross salary[1] (£)
(a) Staff below the senior civil service[2]	1,070
(b) Senior civil service[3]	3,436

[1] Annualised increase in gross salary ie salary before deductions for tax, national insurance etc.
[2] Based on the pay award made on 1 August 2003.
[3] Based on the pay award made on 1 April 2003.
Note:
These figures do not include the DTI agencies.

Cold Calling/Doorstep Selling

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to have completed her consultation on cold calling and doorstep selling; whether she expects to propose legislative measures in relation to these matters; and if she will make a statement. [216420]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Responses to the consultation are currently being analysed by officials and these will inform decisions on how best to proceed. Careful consideration is also being given to the impact of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD) which may address many of the high pressured sales techniques of the sector.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many contracts in her Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much; over what period of time; and if she will make a statement. [211611]

Ms Hewitt: The information requested is as follows:
(a) From 2003 to 2004 four contracts were awarded to EDS. Three of these related to the broadband aggregation project and one related to management information.
(b) The DTI has a long-term PFI contract with Fujitsu and orders to Fujitsu during this period were under this contract. The type of orders related to our existing IT infrastructure and associated services and applications. The PFI contract was of course the subject of a major competition and extends until 2014.

The DTI is not disclosing the amounts for these particular contracts as this information is protected by Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (commercial prejudice).
(c) No contracts were awarded jointly to EDS and Fujitsu.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206495]

Ms Hewitt: The Department has the lead responsibility for accommodation in twelve buildings on its HQ estate with a total floor space of 98,500 sq m. There are no empty properties.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for implementation of multiannual framework programme for actions in the reinforcement of international co-operation (Synergy) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215915]

Ms Hewitt: The committee to which the hon. Member refers no longer meets. Aspects of its work have, since 2003, been undertaken by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme committee.

This committee met on the following dates in Brussels:

24 July 2003 (informal)

8 October 2003

5–6 February 2004

15 September 2004

8 December 2004

The meetings were attended by a DTI and a Defra official.

European Constitution

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will make a statement on the impact of the Charter of Fundamental Rights within the EU Constitution on industrial relations law in the UK; [214353]

(2) if he will make a statement on the impact of the Charter of Fundamental Rights within the EU Constitution on the rights of workers in the UK. [214354]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on 9 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 133–35WS, which made it clear that the Charter of Fundamental Rights will have no practical impact upon UK industrial relations law or the rights of UK workers. The full statement is available in the Library of the House.

The provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms are addressed to the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the European Union with due regard to the principle of subsidiarity and to the member states only when they are implementing Union Law. The Charter does not extend the scope of application of Union Law beyond the existing powers of the Union or establish any new power or task for the Union. Nor does it modify powers and tasks defined in the other parts of the constitutional treaty, which specifically excludes EU action on legislative areas such as pay, the right of association, the right to strike and the right to impose lock-outs.

UK legislation on industrial relations maintains a balance between workers' rights to pursue legitimate disputes and employers' rights to conduct business without disruption from illegitimate industrial action. The Charter will not alter that balance.

External Consultants

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what work was commissioned by her Department's executive agencies to be carried out by external consultants and advisors in 2003–04. [210279]

Ms Hewitt: I have asked the Chief Executives listed as follows to write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Ron Marchant, Chief Executive of the Patent Office

Mr. Desmond Flynn, Chief Executive of The Insolvency Service

Dr. J W Llewellyn, Chief Executive of the National Weights and Measures Laboratory

Ms Claire Clancy, Chief Executive of Companies House

Ms Jeanne Spinks, Chief Executive of the Employment Tribunals Service

Letter from Ron Marchant to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 21 February 2005:

House of Commons Parliamentary Question: 2004/837

I am replying on behalf of the Patent Office to the above parliamentary question concerning work commissioned by the Department of Trade & Industry's executive agencies to be carried out by external consultants and advisors in 2003–04.

The Patent Office has a limited requirement for such services. The cost of work carried out in 2003/04 by external consultants and advisors was £32,000 and covered surveys and feasibility studies for minor building alterations, staff objective setting and the implementation of an EC Directive.

Letter from Desmond Flynn to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 21 February 2005:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply to you directly on behalf of The Insolvency Service in respect of your question (2004/837) requesting information on money spent on external consultants and advisors in 2003–04.

Money spent on external consultants and advisors during April 2003 to date amounts to £34,000. This expenditure was broken down between £18,000 on a Race Equality Impact Study and £16,000 on The Insolvency Service Help Line.

Letter from Dr. J W Llewellyn to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 21 February 2005:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply on behalf of the National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML) to your question regarding what work was commissioned by her Department's executive agencies to be carried out by external consultants and advisors in 2003–04.

NWML commissioned external consultants and advisors to carry out work on a wide range of issues including Electronic Records Management, Market Surveillance, performance monitoring and IT Development in 2003/04. The total cost of their work was £68k.

Letter from Claire Clancy to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 21 February 2005:

House of Commons Parliamentary Question: 2004/837

To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what work was commissioned by her Department's executive agencies to be carried out by external consultants and advisors in 2003–04.

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question that you have raised. I am replying to you as Chief Executive of Companies House.

The details of the external consultants used and the costs for 2003/2004 are:

	£
IT consultancy	880,165
Management consultancy	51,431
Consultants for accommodation project	69,838
Total	1,001,434

I hope that you will find this information useful.

Letter from Jeanne Spinks to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 21 February 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what work was commissioned by her Department's executive agencies to be carried out by external consultants and advisors in 2003–04. I have been asked to reply on behalf of the Employment Tribunals Service.

The major work commissioned was to research the benefits of, and develop the business case for, a computerised case-handling system which in addition will allow the sharing of information with Acas.

The remainder of the work related to professional advice on premises management and development.

Homeworkers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to strengthen the employment rights of homeworkers *(a)* to enable them to claim the minimum wage and *(b)* to give them greater legal protection. [210210]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government introduced regulations last year so that employers have to pay output workers (including homeworkers) either the minimum wage for every hour they work or pay a fair piece rate that allows an average worker to earn the minimum wage. From April 2005 the fair piece rates will need to be multiplied-up by 1.2, at which point most homeworkers should be entitled to the minimum wage.

We have also been considering the position of homeworkers as part of the Employment Status Review and aim to issue a response this year.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases have been brought against her Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [202385]

Ms Hewitt: We do not collect central records of all cases in which the Human Rights Act 1998 is relied on. Human rights are now integrated in the general law and are rarely the sole basis for a challenge. We do monitor centrally those cases which we consider may be of particular significance to this Department.

We do not collect separate information centrally about the costs to public funds, legal fees or compensation payments in cases which include a human rights issue. In most cases it will be difficult to single out associated costs relating to the human rights element.

Labour Statistics (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of how many jobs have moved abroad from the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [211051]

Mr. Alexander: The Government does not collect data from which such estimates could be made. However, employment in the Greater London area has remained broadly constant over the last three years:

December to November	*Number employed*
2000–01	3,298,000
2001–02	3,319,000
2002–03	3,310,000
2003–04	3,327,000

Source:
Local Area Labour Force Survey.

Halliburton

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many export credit guarantees have been entered into by subsidiaries of Halliburton in each year since 1997; what the terms were of the deals for each of these guarantees; and if she will make a statement. [205057]

Ms Hewitt: ECGD has issued guarantees in respect of the following loans supporting UK exporters in which Halliburton has an interest:

1999

$231.4 million for work by Dresser Kellogg Energy Services Ltd. to develop a gas-field in South Africa. The majority of this loan has already been prepaid. The remainder is payable in half-yearly instalments ending in 2010.

2002

$215 million for work by M. W. Kellogg Ltd. in the construction of two gas liquefaction units in Nigeria. The loan is to be repaid in half-yearly instalments ending in 2010.

2004

$10.5 million for work by Kellogg, Brown and Root in connection with an oilfield in Kazakhstan. The loan is to be repaid in half-yearly instalments ending in 2011.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions departmental Ministers have used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years. [213446]

Ms Hewitt: "Travel by Ministers" makes it clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Where RAF/private charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

In addition an RAF aircraft was used for an internal visit on one occasion in June 2002.

Regional Venture Capital Funds

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many formal applications have been made to each regional venture capital fund up to 31 December 2004. [215860]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* As at 31 December 2004 a total of 299 potential investment opportunities had been formally considered for support by the nine Regional Venture Capital Funds (RVCFs), these are broken down by English region in the following table:

RVCF	*Number of applications presented to investment committee*
South East	35
South West	20
London	49
East of England	18
East Midlands	51
West Midlands	28

RVCF	Number of applications presented to investment committee
Yorkshire and Humber	28
North East	25
North West	45
Total:	299

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses in each region have been assisted by regional venture capital funds as at 31 December 2004. [215862]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Set out in the table below is a breakdown of the number of SMEs invested in each Regional Venture Capital Fund, as at 31 December 2004.

RVCF	Number of different SMEs invested in
South East	26
South West	6
London	17
East of England	4
East Midlands	26
West Midlands	21
Yorkshire and Humber	9
North East	25
North West	21

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what initiatives her Department is taking to reduce the numbers of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216637]

Ms Hewitt: The DTI takes the management of sickness absence very seriously and is tightening up procedures for reporting, improving data collection and handling absences, including coaching managers on dealing with specific cases.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215082]

Ms Hewitt: The current cost of producing a DTI identity pass is £1.17 (including VAT). The number of DTI passes which have been lost or stolen on a year-by-year basis, April to March, since 1997 are as follows:

	Passes Lost/Stolen
1996–97	123
1997–98	105
1998–99	115
1999–2000	66
2000–01	90
2001	98
2002–03	80
2003–04	125
2004 (to end December)	82

There is nothing on the pass to indicate that it belongs to a DTI staff member.

Sub-postmasters' Contract

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date she expects the Office of Fair Trading to make a final adjudication on the complaint made by the Association of Convenience Stores with respect to the contract between sub-postmasters and Post Office Limited; and if she will make a statement. [215032]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This is a matter for the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). My officials have asked colleagues at the OFT to write to you with any information they can provide about progress with this case.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215837]

Ms Hewitt: Since the 1998 comprehensive spending review the Department's key objectives have been set out in public service agreements (PSA), which include high-level performance targets. Progress against these targets has been reported every year since then in the Department's annual expenditure plans and departmental reports.

The Department's annual reports also cover progress against a range of other departmental targets, for example in relation to diversity in public appointments and the Department's environmental performance.

Since December 2002 the Department has provided further mid-year updates on progress towards delivering its PSA targets in annual autumn performance reports.

Details of these reports are given as follows:

The Government's expenditure plans 1998–99 Cm 3905

The Government's expenditure plans 1999–2000 to 2001–02 Cm 4211

The Government's expenditure plans 2000–01 2001–02 Cm 4611

www.dti.gov.uk/expenditure/

The Government's expenditure plans 2001–02 to 2003–04 Cm 5112

www.dti.gov,uk/expenditureplan/expenditure 2001/

The Government's expenditure plans 2002–03 to 2003–04 Cm 5416

www/dti.gov.uk/expenditureplan/expenditure 2002/index.shtml

Departmental report 2003 Cm 5916

www.dti.gov.uk/expenditureplan/report2003/

Departmental report 2004 Cm 6216

www.dti.gov.uk/expenditureplan/report2003/

Autumn performance report 2002 Cm 5731

www.dti.gov.uk/about/apr/

Autumn performance report 2003 Cm 6067

www.dti.gov.uk/about/apr/2003.pdf

Autumn performance report 2004 Cm 6422

www.dti.gov.uk/pdfs/DTI_Autumn_Performance_Report_2004.pdf

Textiles

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions the Department has had with the Ministry of Defence about the procurement of textiles. [216235]

Nigel Griffiths: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State chairs an inter-departmental committee on public procurement on which the Ministry of Defence is represented and at which a range of public procurement issues are discussed. This Department's officials also have regular contact with officials in MoD on procurement issues, including textiles.

Training and Development

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213795]

Ms Hewitt: DTI is committed to providing access to learning and development for its staff. This will ensure they have the right skills and expertise to enable them to meet their customer's needs and deliver the Department's business objectives effectively.

The cost for staff learning during FY 2003–04 (and the budget for 2004–05) was around £4.8 million. To provide more detailed information would be possible only at disproportionate cost.

UK-based Companies (Complaints)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints were received by her Department in each year since 1997 regarding the actions of UK-based companies abroad; what procedure has been established to deal with such complaints; and if she will make a statement. [210639]

Mr. Alexander: The primary locus for my Department in dealing with complaints regarding the actions of UK-based companies abroad is the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. A National Contact Point (NCP) was created when the Guidelines were revised in 2000 for discussions with the parties concerned on all matters covered by the Guidelines so that it can contribute to the solution of problems that may arise in this connection.

The number of cases (specific instances) that has arisen from complaints since 2000 is as follows:

	Number
2000	0
2001	0
2002	1
2003	7
2004	0

The NCP issued Statements on two of these cases, and one was resolved by the parties. The remainder are on-going.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with trade unions on compliance by businesses with the Working Time Directive. [216131]

Mr. Sutcliffe: DTI Ministers and officials regularly meet representatives of both trade unions and business. We discuss many different employment issues, including how to ensure the Working Time Regulations made under the Working Time Directive are not abused.

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to ensure that businesses comply with the Working Time Directive. [216132]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Enforcement of the working time regulations is undertaken on DTFs behalf by a number of different authorities: the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), local authorities, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). These authorities follow up complaints about the regulations and, if necessary, have the power to initiate prosecutions. During the 12 months to 31 March 2004, the HSE Infoline received over 5,000 enquiries on working time issues. All those requiring further action were followed up. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) also provides advice and, if necessary, conciliation on matters relating to the working time regulations. Employees can pursue working time entitlements through employment tribunals.

World Trade Organisation

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what basis the World Trade Organisation's Dispute Settlement Body rests its authority; and if he will make a statement. [215402]

Mr. Alexander: The Dispute Settlement Body is established under the provisions of the WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding which is set down in Annex 2 to the WTO Agreement.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* role, *(b)* composition and *(c)* work of the World Trade Organisation's Appellate Body; and if he will make a statement. [215403]

Mr. Alexander: The Appellate Body is provided for in Article 17 of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) which is an integral part of the WTO Agreement. Its function is to address appeals by WTO members of WTO panel rulings. Its mandate is limited to consideration of issues of law covered in the Panel report and legal interpretations developed by the Panel.

The composition of the Appellate Body is determined by the provisions of Article 17 of the DSU. It is composed of seven members who are selected because of their recognised authority and demonstrated expertise in law, international trade and the subject matter of the WTO agreements.

The Government considers that the Appellate Body has and continues to perform its task well and plays a valuable role in the resolution of disputes within the WTO and ensuring consistency in the interpretation of the multilateral trade agreements.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* function, *(b)* foundation and *(c)* make-up of the World Trade Organisation's Dispute Settlement Body; and if he will make a statement. [215418]

Mr. Alexander: The Dispute Settlement Body meets as often as is necessary to carry out its functions under the Dispute Settlement Understanding. Among its main functions are:

administering the rules and procedures applicable to WTO dispute settlement

establishing WTO Panels, and adoption of Panel and Appellate Body reports

to maintain surveillance and implementation of rulings and recommendations of Panel and Appellate Body reports, and

to authorise the suspension of concessions and other obligations.

The DSU is an integral part of the WTO agreement and has been accepted by all members of the WTO. It has the advantage of providing one dispute settlement process covering all of the agreements falling under the WTO umbrella.

The Government considers that overall the WTO dispute settlement system has performed well since it entered into force in 1995.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Area Plan (Antrim)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Antrim, Ballymena, Larne Area Plan will be published. [216072]

Angela Smith: In recent months the Planning Service has been reviewing the rapidly increasing and unprecedented workload pressures being faced by the agency. After careful consideration of the available options, it was decided to concentrate as much of the agency's resources as possible for a period of time on the operational side of the business.

The reallocation of staff has had a knock-on effect on emerging area plans. Work is continuing on those plans that are at an advanced stage in the preparation process. However, progress on the remaining area plans, including Antrim, Ballymena and Larne, will be slower then previously programmed.

The importance of delivering full area plan coverage is recognised and the Planning Service will move forward with the area plan programme as quickly as is feasible. At this point in time it is not possible to say precisely when this will be. Much will depend on how quickly the pressure on the operational side can be reduced. An announcement on revised timescales for the area plan programme, including the Antrim, Ballymena and Larne area plan, will be made in due course.

Armagh Observatory

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what budget has been allocated by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to Armagh observatory for the financial years *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and what budget is planned for 2005–06. [211931]

Angela Smith: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure allocated £633,500 in 2003–04 and £666,000 in 2004–05 towards the running costs of the Armagh observatory. An indicative allocation of £666,500 is anticipated for 2005–06. The Department also provided an additional £115,000 in 2003–04 and £218,000 in 2004–05 to fund research and specific projects and includes £104,000 for work in respect of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have to develop, expand or enhance the facilities at Armagh observatory. [211932]

Angela Smith: The enhancement of the human orrery will continue with plans to add two outer stainless steel rings. Other plans to develop, expand or enhance the facilities at Armagh observatory would be matters for the director, committee and board of the Armagh observatory. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure would consider any proposals put forward by the committee and board through the normal business planning processes.

Belfast Regeneration Office

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by the Belfast Regeneration Office in each of the Belfast constituencies in each year since it was set up. [216413]

Mr. Spellar: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only by means of a special administrative exercise that would entail a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by the Belfast Regeneration Office in each of the district electoral areas of north Belfast in each year since it was set up. [216414]

Mr. Spellar: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only by a special administrative exercise and would entail a disproportionate cost.

Catering Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215053]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Information is not available in the format requested by the hon. Member.

The information requested is captured under overall "entertainment" costs and these costs have previously been provided in the answer I gave to the hon. Member on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 471W.

Charity Laws

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in bringing forward changes to charity laws in Northern Ireland following the recommendations of the Independent Monitoring Commission's report of November 2004. [216409]

Mr. Spellar: The Department for Social Development has launched a public consultation exercise to seek views on proposed changes to the existing laws governing charities in Northern Ireland.

The appointment of a Charities Commission and a Register of Charities in Northern Ireland are among the main proposals in a document called "Consultation on the Review of Charities Administration and Legislation in Northern Ireland 2005" and published by the Department for Social Development.

Charities in Northern Ireland make an immense contribution helping those in our society who are most in need. The proposed changes are designed to provide greater public confidence and will address concerns that the lack of tighter control of charities in Northern Ireland provides opportunities for abuse by organised criminal elements.

Child Mental Health Specialists

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many specialists in child mental health are employed by the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. [216415]

Angela Smith: Information requested is provided in the table as follows.

Specialists in child mental health employed by North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust as at January 2005

Grade	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	1	0.9
Clinical Psychologist	1	1.0
Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist	1	1.0
Total	3	2.9

Notes:
North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust considers that specialist staff are those who have particular expertise in the field of Child and Adolescent Mental Health attendant upon their professional training and ongoing professional development including accredited training. The above staff have the competencies to independently provide community-based Tier 2 services across North and West Belfast and to work within a specialist multi-disciplinary Team at Tiers 3 and 4. Tier 2 services are concerned with the provision of child and adolescent mental health services with a focus on prevention and early intervention with children and adolescents with moderate mental health needs. Tier 3 (out-patient) and Tier 4 (in-patient) provide assessment and intervention of children and adolescents with the most complex mental health issues.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision is made for children and young peoples' mental health in north Belfast. [216416]

Angela Smith: North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust provide Child and Adolescent Mental Health services through the Multi-Disciplinary Adolescent Team, the Children's Clinical Psychology Service, the Early Interventions Service, Children's Services Network and the Shankill Resource Centre. Specialist in-patient and out-patient services are accessed through the regional provider.

City of Derry Airport

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects a decision to be made on the funding application for the safety works at City of Derry Airport; and what assessment has been made of the *(a)* safety and *(b)* regional economic implications of the time scale for making a decision. [216663]

Mr. Spellar: I hope that an announcement can be made soon. Issues relating to the economic benefit to the northwest of investment in the airport, options for airport governance and state aid issues are still being considered. I am aware of the safety and regional economic issues involved in the time scale for making a decision.

Construction Industry Training Scheme

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the operation of the Construction Industry Training Scheme in Northern Ireland. [215742]

Mr. Gardiner: The Construction Industry Training Scheme does not operate in Northern Ireland.

The Construction Industry Training Board in Northern Ireland is the only remaining industrial training board and it raises annually a statutory levy to encourage training in the construction industry in Northern Ireland through:

identifying and meeting industry training needs;

encouraging new entrants to join the construction industry;

providing training, training advice and grant aid to levy paying employers, and;

monitoring training standards.

Department of Education (Judicial Review)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer of 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 421W, what the basis for the judicial review against the Department of Education and ELB was; who paid the costs of the case; and what the total amount involved was. [217307]

Mr. Gardiner: The judicial review against the Department and the NEELB was sought on the grounds that refusal of transport assistance in respect of the Applicant was an infringement of human rights (Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights as incorporated by the Human Rights Act 1998). This application was dismissed by Mr. Justice Girvan.

To date the Department has incurred costs of £4,509, and the NEELB has incurred costs of £8,519. However, the Department is awaiting receipt of a copy of the Court Order before final costs are calculated. Both the Department and the Board have agreed to pay their own costs. The costs associated with the Applicant's Solicitors plus Junior and Senior Council will be met by the Applicant.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to increase the number of people in the Province provided with digital hearing aids. [216536]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to my answers of 15 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 1639W and 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1424W.

Education and Library Boards

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether each of Northern Ireland's five education and library boards request the same standards of service from their transport providers. [216925]

Mr. Gardiner: Education and library boards operate a common set of standards which relate to the appropriate transport legislation such as vehicle licensing, public service testing, insurance etc. Boards also insist on the continued maintenance of core standards of safety. They carry out spot checks to ensure that transport providers continue to meet these standards throughout the period of a contract.

Election Posters

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many party election posters were removed in each constituency by the Roads Service in each year since 1997 because they were not removed by the party responsible within the stipulated period; what the cost was in each year; and in what cases recompense was sought from the responsible party. [216411]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Nigel Dodds, dated February 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding the number of party election posters that were removed in each constituency by the Roads Service in each year since 1997 because they were not removed by the party responsible within the stipulated period; what the cost was in each year; and in what cases recompense was sought from the responsible party. (216411). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive or Roads Service.

I should explain that the erection of election posters is governed by planning legislation and I understand that the Department of the Environment's Planning Service practice is to write to all political parties prior to elections, advising of the statutory regulations for the display of election posters. Under current legislation, all election posters are required to be removed within 14 days after the close of the relevant poll to which they relate.

Although permission is not required from Roads Service for parties to erect election posters on our property, we have powers under Article 87 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993 to remove advertising signs, including election posters, from our property, to seek the recovery of costs and to prosecute those responsible for the signs. In practice, we prefer to persuade offenders to remove such signs themselves and only take stronger action if this proves necessary. Our approach normally begins with a courtesy call to the individual or organisation concerned and this action usually results in the vast majority of posters being removed.

With regard to the recovery of costs involved, Roads Service policy prior to 2001 was to remove election posters without seeking reimbursement from the political parties. Consequently, there is no record of the number of posters removed, or the cost incurred by Roads Service, before 2001.

Roads Service does not maintain details of the removal of election posters on a parliamentary constituency basis, however, the table below shows the posters removed by Roads Service Eastern Divisional area since 2001. Other Divisions have confirmed that requests to constituency offices for posters to be removed from specific locations have usually resulted in their removal and, that on the few occasions where posters have had to be removed by Roads Service staff, no records were kept.

	Number of posters removed in Eastern Division	*Costs recovered (£)*
2001	150	500
2002	0	0
2003	0	0
2004	17	300
2005	2	[1]

[1] Ongoing

I hope this information is helpful.

Ferry Services

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his Department's intentions are regarding the reinstatement of the ferry service between Ballycastle and Campbeltown. [217089]

Mr. Gardiner: The proposed reinstatement of the ferry service between Campbeltown and Ballycastle is a matter in which my colleagues in the Scottish Executive have lead responsibility. The views of Northern Ireland Office Ministers have recently been conveyed to the Minister for Transport in the Scottish Executive re-affirming our continued support, in principle, in relation to their attempts to reinstate the service. Discussions between officials in the Scottish Executive and the Northern Ireland Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment continue on how best to progress the matter.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to freedom of information requests since January. [215223]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland Departments publish on the departmental websites information which is considered to be of wide public interest. In the case of information provided as a result of freedom of information requests, data protection principles are taken into account where it is appropriate to make the name of the requester anonymous. Such information may also be placed in the Library if it is considered to be of general interest to the House.

Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and NDPBs should

consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the publication scheme where appropriate.

General Practitioners

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals completed general practice training in the Province in each of the last three years. [216538]

Angela Smith: The total number of individuals completing general practice training in the Province in the last three years is as follows:

	Number
2004	46
2003	41
2002	36

Housing Executive

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many properties there are in the Housing Executive's Purpose Built Commercial Property Portfolio; what their value is; how many are *(a)* vacant, *(b)* let on a five year lease and *(c)* let on less than a five year lease; how many were acquired in each of the last five years; at what cost; how many were sold in each of the last 10 years; and what the total income from such sales was in each of those years. [216844]

Mr. Spellar: There are 433 properties in the Housing Executive's Purpose Built Commercial Property Portfolio and are valued at £14,514,920.00. Of these 24 are vacant, 318 are let on a five year or more lease and 84 are let on less than a five year lease (seven of which have no lease as they are being used by the Housing Executive). No properties have been acquired in the last five years. During the last 10 years the numbers sold with the annual income is as follows:

	Number sold (unit)	*Annual income (£)*
2002	1	9,000.00
2001	1	25,000.00
2000	11	460,000.00
1999	8	150,000.00
1998	1	14,000.00
1997	1	5,000.00
1996	None	0
1995	None	0
1994	1	6,000.00
1993	None	0

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which posts, not including Housing Executive staff, are funded by the Housing Executive to assist local communities and residents' groups in each Northern Ireland constituency; who the occupants are of each post; what the length of service is in each case; and what the remuneration for each post is. [216845]

Mr. Spellar: The name of the post holders and their length of service is personal data and constitutes exempt information under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and as such it would inappropriate to release it with out the consent of the postholder. However the following table provides the name of the organisation funded or partly funded by the Housing Executive during the 2004–05 financial year and the amount of funding paid by the Housing Executive. When organisations approach the Housing Executive for funding this normally covers more than just the salary. The amount of funding shown only includes costs paid by the Housing Executive that were associated with the post. The organisations are grouped by constituency based on the name of the group and/or the known area where it operates and compared with the names of the wards in that constituency.

Constituency/group name	*Housing Executive funding level (2004–05) (percentage)*	*Amount of Housing Executive funding (£)*
Belfast, West		
Lenadoon	50	12,751
Upper Springfield Resource Centre	50	10,250
West Belfast Partnership Board	100	18,582
Whiterock/Westrock	62	9,143
Greater Shankill	100	18,200
Tudor Renewal Residents Association	100	18,886
Twadell/Woodvale	100	10,250
Belfast, North		
New Lodge Housing Forum	100	21,100
Ardoyne	100	17,000
Lower North Belfast Community Council	50	11,400
Concerned Residents Upper Ardoyne[1]	100	25,561
Belfast, South		
Markets Development Association	50	5,640
Greater Village Regeneration Trust	50	10,600
Strangford		
Glen Ward Community Association	50	10,000

Constituency/group name	Housing Executive funding level (2004–05) (percentage)	Amount of Housing Executive funding (£)
Foyle		
Bogside/Brandywell Community Housing project	100	18,417
Belfast, East		
Mersey Street Area Residents Association[2]	50	2,397

[1] The post has yet to be filled.
[2] Current postholder has left employment and funding has been sought to fill the post in the 2005–06 year.

Jobskills Traineeships

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of young people enrolled on year three of a jobskills traineeship in Northern Ireland had found a full-time job by the end of that year in each year since 2001. [215743]

Mr. Gardiner: The traineeship strand of the jobskills programme has a maximum training period of 78 weeks. Therefore the question is being answered on the basis of the number of young people who commenced a jobskills traineeship in each financial year since 2001 and, of those, the number who subsequently gained full-time employment.

The number of young people who commenced a jobskills traineeship in each financial year since 2001 is as follows:

	Number
2001–02	5,304
2002–03	4,956
2003–04	5,064
2004–05	[1]4,464

[1] To date.

The number and percentage of young people recruited in each of the above years that subsequently found a full-time job is as follows:

	Number	Percentage
2001–02	3,018	57
2002–03	2,806	57
2003–04	[1]–	[1]–
2004–05	[1]–	[1]–

[1] Too early to report.

Medical Negligence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the number of deaths that resulted from medical negligence in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [216537]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the total annual cost to the Northern Ireland economy of medical negligence in each of the last three years. [216539]

Angela Smith: Information in relation to the last three years is detailed in the following table:

Amounts paid in settlements for clinical negligence claims from 2001–02 to 2003–04

	£000
2001–02	7,415
2002–03	13,550
2003–04	15,194

The amount paid in any one year in respect of clinical negligence can vary considerably due to the uncertain timing of the settlement of cases.

Motorcycle Races (Funding)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what public sector *(a)* funding and *(b)* support is being provided to (i) the International North West 200 and (ii) the Ulster Grand Prix at Dundrod motorcycle races in 2005; and what assessment he has made of the economic effects on the local economy. [216304]

Angela Smith: To date, £5,800 has been made available by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland through the 2 and 4 Wheel Motorsport Steering Group Ltd. for the North West 200 in 2005. The Northern Ireland Events Company (NIEC) and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) are presently considering applications for funding for the North West 200 and the NIEC is also considering an application for funding from the Ulster Grand Prix. Both the NIEC and NITB provide support to the organisers in developing these events.

An economic impact study commissioned by NIEC estimated the economic impact of the North West 200 in 2002 to be in the region of £5.6 million. An appraisal of the impact of the Ulster Grand Prix in 2004 carried out by Tourism and Transport Consult indicated a benefit of £1.9 million. These are separate studies and it may not be appropriate to make exact comparisons.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Roman Catholic and *(b)* Protestant members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary have been murdered by the IRA since 1 January 1975; and what percentage of the total numbers who have served in the Constabulary since 1975 each of those figures represents. [214358]

Mr. Pearson: Between 1 January 1975 and 4 November 2001, 222 Royal Ulster Constabulary Officers were murdered by the Provisional IRA.

Monitoring of the community background of employees only came into effect in 1989, and it is therefore not possible to define the percentage of those murdered officers who were serving in the RUC from 1975 to 2001 by community background.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the part-time RUC reserve were required to transfer to either the full-time reserve or the regular police service as a result of intimidation or other terrorist activity during the troubles. [216840]

Mr. Pearson: There has never been provision for part-time reserve officers to transfer into the RUC full time reserve or the regular police service. Part-time reserve officers who wished to join the RUC full time reserve or regular police service had to resign and subsequently apply for and undertake the necessary training, as with any other applicant.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the part-time RUC reserve were forced to move home as a result of intimidation or other terrorist activity during the troubles. [216841]

Mr. Pearson: From 1994 to date, a total of 16 part-time reserve officers were evacuated from their homes as a result of intimidation or other terrorist activity. There are no figures specifically relating to the PTR available for the period before 1994.

NHS Staff (Abuse)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce legislation to protect persons serving within the national health service from physical and verbal abuse. [214819]

Angela Smith: Legislation already exists under the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 which includes offences such as assault, assault and battery, and grievous bodily harm, and offences in relation to conduct in public buildings.

The Department has made it clear that it will not tolerate attacks on Health and Personal Social Services staff and expects employers to take reasonable steps to protect staff and to actively support staff who have been subjected to such incidents.

There are no plans to introduce any further legislation. However, the Department continues to closely monitor the number of attacks on staff and will review the situation should the monitoring process highlight a growing trend.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213605]

Mr. Pearson: Hillsborough Castle is the official residence of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The facilities at the castle are also used to provide official hospitality, overnight accommodation and to carry out other official business. The range of activities can include political meetings, hospitality for visiting dignitaries, the Secretary of State's garden party, and citizenship ceremonies. In addition to its use by the Northern Ireland Office and other Government Departments, charities and local community groups can request to use the facilities, generally for fund raising purposes, and the castle and grounds are open at certain times of the year for guided tours.

The total cost of running Hillsborough Castle in the 2003–04 financial year was £1,285,224.08. This includes the maintenance of the listed building and grounds; the security of the castle and its grounds and that of Ministers, officials and visitors while present at the castle. It also includes the cost hosting of the events listed above, as well as catering, hospitality and administration.

The Secretary of State is on duty while at Hillsborough Castle and therefore his costs count as official expense.

Records of expenditure on refurbishment are an integral part of the records that cover many other items of building maintenance and repair. It would be possible to identify only those items that relate specifically to refurbishment only at disproportionate cost.

During the 2003–04 year £16,769.87 was spent on flowers and plants. This included plants and flowers for the 100 acre listed estate surrounding the castle and flowers for functions.

A total £171,107.56 was spent on all catering and hospitality related items (the costs of food wine and entertaining not being separately available).

£19,254.33 was spent on telephone system including calls, installations and maintenance.

£64,360.56 was spent on power, including electricity, gas, oil and other forms of fuel.

The total cost for all staff in the 2003–04 year was £660,715.61. There are currently the equivalent of 5.5 full-time domestic staff employed at Hillsborough Castle but no maintenance staff.

Paramilitary Attacks

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many paramilitary attacks on individuals there have been in the Province in each week since October 2004. [210045]

Mr. Pearson: The information requested is included in the following table.

Security situation statistics: Number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults and shootings per week

1 October to 31 December 2004	*Paramilitary style assaults*			*Paramilitary style shootings*		
Week[1]	*By Loyalist*[2]	*By Republican*[2]	*Total*	*By Loyalist*[2]	*By Republican*[2]	*Total*
1–7 October 2004	2	—	2	3	—	3
8–14 October 2004	1	1	2	—	—	—
15–21 October 2004	1	—	1	3	—	3
22–28 October 2004	—	1	1	5	—	5
29 October to 4 November 2004	1	3	4	2	—	2
5–11 November 2004	3	2	5	1	—	1
12–18 November 2004	1	—	1	—	—	—
19–25 November 2004	1	2	3	1	—	1
26 November to 2 December 2004	—	1	1	—	—	—
3–9 December 2004	—	1	1	—	—	—
10–16 December 2004	1	—	1	1	—	1
17–23 December 2004	—	—	—	—	1	1
24–31 December 2004[1]	1	3	4	1	—	1
Total	12	14	26	17	1	18

[1] Periods of one week/seven days; except 24–31 December which covers eight days.
[2] Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available and does not necessarily indicate the involvement of a paramilitary organisation.
Notes:
1. At this stage statistics can only be validated up until end of December 2004.
2. 2004 statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

Police Ombudsman

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions he has held meetings with the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman. [215282]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Since my appointment as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland I and my ministerial colleagues have met with the Police Ombudsman informally on a number of occasions, and I have had two formal meetings with her

Police Service of Northern Ireland (Ards)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers were stationed at Ards in each of the last six years. [214920]

Mr. Pearson: The following is the total number of officers attached to Ards sub division/Ards DCU from 31 March 1999 to the present date. The figures include regular officers, full-time reserve officers and part-time reserve officers.

	Number of officers
31 March 1999	299
31 March 2000	296
31 March 2001	271
31 March 2002	270
31 March 2003	259
31 March 2004	276.75
3 February 2005	243.75

The reduction in 2005 is due to a number of cessations and transfers, plus a readjustment of numbers due to the HR Allocation Model used by PSNI.

School Transport

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his plans are for changing the free transport to school system for children in Northern Ireland from September; and what assistance he will offer to parents who risk suffering hardship as a result of changes. [215828]

Mr. Gardiner: I have no plans to change the Home to School Transport arrangements in Northern Ireland from this September. The average cost of provision for eligible children in 2003–04 was over £600 per pupil totalling over £59 million. I have therefore asked the Department of Education to carry out a fundamental review of the service with a view to identifying the source of cost pressures and developing mechanisms for cost control. Thereafter, any proposed policy changes would be subject to public consultation and to rigorous equality testing. The introduction of any new arrangements would be publicised in advance.

Schools Building Programme

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will announce the new schools capital build programme and budget for 2005–06. [216070]

Mr. Gardiner: No decision has been taken yet on the timing of the next announcement of schools capital allocations. The Department of Education is currently assessing the resources which would be available for the schools capital programme and establishing with the school authorities projects which would be eligible to be considered.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what new schools and colleges in the post-primary sector will be located in *(a)* Antrim town, *(b)* the Antrim district council area and *(c)* the Newtownabbey district council area in 2005–06. [216071]

Mr. Gardiner: There are no plans to locate any new post-primary schools or colleges in the areas detailed in 2005–06.

A capital scheme has been prepared by the North Eastern Education and Library Board for Parkhall College in Antrim town which will need approval for capital funding before it can proceed. Economic appraisals for proposed capital schemes for Crumlin High School, Ballyclare High School and the North East Institute are expected to be completed later this year. The East Antrim Institute has recently submitted to the Department for Employment and Learning an appraisal on accommodation requirements. The appraisal is currently being assessed by the Department.

Secondary Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the Department of Education's *(a)* definition and *(b)* criteria are for classifying curriculum subjects and courses as *(a)* vocational and *(b)* academic in secondary schools in Northern Ireland. [217304]

Mr. Gardiner: I have made clear previously that I do not believe neat definitions are possible. Schools will, however, be provided with clear guidance on which subjects will be regarded as "general" or "applied" for the purposes of the Entitlement Framework. A preliminary, illustrative list of general and applied courses was placed on the Department of Education website on 23 June 2004.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why development proposals for post-primary arrangements in Antrim include only controlled schools; and what the results were of community audits of such arrangements. [217305]

Mr. Gardiner: There are currently no development proposals for any post-primary schools in Antrim.

I am aware that following concern about the significant decline in the enrolment at Massereene Community College the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB), which has responsibility for the school, decided to explore options for the future of controlled secondary education in Antrim town. These options formed the basis of a consultation process carried out by the NEELB between September-November 2004.

The consultation took the form of meetings and a questionnaire. The questionnaire sought views on the proposed closure of Massereene Community College and interim arrangements to transfer all pupils to Parkhall College. It also asked parents of children of compulsory school age their views on the current choice of secondary school provision in the Antrim borough council area and on integrated education.

The NEELB has advised that the consultation identified opposition to the proposed closure of Massereene College and to the prospect of mobile accommodation on the Parkhall College site in order to accommodate the combined enrolments.

The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire said they were satisfied with the current choice of post-primary school in Antrim and a majority also indicated that they were supportive of integrated education, and would consider sending their children to an integrated post-primary school in the town.

The results of the consultation are due to be considered shortly by the North Eastern Education and Library Board.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why postage-paid oversize reply envelopes provided for responses to the consultation on new admissions arrangements for post-primary schools used first class rates; and if he will estimate the costs of using second class post. [217306]

Mr. Gardiner: A freepost envelope has been included with each response booklet to encourage people to respond. The initial distribution of documents inadvertently included freepost envelopes at first class rate (28p per response). Subsequent copies will contain envelopes at 2nd class rate which will cost the Department 21p per response. At this stage it is too early to predict the level of response to the consultation.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland upon what basis the consultation on the new admissions arrangements for post-primary schools is different from the consultation on the post-primary review carried out by his Department in 2002; and if he will make a statement. [217308]

Mr. Gardiner: The consultation in 2002 was in response to the Burns Report which made specific proposals about post-primary education. The current consultation seeks views on options for new admissions arrangements for post-primary schools.

Over 14,000 copies of the consultation document have been issued so far covering a range of interests including schools, education partners, churches, political parties, MLAs, MPs, MEPs, community and voluntary groups, and libraries. All parents of school-age children have been given a leaflet providing them with details of the consultation and how they can respond to it. Advertisements have been placed in the three main newspapers (Belfast Telegraph, Newsletter, Irish News) giving details of the consultation.

This is an important issue and I would encourage all those with an interest to consider the details of the consultation document and to submit their views to the Department of Education by 30 June.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been spent on the post-primary review to date, broken down by *(a)* pre-Burns Report, *(b)* from the Burns Report to the appointment of the Post-Primary Review Working Group (Costello) and *(c)* since; and how much has been paid to consultants providing services to the three groups. [217309]

Mr. Gardiner: The Post-Primary Review was completed on 26 January 2004 when the Government announced they had accepted and were implementing the recommendations of the Post-Primary Review Working Group.

A total of £1,464,000 has been spent on the post-primary review as follows:

(a) £830,000 on research, the Post-Primary Review Body costs and the publication of the Burns report;

(b) £419,000 on consultation about the recommendations of the Burns report; and

(c) £215,000 on costs of the Post-Primary Review Working Group and the publication and distribution of the Costello report.

Included are consultancy costs of £4,000 for work carried out to obtain young people's views about the Burns recommendations.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215081]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The unit cost of producing a staff identity pass in Northern Ireland is £2.41. Identity passes for staff based in London are not produced by the Department and their cost is assimilated within our annual rent.

The number of passes reported by staff in the Northern Ireland Office as lost or stolen each year since 1997 is as follows:

	Number of passes reported as lost or stolen
1997	12
1998	5
1999	20
2000	27
2001	20
2002	12
2003	21
2004	20
2005 (to date)	0

This reply relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not cover the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Suicides (North Belfast)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have committed suicide in north Belfast in each year since 1997. [216417]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Registration year	*Death due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury"*	*Death due to "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted"*	*Total deaths due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury" or "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted"*
1997	7	0	7
1998	7	1	8
1999	13	4	17
2000	11	2	13
2001	13	0	13
2002	10	2	12
2003	14	1	15

Working Time Regulations

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many officials working in ministerial private offices in the Department have worked more than a 48 hour week at any time in the last 12 months for which figures are available; how many of those had signed a waiver under working time regulations; and what percentage these figures represented of the total in each case. [204139]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The working time regulations provide workers with the protection of a limit of an average of 48 hours a week working time. This is not an absolute cap of 48 hours in any one week. This average is normally calculated over a 17-week reference period, although this can be longer in certain situations (26 weeks) and can be extended by agreement (up to 52 weeks). Workers may choose to work more than 48 hours a week over this reference period by signing an opt-out agreement, but employers cannot force a worker to sign an opt-out, and workers cannot be subjected to detriment for refusing to sign an opt-out.

Six people have signed the opt-out agreement.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to implement the 1997 Labour manifesto pledge on localising business rates. [216650]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government have appointed Sir Michael Lyons to undertake an independent inquiry that will consider the detailed case for changes to the present system of local government funding and make recommendations on any changes that are necessary and how to implement them. The inquiry will make recommendations on how best to reform council tax and will, among other things, be conducting thorough analysis of options other than council tax for local authorities to raise supplementary revenue, including reform of business rates. Sir Michael is due to report by the end of this year, to my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor the Exchequer.

Child Poverty

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to achieve the

Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020 and *(b)* halving it by 2010; and if he will make a statement. [216577]

Yvette Cooper: Tackling disadvantage is one of the five key aims for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Achieving government child poverty targets is an important part of this work.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made a significant input into the Child Poverty Review, which includes measures to contribute towards the long-term goal of halving and eradicating child poverty, including:

a 50 per cent. increase in the rate of social house building by 2008 providing 10 000 extra dwellings per year as outlined in "Sustainable Communities: Homes For All" to help achieve the target to halve the number of households living in Temporary accommodation by 2010;

increasing investment in homelessness prevention;

Providing £1.7 billion per year through the Supporting People (SP) programme to help vulnerable people sustain independent living including teenage parents or women fleeing from domestic violence, with benefit to their children;

a £1.2 billion market renewal programme up to 2008;

a new PS A target: by 2010, to bring all social housing into a decent condition.

Progress

The proportion of vulnerable households—including families with children—living in decent homes in the private sector, increased from 57 per cent. in 2001 to 63 per cent. in 2003. New data from English Housing Condition Survey confirms the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is ahead of expected progress towards its PSA target for the private sector.

We have succeeded in ending the scandal of homeless families having to raise their children for long periods in cramped B&B hotels. There were 96 per cent. fewer families with children living long-term in B&B hotels in September 2004 than in March 2002.

The Housing Act 2004 contains measures aimed at helping the most at risk from poor conditions and irresponsible landlords. Part 1 of the Act contains provisions to replace the housing fitness standard (also one of the criteria of the decent home standard) by an evidence based risk assessment procedure, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). HHSRS will help focus decisions about housing conditions on the hazards which impact on the health and safety of vulnerable occupants, including children. The measures are likely to be implemented this autumn.

The Housing Act also enables us to amend the statutory overcrowding standards through secondary legislation. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to consult on this.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out with statistical information relating as closely as possible to Chorley constituency the effects of his actions and policies on Chorley since 1997. [216407]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

In the local government finance settlements since 1997–98, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the amount of Government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Since 1997–98 Chorley has received an average annual increase in formula grant of 4.4 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Haltemprice and Howden constituency, the effects on Haltemprice and Howden of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216015]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since, 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

In the local government finance settlements since 1997–98, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the amount of Government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Since 1997–98 East Riding of Yorkshire has received an average annual increase in Formula Grant of 5.4 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, the effects on Huddersfield of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216871]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

In the local government finance settlements since 1997–98 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the amount of Government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per

cent. increase in real terms. Since 1997–98 Kirklees has received an average annual increase in formula grant of 4.8 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Witney constituency, the effects on Witney of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216014]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

In the local government finance settlements since 1997–98, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the amount of Government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Since 1997–98 West Oxfordshire has received an average annual increase in formula grant of 3.2 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Fire Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's estimate is of the total procurement cost for the proposed eight new English regional fire control rooms. [216615]

Mr. Raynsford: The current estimate of the procurement cost for the proposed eight new regional control centres for fire and rescue services in England is £5.8 million, up to the time of award of contracts for control centre accommodation and infrastructure services. This includes the involvement of civil servants, secondees from the fire and rescue service, consultants and advisers such as lawyers and property experts in procurement activities, including the development of specifications and tenders. The chosen developers will make a contribution towards the design and other work carried out on their behalf by the project team.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's budget is for each of the next three financial years for providing financial assistance to fire and rescue authorities to enable them to maintain in operation communications and other mobilisation equipment that would otherwise be regarded as obsolete pending the introduction of the new Fire Control and FireLink systems in 2007–08. [216617]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has already undertaken a programme of work to replace higher risk items of the brigades' existing wide area radio systems, thereby ensuring that they continue to be operationally effective until they can be replaced by the national wide area radio system, Firelink. This will amount to up to £9 million by the end of financial year 2004–05. Funding for the next three financial years will be finalised following further risk assessments and dialogue with fire and rescue authorities about priorities.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make an estimate of the expected net changes in costs to fire authorities in England and Wales as a result of the implementation of the integrated risk management plans *(a)* approved by him last year and *(b)* submitted to him for approval this year. [216619]

Mr. Raynsford: Under Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) it is for each Fire and Rescue Authority to carry out a full risk assessment of its area and decide on the appropriate levels of provision and response times. Any cost savings will reflect those decisions. I am, however, satisfied that Fire and Rescue Authorities are making good progress in realising savings through IRMP. I have been assured by the Local Government Association and the Fire and Rescue Authorities that sufficient efficiencies will be delivered for 2006–07 to repay the £30 million transitional funding. For that reason the Government have agreed to defer recouping the £30 million until 2006–07.

Parliamentary Boundaries

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1294W, on parliamentary boundaries, on what date he intends to lay the Order implementing the changes. [216653]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently arranging the printing of the report together with a draft Order and will lay them before Parliament as soon as may be.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211559]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. In the financial year 2003–04 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister spent £3.4 million on centrally procured advertising and £10.7 million on advertising and publicity. The estimated cost for 2004–05 for advertising is £4.9 million and £12.6 million for advertising and publicity. The largest part of this has been for fire safety advertising campaigns.

Budgets for 2005–06 and beyond have yet to be estimated.

Renewable Energy (Business Rates)

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received, and when, regarding the impact of changes to the calculation of business rates on the renewable energy sector; and if he will make a statement. [216668]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received representations on this issue from the Friends of the Earth and the World Wildlife Fund in December 2004 and from the Renewable Power Association in February 2005.

Rent Harmonisation

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate the additional rent revenue forgone as a result of the decision to postpone rent harmonisation measures between council and housing association tenants until the end of 2005. [216610]

Keith Hill: No decisions have yet been made on the implementation of the proposals arising from the three-year review of rent restructuring. However, had we implemented the measures as consulted upon, the additional rent raised by councils in England during 2005–06 would have been approximately £70 million.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the grounds are on which a planning inspector may refuse permission for a telephone mast; [216556]

(2) under what criteria a planning application for a telephone mast can be refused. [216885]

Yvette Cooper: Planning applications will be decided by the local planning authority (or the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on appeal) in the light of development plan policies and any other material considerations, including any relevant representations either for or against the proposal.

Material considerations in planning decisions must be genuine planning considerations, i.e. they must be related to the purpose of planning legislation, which is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. The considerations must also fairly and reasonably relate to the application concerned. Whether a particular consideration is material in any given case will depend on the circumstances. The courts are the arbiters of what constitutes a material consideration.

The courts have also held that the Government's statements of planning policy are material considerations which must be taken into account, where relevant, in decisions on planning applications.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he is able to call in a planning consent where the reasons for refusal of a planning application for a telephone mast have been contravened. [216886]

Yvette Cooper: The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 contains powers to enable a local planning authority to refuse to accept a repeat application where it has refused a substantially similar application and there has been no appeal against refusal to the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. These will be brought into effect by a Commencement Order within the next few months.

These provisions are designed to give local authorities discretionary powers to prevent developers submitting repetitive applications for undesirable projects in an attempt to wear down resistance. Local planning authorities should consider repeat planning applications where they are satisfied that a genuine attempt has been made to overcome the planning objections which led to rejection of the proposal on appeal.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* projects and *(b)* measures in progress (i) to end the production of opium and (ii) to substitute the production of opium with a sustainable agricultural sector in Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [216707]

Mr. Rammell: The UK, as lead nation, is committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy and, in particular, the 1384 (2005) Counter Narcotics Implementation Plan. President Karzai launched the plan during the visit of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to Kabul on 16 February. The eight pillars of the plan include the development of the criminal justice system, the creation of alternative livelihoods for farmers and strengthening interdiction and law enforcement measures. The UK and its international partners are supporting many projects across all of these strands. It is too early to make an assessment of cultivation in 2005 but due to a number of factors there may be reduced planting this year.

I also refer the hon. Member to the written statement I made on Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 17–18WS; I hope to make a further statement shortly.

Since then, we have increased our efforts on alternative livelihoods for poppy growers to $50 million this year, bringing to $100 million the amount the UK is spending this year on counter narcotics activity in Afghanistan.

The creation of alternative livelihood opportunities and an effective agricultural sector is crucial both for counter narcotics efforts and for Afghanistan's longer-term development. An estimated 80 per cent. of the country's labour force are employed in the agricultural sector, though individuals' livelihoods strategies are often complex and may involve a number of different types of income generating activity. Action to develop licit alternative rural livelihoods must take place on many levels and include both long-term development and short-term measures.

However, rural development assistance is provided to all provinces across Afghanistan through national programmes managed by the Ministry for Reconstruction and Rural Development (MRRD), funded from the national development budget (and, soon, the new Counter Narcotics Trust Fund) and supported by the international community. Each programme focuses on redeveloping the infrastructure and underlying conditions necessary for growth, the development of an effective agricultural sector and viable licit alternatives to poppy cultivation.

Short-term seed delivery programmes are being implemented by donors, such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation. The World Bank recently committed US$75 million for quick disbursing activities on alternative livelihoods and is currently developing an accelerated integrated rural development programme.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letters dated 3 August and 20 October 2004 from the hon. Member for Brent East regarding Mr. John Bennett. [215632]

Mr. Rammell: I replied on 18 February.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) EEC-Ukraine Co-operation Committee, (ii) EC-Tunisia Association Committee and (iii) EC-Morocco Association Committee met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if he will make a statement. [216724]

Mr. MacShane: During this period, the EU-Ukraine Co-operation Committee met on 11 December 2003 in Kiev. There was no UK representative at this meeting, although the UK did participate fully in formulating the EU's position for the meeting. The EU-Tunisia Association Committee met on 18 November 2004 in Brussels and the EU-Morocco Association Committee met on 21 October 2003 in Rabat. The UK was represented at both meetings by Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EC-Palestinian Authority) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217250]

Mr. MacShane: No meetings of the EC-Palestinian Joint Committee took place during the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Egypt Association Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217251]

Mr. MacShane: The EU-Egypt Association Agreement was ratified on 1 June 2004. No date has been set yet for the first meeting of the EC-Egypt Association Committee.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the ECC-Israel Association Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217252]

Mr. MacShane: During this period, the EU-Israel Association Committee met on 9 July 2003 in Brussels. The UK was represented by an official from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

EU Opt-Outs

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on which occasions since May 1997 the Government has opted into European Communities policy areas for which it previously enjoyed an opt-out. [216448]

Mr. MacShane: The UK's Title IV (TEC) opt-in protocol allows the Government to choose which measures it will participate in under asylum, immigration and visa policies, and free movement of persons.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 29 June 2004, *Official Report*, columns 203–05W, to the right hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) by my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Home Office (Mr. Browne) for a list of measures the UK has opted into.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which declarations drafted by the United Kingdom were appended to the European Constitution; and what legal status they will have should the Constitution be ratified. [216449]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the commentary on the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (Command Paper 6459) (available in the Vote Office and at www.europe.gov.uk) which sets out all the declarations made in relation to the treaty and describes their status.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those amendments submitted to the Convention on the Future of Europe by the UK Government representative which *(a)* appeared and *(b)* did not appear in (i) the final Convention text of the Constitution and (ii) the final text of the Constitution as agreed by member state Governments. [216450]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 638W. The analysis of the EU constitutional treaty

referred to in that answer has now been published as the commentary on the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe and is available at www.europe.gov.uk.

Hong Kong

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on *(a)* free and open elections and *(b)* the future of democracy in Hong Kong. [216888]

Mr. Rammell: The Government supports democracy throughout the world as the best means of creating stable, accountable and transparent government, of protecting rights and freedoms, and of upholding the rule of law.

The ultimate aim of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) is a Chief Executive and Legislative Council elected by universal suffrage. We have always favoured early progress to this end at a pace in line with the wishes of the people of Hong Kong. We hope that the Hong Kong SAR Government will take full account of the wishes of the people of Hong Kong.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when Ministers last visited Hong Kong; when Ministers last discussed Hong Kong with the Chinese Government; and what issues were discussed. [216890]

Mr. Rammell: There is a regular flow of high level visits between the UK and Hong Kong. I visited Hong Kong in October 2004. My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Hewitt), Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett), the Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Hain), my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Morley) and my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Home Affairs (Baroness Scotland) all visited Hong Kong last year.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary visited China in January. He discussed Hong Kong's constitutional reform and progress towards universal suffrage with Premier Wen Jiabao and Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing. I also raised these issues when I visited China in July last year. During my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's talks with the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on 20 May 2004, both Governments reaffirmed their commitment to the implementation of the Joint Declaration and agreed to continue exchanges of view on the issue.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total estimated value of assets transferred to China was on the handover of Hong Kong. [216891]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to him on 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1530W.

Human Rights/Freedom of Worship

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of *(a)* China and *(b)* Vietnam on (i) human rights and (ii) freedom of religious worship; and if he will make a statement. [216609]

Mr. Rammell: The information is as follows:

China

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised human rights with Premier Wen Jiabao and Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing during his trip to China in January. He raised progress on the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. He raised the case of the Tibetan monk Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche. The case of Pastor Zhang Rongliang was also discussed.

I raised human rights issues during my last visit to China in October 2004.

Vietnam

We regularly discuss human rights issues with the Vietnamese Government. We raise our concerns at every possible opportunity, both bilaterally and with our EU partners.

We have an increasingly open dialogue with the Vietnam Government on a range of human rights concerns. The EU-Vietnam Death Penalty Seminar that took place in Hanoi on 24–26 November 2004 is an example of increasing Vietnamese willingness to discuss human rights issues.

We also participate in regular EU-Vietnam Dialogue meetings on human rights issues, the latest of which was held on 17 December and attended by our ambassador in Hanoi. Freedom of religion, restrictions on religious organisations, the situation of Protestant groups, and fair trial procedures were among the concerns raised by the EU side. On 28 January the Vietnamese released four prisoners of conscience, who were among the EU's List of Prisoners of Concern, as part of a wider amnesty.

We will continue to press the Vietnamese and Chinese Governments to adhere to their international human rights obligations at every suitable opportunity.

Kenya

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications of the resignation of John Githongo as head of Kenya's anti-corruption team. [217186]

Mr. Mullin: We regret the resignation of the Permanent Secretary in the Office of Governance and Ethics on 7 February. John Githongo is a person of integrity, courage and principle intensely committed to fighting corruption.

It is too soon to judge the full implications of his resignation, but the international community has expressed its serious concerns at the impact upon the Kenyan Government's anti-corruption work.

We continue to encourage the Kenyan Government to give its full and undivided support to the country's anti-corruption institutions.

Macedonia

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement

of the inclusion of Title 8710, tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles and parts, in the Communities/ Macedonia Protocol set out in Official Journal L388 volume 47 of 29 December 2004. [216446]

Mr. MacShane: The inclusion of Title 8710, tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles and parts in the Communities/Macedonia Protocol set out in Official Journal L388 volume 47 of 29 December 2004 has no particular significance. Protocols of this nature are based on the internationally agreed system of classification known as the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System of the Customs Co-operation Council.

This nomenclature provides a systematic classification for all goods in international trade.

Nepal

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what proportion of Global Conflict Prevention Pool allocations to Nepal in the last three year has been spent on aircraft; [217319]

(2) what proportion of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool since its inception has gone on direct assistance to the Nepalese army. [217322]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* We have requested figures from the Ministry of Defence to allow us to reply on the points raised in this question. I will write to my hon. Friend with this information once it has been received.

Shipping Lines

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's spending was in each of the last two years with the shipping lines *(a)* P&O, *(b)* Nippin Yusen Kaisha, *(c)* Mitsui Osaka Shosen Kaisha, *(d)* Orient Overseas Container Line and *(e)* Mediterranean Shipping Corporation. [217317]

Mr. Rammell: All shipping is arranged by contractors. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Services does not have any direct expenditure with the shipping lines cited. Identifiable expenditure for calendar years 2003–04 is shown in the following table. Substantial value is not attributable as much freight moves as part of consolidated loads. It is not possible to segregate the annual expenditure.

	£
(a) P&O	95,248.06
(b) Nippin Yusen Kaisha	0
(c) Mitsui Osaka Shosen Kaisha	0
(d) Orient Overseas Container Line	2,461.62
(e) Mediterranean Shipping Corporation	41,973.51

Taiwan

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of Taiwan's trade relationship with China; and if he will make a statement. [217138]

Mr. Rammell: Taiwan and mainland China are important trading partners. Collectively mainland China and Hong Kong are Taiwan's leading trading partner (24 per cent. of total trade) followed by Japan (16.6 per cent.) and the US (14.6 per cent.). Taiwan's exports to Hong Kong and mainland China for January to November 2004 were US$58.6 billion (up 30.8 per cent. on the corresponding period of 2003). Taiwan's imports from Hong Kong and mainland China for January to November 2004 were US$16.8 billion (up 49.4 per cent. on the corresponding period of 2003).

Uganda

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he intends to *(a)* develop a relationship with the Ugandan opposition party the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and *(b)* meet the FDC leader Mr. Kizza Besigye. [216915]

Mr. Mullin: Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials in London and Kampala are in regular contact with the FDC leadership and already have a productive working relationship.

I met current members of FDC during my visit to Uganda last year. Their recently-elected interim chairman, Kizza Besigye, is currently in exile in South Africa. I have not yet had an opportunity to meet him.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the attempt by the President of Uganda to amend the Ugandan Constitution in order to secure a further term of office. [216917]

Mr. Mullin: I raised this with President Museveni during my visit to Uganda in August and expressed concern at the direction of Uganda's political transition process.

We continue to urge the Government of Uganda to ensure that political change follows the constitution, respects the rule of law and institutions of governance, and is free from physical intimidation or manipulation.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards a pluralistic civil society in Uganda. [217076]

Mr. Mullin: Progress towards pluralism in Uganda has been slow. I raised our concerns with President Museveni during my visit to Uganda in August and stressed that the process of political change needs to carry the confidence of the Ugandan people and Parliament.

We continue to urge the Government of Uganda to ensure that the process of transition follows the constitution, respects the rule of law and institutions of governance, and is free from physical intimidation or manipulation.

US Foreign Policy

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his

Department has made to "assist those seeking to liberate themselves from tyranny and to build democracy" as requested by the US Secretary of State on 8 February; and if he will make a statement. [216326]

Mr. Rammell: The promotion of democracy, alongside human rights, the rule of law and good governance is a thread which runs through all of the Government's foreign policy. These issues are mainstreamed throughout everything the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does. At the strategic level, this is highlighted by two of the FCO's eight strategic priorities aiming to support the development of democracy and the rule of law (Strategic Priority 3: An international system based on the rule of law, which is better able to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts; and Strategic Priority 6: Sustainable Development, underpinned by democracy, good governance and human rights).

At an operational level we adapt our approach on these issues to reflect the situation in the countries in which we work. This might range from; what might be considered traditional diplomatic measures (e.g. advocacy; resolutions in international fora; or sanctions); it may mean technical capacity building to support an emerging democratic culture in a country with no history of participatory government; or it may mean working in partnership with more established democracies to reinforce democracy in third countries, or to improve transparency and accountability throughout the international system. We also promote democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance in international fora, and press countries to adhere to the commitments they've signed up to in these bodies.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Character Evidence

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs on how many occasions bad character evidence of a defendant has been allowed in evidence since the coming into force of section 101 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003; and on how many of these occasions bad character evidence has been allowed in evidence following a decision of the court. [216790]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is not held centrally.

Electoral Registration

Mr. Brady: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have opted for inclusion in the edited register of electors; and what percentage this is of all electors in the United Kingdom. [216933]

Mr. Lammy: The Representation of the People Regulations 2002 provide that electors may opt out of the edited version of the register of electors if they do not want their details to be sold to anyone for any purpose. According to statistics provided by the Credit Reference Agencies 29.29 per cent. of eligible electors (representing 13,099,264 people) opted out of inclusion in the edited version of the register compiled in 2004. The official figures in respect of the number of electors included in the full version of the register on 1 December 2004 is due to be published by the Office for National Statistics on 24 February 2005.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of letters electoral registration officers sent to *(a)* service personnel and *(b)* spouses of service personnel in the last year for which figures are available; and what method of distribution is employed for such letters to military bases. [216358]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not collected centrally. Service personnel and their spouses may register either by way of a service declaration or as ordinary (or overseas) electors. There is no way of distinguishing between the latter and other electors. Royal Mail deliver letters to military bases in the UK. Bases overseas (and HM Ships) are allocated a British Forces Postal Service (BFPO) number. Letters with a BFPO address are posted in the normal way and delivered by the Royal Mail to BFPO Mill Hill London where they are forwarded under arrangements by the Defence Postal and Courier Service to the BFPO address.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what records are kept of letters sent by electoral registration officers to service personnel. [216359]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not collected centrally. Service personnel and their spouses may register either by way of a service declaration or as ordinary (or overseas) electors. There is no way of distinguishing between the latter and other electors. Electoral registration officers will usually keep locally records of registration, renewal letters and reminders to renewal letters posted to those personnel who are registered as service voters.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what procedures electoral registration officers use to contact service personnel serving overseas. [216360]

Mr. Lammy: Electoral registration officers (EROs) will write to whichever address has been supplied to them by the individuals concerned. If service personnel overseas have registered using a British Forces Post Office (BFPO) address, electoral registration officers would send letters to BFPO Mill Hill London by the Royal Mail where they would be forwarded under arrangements by the Defence Postal and Courier Service to the BFPO address.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how often electoral registration officers are required to contact overseas service personnel about their electoral registration obligation. [216361]

Mr. Lammy: Regulation 25(2) of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 requires electoral registration officers to send annually a written reminder to service personnel who are registered by way of a service declaration, whether in the UK or overseas, of the need to make a fresh declaration if they

wish to remain registered under this method. The reminder is sent to the address at which such personnel are recorded as being most recently resident.

SCOTLAND

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211647]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. All staff in the Office are on loan from other Government Departments or other bodies, who remain their employer. The Office has incurred no costs, to date, in relation to the enhanced early retirement scheme. Any future costs would be met by the individual's employer.

Cleaning

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since it was established. [213729]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The Office shares accommodation with the Office of the Advocate-General for Scotland (OAG) and it is not possible to separate all expenditure between the Offices. Since 1 July 1999, direct expenditure on cleaning for the Scotland Office and OAG was:

	£
1999–2000[1]	35,199
2000–01	42,145
2001–02	37,753
2002–03	43,732
2003–04	46,663

[1] Part year

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent on official Ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214959]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The Office provides a number of services to the Office of the Advocate-General for Scotland and it is not possible to separate all expenditure between both Offices. Since 1 July 1999, expenditure by Scotland Office Ministers and the Advocate-General for Scotland was as follows:

	£
Scotland Office/OAG	
Business cards	
1999–2000[1]	273
2000–01	219
2001–02	128
2002–03	0
Headed paper	
1999–2000[1]	381
2000–01	1,287
2001–02	625
2002–03	858
Compliment slips	
1999–2000[1]	80
2000–01	0
2001–02	148
2002–03	216

[1] Part year

	£	
	Scotland Office	*OAG*
2003–04	0	0
2003–04	110	189
2003–04	0	62

[1] Part year

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent on postage by the Department in each year since it was established. [215027]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The Office provides a number of services to the Office of the Advocate-General for Scotland and it is not possible to separate all expenditure between both Offices. Since 1 July 1999, both Offices have spent the following on postage:

	£
1999–2000[1]	1,466
2000–01	8,660
2001–02	10,068
2002–03	12,874
2003–04	12,913

[1] Part year

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206656]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. This information sought is not held in the form requested.

All travel and subsistence is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 1 July 1999 to 31 March 2004 is available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the official residences for which his

Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213606]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office is not responsible for any official residencies.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since it was established. [213744]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date, the Office has incurred no expenditure on parking ticket penalties for civil servants. The Office pays £5,250 per year for car parking spaces as part of the rental for its offices in Edinburgh.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on how many occasions departmental Ministers have used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years. [213445]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date, no Scotland Office Minister has used the Queen's Flight.

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213785]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Most of its staff are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs who continue to provide access to training and development opportunities. The Scotland Office does not hold information in the form requested; however, the total direct expenditure on training was:

	£
1999–2000[1]	7,539
2000–01	14,695
2001–02	12,570
2002–03	25,202
2003–04	23,483

[1] Part year

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much the Department and its predecessors spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since it was established. [213856]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The Office provides a number of services, including stationery and office supplies, to the Office of the Advocate-General for Scotland (OAG). Prior to 2003–04, expenditure by OAG was not held separately.

Since July 1999, the Scotland Office (SO) and OAG have spent the following on stationery and office supplies:

	£
SO and OAG	
1999–00[1]	22,207
2000–01	25,270
2001–02	24,478
2002–03	25,294
2003–04	
SO	16,858
OAG	5,485

[1] Part year

DEFENCE

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what responsibilities have been accorded to each of the alliance members in the future aircraft carrier programme. [216073]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 February 2005]*: Discussions continue on the responsibilities of the alliance participants, which are being developed progressively and will be detailed in the final alliance agreement. This will be completed prior to the main investment decision, which we currently anticipate taking place in the latter half of 2005.

Allied Rapid Reaction Corps

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops are declared to the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps. [216496]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom contributes 226 members of staff to Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (HQ ARRC), out of a total of 449. The UK's 1 Signal Brigade is also dedicated to HQ ARRC to provide support, and consists of seven and 16 signal regiments and the ARRC Support Battalion; a total of 1,650 personnel. For an operational deployment, the ARRC may draw on forces from the UK and other NATO nations as required by the mission.

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost would have been of providing an

RAF flight to repatriate to the United Kingdom bodies of British citizens who lost their lives in the tsunami in Thailand. [216534]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has not provided a repatriation service for tsunami victims and given the large number of possible variables, cannot estimate what the cost would have been had it done so. Families wish their loved-ones to be returned to them as soon as possible. The quickest and most efficient way of meeting the families' wishes is through the use of commercial airline operators.

Atomic Weapons Establishment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many visits there have been to the US by personnel from the Atomic Weapons Establishments during the last 12 months; and how many visits of US personnel to the AWE there have been during that time. [216675]

Mr. Ingram: There have been 180 visits to the United States by personnel from the Atomic Weapons Establishment during the 12 months ending January 2005. In the same period there were 128 visits by US personnel to the Atomic Weapons Establishment.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which facilities in the US have been visited by personnel from the Atomic Weapons Establishments during the last 12 months. [216676]

Mr. Ingram: Atomic Weapons Establishments personnel visited 29 facilities in the United States during the 12 months ending January 2005. These were:

National Nuclear Security Administration
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Sandia National Laboratories Livermore
Los Alamos National Laboratory
Honeywell Kansas City Plant
Sandia National Laboratories Albuquerque
NWSC Seal Beach
Savannah River Site
Y-12, Oak Ridge
Pantex
Titan Corp.
Mission Research Corporation
Brookhaven
Laser Technology Inc.
ITT Colorado
ITT Washington
Defense Threat Reduction Agency
Lockheed Martin Missiles and Space
Air Force Research Laboratory
Visidyne
Nevada Test Site
Naval Research Laboratory
ITT Crystal City
New York Port Authority
LLE Rochester
Washington Group International, Princeton
New Brunswick Laboratory
Manufacturing Sciences Corp., Oak Ridge
Remote Sensing Laboratory

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Atomic Weapons Establishment personnel are assigned to the US as part of the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement; and where they are located. [216677]

Mr. Ingram: Numbers of the United Kingdom personnel stationed in the United States under the auspices of the 1958 MDA vary in line with operational and other requirements. There are currently no such assignments of personnel from the Atomic Weapons Establishment.

BAE Systems (Contracts)

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the value was of the Joint Repair Management Team contract awarded to BAE Systems in January 2003 at RAF Cottesmore. [217383]

Mr. Ingram: £570,000.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the value is of the Joint Repair Organisation contract awarded to BAE Systems in June 2004 at RAF Cottesmore. [217384]

Mr. Ingram: £17 million.

Catering Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215047]

Mr. Caplin: Working lunches have to be specifically approved in advance by a budget holder against a clear business need and in strict accordance with departmental instructions. The cost of such lunches are not however recorded separately on the Department's financial systems and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Chelsea Barracks

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his plans are for the future of Chelsea Barracks. [216111]

Mr. Caplin: There is a requirement to provide improved accommodation for personnel working in public duties in London. The proposal to redevelop Chelsea Barracks through PFI ended unsuccessfully in August 2004.

Work is now in hand on a number of options to meet the requirement, including the redevelopment of Chelsea. I expect to announce the outcome shortly.

Clothing Contracts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 729W, on clothing contracts, how many items of battle dress under the cut and sew contract have been delivered by the factory in China including *(a)* printing and *(b)* fabric manufacture; and whether the fabric samples tested for the contract originated from Belgium. [216057]

Mr. Ingram: No deliveries of combat clothing items have yet been made under the Cut & Sew contract. Deliveries are due to commence in late February 2005, as per the contract delivery schedule.

Again I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1372W, the garment tests I previously referred to on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 156WH, related to the testing of fabric samples that were printed and manufactured in China. Under the terms of the contract I cannot specifically comment on sub-contractor details, however, I can confirm that samples provided during the tender process utilised fabric from a variety of sources, both in the UK and overseas.

Defence Aviation Repair Agency

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his policy that all Tornado F3 programmes are to be carried out at the Defence Aviation Repair Agency St. Athan. [217160]

Mr. Ingram: Depth support for the Tornado F3 will remain as it is at present split between the Front Line units and DARA St. Athan until the aircraft's Out of Service date.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated cost is of replicating the Defence Aviation Repair Agency St. Athan capability at RAF Marham. [217161]

Mr. Ingram: It is not intended to replicate the DARA St. Athan facilities at RAF Marham, but to provide Depth maintenance facilities to support the Tornado GR4 aircraft fleet.

Defence Management Board

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will place in the Library the Defence Management Board balanced scorecard reports for each quarter since April 2000; [213586]

(2) what the Defence Management Board's *(a)* strategic objectives and *(b)* associated performance measures were for financial years 2001–01 to 2003–04; and what they are for financial year 2004–05. [213585]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence's strategic objectives, together with the associated targets and performance measures, are set out in the Department's Public Service Agreements (PSA) for 1999–2002, 2001–04 and 2003–06. These targets are at the core of the Defence Balanced Scorecard. The PSAs are available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk. Performance against PSA targets is reported formally to Parliament in Departmental Spring and Autumn Performance Reports. For the MOD the Spring Performance Report has usually been incorporated within "The Government's Expenditure Plans", and since 2002–03 the Autumn Performance Report has been incorporated within the Ministry of Defence "Annual Report and Accounts". The Autumn Performance Reports also include detailed reporting against the full range of Defence Balanced Scorecard objectives. All these reports for financial years 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 should be in the Library of the House, and are also available at www.mod.uk. The MOD's "Government Expenditure Plans for 2005–06 to 2007–08" will be published in the spring. "The Annual Report and Accounts for 2004–05" will be published in the autumn. In addition, in accordance with Treasury requirements, information on PSA performance since the first quarter of 2003–04 has been published quarterly on the Treasury website.

Dentistry

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the ratio is of military personnel to service dentists; and if he will make a statement. [216424]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The current ratio of military personnel to service dentists is 1012:1.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what estimate the Department has made of the financial effects of the proposed restructuring process between 2008 and 2013; [198989]

(2) what the projected costs between 2008 and 2013 are of the proposed *(a)* heavy (warrior) battalion, with high-tech upgrade, *(b)* medium (FRES battalion, with heavy-lift aircraft capability and *(c)* light (airportable) battalion, with high-tech network-capable upgrade. [198988]

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate the projected costs per annum of the proposed new *(a)* heavy (warrior) battalion with high-tech upgrade, *(b)* medium (Future Rapid Effect System) battalion with heavy-lift aircraft capability and *(c)* light (airportable) battalion with high-tech network capable upgrade; and what estimate the Department has made of possible savings from the proposed restructuring process. [201010]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is continually restructuring. Currently this is being taken forward in the context of the Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities White Paper, published in July 2004. This set out our requirement for flexible and adaptable Armed Forces supported to carry out the most likely expeditionary operations. In order to better meet these operational requirements we are reducing force levels in certain capabilities in order to invest more in higher priority capabilities. The overall financial effect of the restructuring process will be that we are able to spend more on those capabilities able to deliver the effects we require. That will mean we are able to deploy our resources to optimum effect. Overall, the Spending Review 2004 settlement provided a 3.7 billion increase to the Defence budget. This represents the longest period of sustained real growth in defence spending for over 20 years.

In the Land environment, there will be a shift in emphasis to Light and Medium Weight forces in line with our operational requirement for greater adaptability and flexibility. In order to facilitate this re-balancing there will be a reduction in Heavy Weight capability.

European Multinational Formations

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those headquarters units of European multinational formations to which the United Kingdom is not a party to which a liaison officer has been attached since May 1997. [216459]

Mr. Hoon: Since May 1997, of the European multinational formations to which the UK is not a party, and which are outside the NATO command and force structures, only Eurocorps has had a UK liaison officer. As indicated in my reply to the hon. Member of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 539–40W, there was a UK liaison team with Eurocorps from 2000–04.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of flying the released British detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the United Kingdom was. [216529]

Mr. Ingram: Costs arising from the use of RAF aircraft to return released British detainees from Guantanamo Bay to the United Kingdom on two occasions amounts to some £170,000 in total.

Harriers GR7

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the conversions and repairs of Harrier GR7 at BAE Warton are on schedule. [217163]

Mr. Ingram: The overall programme remains on schedule for completion by the end of 2005.

Heroes Return Programme

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many individuals have participated in the Heroes Return programme in Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber; and at what cost. [216578]

Mr. Caplin: The Big Lottery Fund has made a total of 12 grants with a combined value of £17,755. This funding has enabled 30 people from the Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber constituency to participate in the Heroes Return scheme.

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the incidents that have led to compensation being paid to Iraqi people in the sector occupied by British forces for *(a)* death, *(b)* injury and *(c)* destruction of property. [216503]

Mr. Ingram: As at 4 February 2005, the Ministry of Defence had paid 245 claims for compensation made by Iraqi civilians as follows:

(a) Death 11 (nine as a result of road traffic accidents; two as a result of accidental shootings)

(b) Personal injury 34

(c) Property damage 200

The papers relating to these claims are not held centrally and therefore it has not been possible to list individual incidents.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the circumstances surrounding the Hercules crash in Iraq; [217158]

(2) when the air accident investigators will complete their work on the Hercules crash in Iraq; and when he will publish it. [217156]

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to be in a position to make a full statement on the crash of the RAF C-130 Hercules in Iraq on 30 January. [217104]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 15 February 2005]:* It would be inappropriate to speculate on the cause of the tragic crash of the Hercules C130K in Iraq on 30 January. The investigation is under way and will consider all the evidence before coming to any conclusion. It is impossible to say how long the investigation will take at this stage; the emphasis must be on exploring every possible avenue to help determine the cause of this crash.

Japan

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the *(a)* level and *(b)* nature of military contacts with Japan. [217034]

Mr. Ingram: The UK has an important, and developing, bilateral defence relationship with Japan. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received the Director General (Defence Minister equivalent) of the Japanese Defence Agency for talks in London and has in turn visited Japan. Exchanges take place at Chief of Staff level across all the services. Pol-mil Defence Staff talks are established on a regular cycle, as are single service staff talks. Given the constraints in the Japanese constitution there have been no joint military exercises. However, we have given advice and assistance to Japan in the context of her peace support mission in southern Iraq, where the Japanese contingent works within the framework of MND(SE).

Military Clothing

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1372, on military clothing, for what reason the prime contractor has decided to withhold sub-contractor information. [216607]

Mr. Ingram: In the early stages of establishing its supply chain, the prime contractor wishes to maintain the competitive advantage it has achieved and it considers this information to be commercial in confidence.

The terms of the contract prohibit the Ministry of Defence from disclosing this information without the consent of the prime contractor.

Morson

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel Morson have employed at *(a)* RAF Cottesmore and *(b)* RAF Marham; and what work they are undertaking. [217263]

Mr. Ingram: No Morson International staff are employed by the Ministry of Defence at either RAF Cottesmore or RAF Marham.

Mutual Defence Agreement

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Joint Working Groups established under the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement in which personnel from the Atomic Weapons Establishment participate. [216674]

Mr. Ingram: Personnel from the Atomic Weapons Establishment participate in the following Joint Working Groups (JOWOGs) under the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement:

Radiation Simulation and Kinetic Effects Technology
Energetic Materials
Nuclear Materials
Warhead Electrical Components and Technologies
Non-nuclear Materials
Nuclear Counter Terrorism Technology
Facilities
Nuclear Weapons Engineering
Nuclear Warhead Physics
Computational Technology
Aircraft, Missile and Space System Hardening
Laboratory Plasma Physics
Manufacturing Practices
Nuclear Warhead Accident Response Technology
Nuclear Weapon Code Development
Nuclear Weapon Environment and Damage Effects
Methodologies for Nuclear Weapon Safety Assurance

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when and where in the UK the next Stocktake review meeting under the 1958 UK/US Mutual Defence Agreement is scheduled to take place. [216680]

Mr. Ingram: The date and venue for the next Stocktake meeting has yet to be arranged.

QinetiQ

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what actions his Department is taking to maximise the return to public funds from the Department's shareholding in QinetiQ. [216879]

Mr. Ingram: A key feature of the original Defence Evaluation and Research Agency Public Private Partnership was to bring in a strategic partner to improve the management of QinetiQ and help grow the business in preparation for its transfer to the private sector. Although the Ministry of Defence continues to hold a majority equity stake in QinetiQ, operational control of the company is exercised by The Carlyle Group as the Government's strategic partner. This injection of private sector resource and expertise is contributing to the growth of the company and hence to the value of the Government's shareholding.

RAF Defensive Aid Suites

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what requests he has had from the Royal Air Force to upgrade defensive aid suites. [217261]

Mr. Ingram: We have well-tried and effective arrangements for addressing urgent operational requirements identified by the front line commands. For example, for operations in Iraq advanced counter-measures have been fitted to the RAF's Tristar passenger aircraft and to the C-17 fleet.

RAFT Project

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what environmental assessments *(a)* were carried out before and *(b)* have been carried out during the lifetime of the RAFT project; [216505]

(2) how much had been spent on the RAFT project at the date of its cancellation; and if he will make a statement. [216506]

Mr. Ingram: At the time of the suspension of Remote Ammunitioning Facility Tamar in 2002, £15 million had been spent on works (covering design, ammunition clearance, dredging and site preparation). Subsequent cancellation and project management costs have increased expenditure to a total of £25 million and this has been highlighted as a potential constructive loss in the departmental annual accounts for financial year 2003–04.

A number of environmental assessments were carried out prior to the commencement of the RAFT project. The first in 1996, was carried out by Babtie, the Ministry of Defence's Project Manager. In 1998, the Babtie Group carried out a desktop archaeological study to review the potential effect of RAFT on existing scheduled monuments at Bullpoint. This was followed by a supplementary report on the effects of RAFT dredging on potential buried archaeological artefacts in peat deposits in the riverbed. An Ecological Study, also in 1998 and carried out by Panscape Consultancy, considered the potential impact of RAFT on the key habitats and species in Plymouth Sound and its estuaries. In addition, a Baseline Environmental Survey of Estuarine Sediment and Benthic Macrofauna, carried out by Zeneca and which supplemented the Ecological Study, assessed the potential environmental impact of dredging on surface sediments and resident worms. In 1999, an extensive hydraulic modelling study was undertaken by Hydraulics Research Wallingford, which covered the potential effects of dredging on the River Tamar (in particular on the salmon), the inter-tidal habitats of the Tamar and the salt marshes in the Upper Tamar estuary. A detailed sedimentation study was carried out of the whole tidal extent of the Tamar rather than just the local area of RAFT. The conclusions and results were overseen by an independent expert appointed by English Nature.

In 2000, during the lifetime of the RAFT project and following award of the construction contract, a Conservation Management Plan was jointly produced with English Nature and the Environment Agency. In support of this plan, extensive mitigation measures were applied, including noise pollution monitoring of the surrounding areas and water quality monitoring in the River Tamar, during the dredging. The Environment Agency has recently confirmed that, as a result of this mitigation, there have been no permanent effects on fish stocks in the river.

Research Expenditure

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of his Department's research spending was directed towards conflict prevention in 2003–04. [215889]

Mr. Ingram: Preventing conflict is a key objective for the Ministry of Defence (MOD). It underpins the successful delivery of the defence aim, to deliver security for the people of the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories, and to act as a force for good by strengthening international peace and stability. Consequently, much of MOD and the armed forces' operational and non-operational activity, together with the associated research work and military equipment development and procurement programmes that support these activities, contribute in some way to HMG's wider conflict prevention efforts around the world. This is particularly true of the work that MOD carries out in conjunction with FCO and DFID through the separately funded Conflict Prevention Pools. More information on this activity can be found on the FCO website.

As we do not collate information on research activity in the way requested, it would be disproportionately expensive to provide a more detailed breakdown.

Salisbury Plain

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much land in the Salisbury Plain area is rented by his Department to farmers; and what the average rent is per hectare. [216052]

Mr. Caplin: 25,110 hectares of land on Salisbury Plain are let to farmers on agricultural agreements. The average rent is £42.97 per hectare.

Shipping Lines

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's spending was in each of the last two years with the shipping lines *(a)* P&O, *(b)* Nippin Yusen Kaisha, *(c)* Mitsui Osaka Shosen Kaisha, *(d)* Orient Overseas Container Line and *(e)* Mediterranean Shipping Corporation. [217315]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has no requirement to retain spend information against individual shipping lines. Also, while some bookings may be made direct with shipping lines, others are placed through agents/freight-forwarders and spend will be recorded against them and not the shipping lines used. As the MOD operates a financial regime of disaggregated budgets, bookings can be made by units throughout the United Kingdom and overseas. For these reasons the spend requested is not held centrally or in a form which could be easily extracted and without disproportionate cost. The only spend information readily available is that against P&O shipping companies for invoices submitted through the Defence Bills Agency which is shown in the table.

Financial	*£ million*
2002–03	2.697
2003–04	2.143
2004–05	[1]1.677

[1] To date.

Tornado F3

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contracts were awarded to BAE systems relating to Tornado F3 in December 2004; and whether those contracts were put out to competition. [217162]

Mr. Ingram: The Tornado F3 Sustainment Programme contract was awarded to BAE Systems in December 2004. The contract was not subject to competition as only the Design authority was deemed capable of prime contracting.

Tornado GR4

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether primary star servicings on Tornado GR4 jets are being transferred to front line squadrons. [217196]

Mr. Ingram: Work to consider this option is on-going.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Investment Appraisal of the E2E review of air support which recommended rolling forward the Tornado GR4 including transferring work to RAF Lossiemouth. [217197]

Mr. Ingram: It did not. The Investment Appraisal looked at two options for Tornado GR4. These were rolling forward support to RAF Marham or rolling back support to DARA St. Athan. For Tornado GR4 the decision was to roll depth support work forward to RAF Marham.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Aircraft Charters

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213692]

Maria Eagle: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/private charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

The Department has incurred no costs for chartering aircraft.

Benefit Processing Centres

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to make a decision on the location of benefit processing centres; and what assessment he has made of the merits of Inverness as a possible site. [216582]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. David Stewart, dated 22 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the decision on the location of Benefit Processing Centres and the suitability of Inverness as a site. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

On 16 September 2004, the Secretary of State announced the locations for Benefit Processing Centres in the UK. Inverness was among the 8 selected locations in Scotland. Subject to further detailed planning, it remains our intention to undertake processing work in the Inverness site.

I hope that this is helpful.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the letter of 29 October 2004 from the hon. Member for Northavon on behalf on a constituent, Mr. Matthews, regarding benefit provision for carers. [216897]

Alan Johnson: I replied to the hon. Member today.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how much council tax benefit remained unclaimed by pensioners in London in each year since 1997, broken down by constituency; and what plans he has to redistribute these sums to the relevant claimants; [215639]

(2) what measures are in place to ensure pensioners are made aware of sums available to them through council tax benefit. [215640]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested.

Estimates of the total amount council tax benefit that went unclaimed in 2002–03, the latest year for which information is available, can be found in the Department's report entitled: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up in 2002–03": copies of which are available in the Library.

Council tax benefit already makes a valuable contribution in providing financial security for nearly 5 million households responsible for paying council tax. But encouraging those who are still to claim is very much at the heart of our agenda. This is why we launched a campaign in the lead-up to last year's council tax billing round. And why we are continuing to support local authorities in the lead up to, and during, this year's billing round, to make sure they have procedures in place locally to encourage people to apply.

We have already issued new versions of the posters and flyer with the headline "Cut your Council Tax—Find out if you should be paying less" and have arranged for the flyer to go out with the winter fuel payment letters to around 12 million pensioners in around eight million households.

We have contacted over 20,000 organisations that deal with older people, to update them on the continuing campaign to raise awareness of council tax benefit, and have arranged for the flyer to be available via displays in doctors' surgeries. Electronic versions of the flyer are also available for local authorities to download and customise to include in with this year's council tax bills if they do not already have their own local products.

A further round of press advertising, some national but mainly regional, started in January, with a second round of regional advertising due to start in early March, again to coincide with the issue of the council tax bills.

The Pension Service are already doing much to promote council tax benefit–take-up, from issuing a housing benefit/council tax benefit claim form to everyone who calls the pension credit application line and wishes to claim, to helping people fill in this form when visiting pensioners to take a claim for pension credit.

The Link-Age Programme (which is building an integrated network of services for older people) is joining up existing service providers to offer a more holistic service to pensioners. Partnerships are being developed between The Pension Service and local authorities and joint teams of staff from both organisations are already operational in over 30 local authority areas, and are being rolled out nationally.

A new £13 million fund—The Partnership Fund—was launched on 25 January 2005, providing up to two years' funding to around 170 organisations across Great Britain to finance local initiatives to improve take-up of older people's benefits, particularly those in hard to reach groups.

The Pension Service have also recently provided local authorities with details of those people in their area claiming pension credit but not claiming housing benefit or council tax benefit, for authorities to use to complement their own take-up activities.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by his Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [202444]

Maria Eagle: Most equipment used by the Department is not leased but obtained via service contracts. Most office equipment is provided under serviced accommodation arrangements under the 20-year PRIME PFI partnership for estates management services or under other facilities management contracts. IS/IT and telephony equipment is not leased but provided or sourced under long-term service contracts. The Department does enter into leasing agreements for some other equipment, principally photocopiers, but

these arrangements are made at local level. The information on these arrangements required to answer the questions is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of refurbishments in his Department was in each year since 1997; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [205667]

Maria Eagle: DWP was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service (ES). Information for the period prior to June 2001 refers to the former DSS and ES.

The available information on the costs of refurbishments since 1997 is in the table.

	Total (£ million)
1997–98	52.4
1998–99	14.6
1999–2000	23.3
2000–01	23.7
2001–02	77.8
2002–03	175.3
2003–04	179.7

Notes:

1. Expenditure on refurbishments increased in 2002 when the Department embarked on a major modernisation programme funded by the Treasury to improve the way in which DWP services are delivered to the public. The physical surroundings of several of the businesses within DWP are being changed, including Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service and Debt Management Services. The total spend is a combination of major refurbishments to buildings and smaller, business-related refurbishment works costs.
2. Health and Safety Executive figures are included from 2002 when they joined DWP.

The available information on estimated future expenditure on refurbishments is in the table.

	Total (£ million)
2004–05	73.1
2005–06	307.8

Notes:

1. These figures are estimates and may be subject to change.
2. The estimates include expenditure for Jobcentre Plus rollout, the Health and Safety Executive and the Rent Service which became part of DWP in April 2004. Estimated costs for other business related refurbishment works are not included as they are not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.
3. The anticipated increased spend in 2005–06 is due to an expected increase in the number of Jobcentre Plus offices to be rolled out during the year.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions who the ministerial design champion for his Department is. [215653]

Mr. Pond: I am the design champion for the Department for Work and Pensions.

Disabled People (Middlesbrough)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate how many disabled people will receive the personal budget for disabled people in the constituency of Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East. [215896]

Maria Eagle: Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report "Improving the life chances of disabled people" sets out the Government's commitment to introducing, over time, new arrangements for individualised budgets for all disabled people. More work is needed to develop the detail of these arrangements and the Department of Health, supported by this Department and the office of the Deputy Prime Minister, will be developing early pilots to start testing the feasibility of this new approach.

The Strategy Unit report was published on 19 January 2005, and is available in the Library.

DLA

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people who were disabled before their 65th birthdays were unable to claim disability living allowance because they were incapable of doing so because of illness or other reasons in the last period for which figures are available; and what the main reasons for inability to claim were. [216590]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not available.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207676]

Maria Eagle: The Department owns the following electronic devices:

	Number of devices
Desktop PCs	149,000
Laptops	11,000
Servers	6,000
Printers	27,000
Communications room equipment	6,495
Projectors	990
Large and specialist monitors	4,187
Scanners	579
Photocopiers	491
Order book printers	349
Giro writers	118
Mobile phones	14,005
Palmtops	55

Notes:

1. Figures collected 23 November 2004.
2. The number of desktop PCs, laptops, servers and printers is constantly changing due to new installations and the removal of obsolete equipment, which creates a time lag for updating the Department's records. The figures provided are therefore estimated.
3. In addition to those items listed, the Department has a range of private finance initiative and leasing contracts in respect of computer equipment, advanced telephony services, photocopiers, franking machines and mobile phones which are used by, but not owned by, the Department.

4. Lower cost electronic devices purchased which fall below the de minimus level for capitalisation (£5,000 except for ex ES assets which is £2,500), are treated as consumables and detailed information on numbers is not available.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation; [204346]

(2) how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215051]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was formed in June 2001 from the Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) including the Employment Service (ES).

Expenditure on official hospitality, entertainment of non-civil servants, is not collected at the level of detail requested. The available information on official hospitality expenditure, including working lunches, is in the table.

All expenditure on official hospitality and on working lunches is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

£

	Official hospitality[1]	*Working lunches*[2]
1997–98	46,000	—
1998–99	86,000	—
1999–2000	327,000	—
2000–01	127,000	—
2001–02	155,000	—
2002–03	250,000	722,000
2003–04	123,000	867,000

[1] Figures for 1997–98 to 2000–01 refer to the former DSS and ES.
[2] Working lunch expenditure information is only available for the two most recent financial years because the predecessor Departments accounted for this type of expenditure in different ways.

Five-year Strategy

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which, under the plans published in his Department's five year strategy, existing incapacity benefit claimants would be able to move from incapacity benefit to *(a)* rehabilitation support allowance and *(b)* disability and sickness allowance; [215548]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of existing claimants who would seek to move from incapacity benefit to *(a)* the rehabilitation support allowance and *(b)* the disability and sickness allowance under the plans set out in the Department's five year strategy. [215553]

Maria Eagle: No estimate has been made of the numbers who would seek to move from incapacity benefit to rehabilitation support allowance or disability and sickness allowance. We will explore and discuss with stakeholders how best to incentivise existing claimants to access the support on offer to help them return to work. As part of this we will make any necessary changes to the linking rules to support the new arrangements.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether people who would be entitled to statutory sick pay under the present system would receive *(a)* SSP and *(b)* the new holding benefit under the plans set out in his Department's Five Year Strategy. [215550]

Maria Eagle: People who would be entitled to statutory sick pay under the present system would remain entitled to statutory sick pay under the reforms to the incapacity benefits as set out in our Five Year Strategy. We intend to ensure that statutory sick pay provides the right incentives to employers to rehabilitate people and get them back to work quickly.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what exceptions he plans to the requirement for claimants of his proposed disability and sickness allowance to attend work-focussed interviews; and what sanctions he expects will be applied where there is non-compliance. [215551]

Maria Eagle: We would expect to continue with the current arrangements for waiving and deferring mandatory work-focused interviews that currently apply within the Pathways to Work pilots and Jobcentre Plus generally. We would also expect that the current sanctions regime applicable to any failure to take part in a work-focused interview without good cause would equally apply.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215224]

Maria Eagle: Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and NDPBs should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate.

The Department for Work and Pensions now has arrangements in place for information that is of wider general interest, and which has been released in response to a Freedom of Information Act request, to be posted on its internet site where it will be readily accessible. There are no plans to place such information in the Library.

Incapacity Benefit

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures his Department is implementing to encourage those claiming incapacity benefit to return to work if they are able to do so. [215951]

Maria Eagle: The Government's vision is to deliver a fundamental change in the way that people with a health condition or disability, but who want and are able to work, are given support to find, remain and progress in employment. We believe that everyone who wants and is able to get back to work should be helped and enabled to do so.

Our groundbreaking Pathways to Work programme provides intensive help and support to people on incapacity benefits who want to work again. In December 2004 we announced a significant extension of the Pathways to Work pilots to include an additional 14 Jobcentre Plus districts starting from October this year.

Building on the expansion of Pathways to Work we have announced a number of measures as part of the Five Year Strategy that will improve incapacity benefits in order to ensure that there are clear rewards for moving into work, and that will address the anxieties many claimants have about trying out a job by minimising the risks. We recognise that a person's health condition can affect their ability to work in varying degrees, sometimes making work very unlikely, but sometimes leaving a good prospect of a return to work.

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the percentage of incapacity benefit claims that subsequently proved to be unsubstantiated in the last year for which figures are available. [216337]

Maria Eagle: The level of fraud in incapacity benefit is very low, estimated at less than 3 per cent. of expenditure when last measured.

Evidence of fraud in incapacity benefit is investigated thoroughly. This resulted in 613 prosecutions in 2003–04.

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he plans to take to discourage general practitioners from issuing sick notes that support dubious incapacity benefit claims. [216338]

Maria Eagle: The vast majority of GPs provide advice on fitness for work which they believe to be in the best interests of their patient. The Department has recently revised the guidance to doctors about providing advice to patients on fitness for work and appropriate certification. This guidance is supported by case examples and evidence based recovery times and is available on the Department's website.

The Department also works with GPs, royal medical colleges and universities in developing undergraduate and post graduate training materials to support doctors in
providing appropriate advice.

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in what ways changes to incapacity benefit will affect long-term claimants. [216339]

Maria Eagle: The reforms to incapacity benefits, as set out in the five year strategy, will apply to new claimants only. However, existing claimants, including long-term claimants, would be able to access the help and support on offer to help them return to work.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Bridgwater constituency were claiming incapacity benefit in each year since 1997. [217351]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

All incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in the Bridgwater parliamentary constituency, at the quarter shown

As at 31 August:	*Number*
1997	3,300
1998	3,500
1999	3,500
2000	3,400
2001	3,600
2002	3,900
2003	3,800
2004	3,700

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Claimant figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance and credits-only cases.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. data

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effect on the number of people leaving incapacity benefit of the means-testing of new claims. [217608]

Maria Eagle: Incapacity benefit is not a means-tested benefit.

International Labour Organisation Report

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the findings of the report on Forced Labour and Migration to the UK. [216130]

Mr. Pond: Our initial assessment is that the draft report, because for example it is based on a very small number of interviews, does not present a balanced view of current UK policy, law and practice and that some of the recommendations are very difficult to justify. Officials, having consulted officials from other relevant Government Departments, are responding to the ILO on the detail, and we will make a further assessment when they have completed their discussions.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205815]

Maria Eagle: Information is not collected on the number of DWP staff who have received official warnings following breaches of IT policy.

Information on DWP staff who have faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy is available from July 2003. The information is in the table.

Staff in the Department who have faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy

	Number
July 2003 to March 2004	253
April 2004 to September 2004	171

All DWP staff are subject to the Department's Standards of Behaviour statement which is based on the Civil Service Code.

The Department's Electronic Media policy sets out the conditions for the official and personal use of the Department for Work and Pensions' Information Technology (IT) and covers intranet, internet, email, work PC and laptop.

Both the Department's Standards of Behaviour and Electronic Media policy are available and publicised on the DWP intranet site.

All forms of misconduct are dealt with under the Departments disciplinary policy and procedures. The Department's disciplinary policy includes, under gross misconduct:

misuse of the internet, intranet or email, including accessing, storing or sending material that is illegal, obscene, pornographic, incites violence or reflects/promotes hatred.

If anyone in the Department is charged with or convicted of a criminal offence they are required to inform their manager straight away.

When an offence comes to light consideration is given to establish whether restriction of duties, transfer or suspension from duty is appropriate and what disciplinary action is required. Failure to report a criminal caution can of itself be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Job Centres

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which job centres *(a)* are due to be closed and *(b)* are due to remain open; what the timescale is for those remaining open to become Jobcentre Plus; and if he will make a statement. [207898]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Simon Hughes, dated 21 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning our plans for closing and retaining Jobcentres, and the timescale for completing the transformation of Jobcentre Plus. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I have placed in the Library a list of sites planned for closure as part of the Jobcentre Plus rollout programme and activity to centralise benefit processing. This list includes a number of sites which are closing through merging with co-located offices. While the majority of these sites will be disposed of in due course, a number will be retained by Jobcentre Plus to accommodate non-customer facing activity.

I have also placed in the Library a list of our planned Local Service Outlets—those customer-facing offices providing access to our services. This listing includes what we refer to as Flexible Service Delivery sites, where we are working with local partners to provide access to services through third party premises.

I should stress that this is a snapshot of our plans based on the best information available. The lists of offices will inevitably change as we progress through rollout of the new, integrated service and continue to refine our plans for centralising benefit processing in Jobcentre Plus. For example, a significant number of the site closures are dependent on construction of new buildings or acquisition of new premises and these are often subject to delays and other issues. I would also expect the number of Flexible Service Delivery sites to increase significantly as we conclude local discussions with partners on arrangements.

We continue to review the plans for our network as the reducing headcount is impacted on all parts of the business, and we may have to reconsider the future viability of a number of sites in this context. Completing the rollout of the new service and centralising benefit processing at the same time is a challenging programme of work and I can assure you that providing customer service is at the centre of decisions we make. We will also ensure that local stakeholders are kept informed of progress and any changes to our plans.

We are shaping the future Jobcentre Plus network in response to the changing business need. The need for face-to-face facilities for jobsearch and other aspects of our business has been superseded in many instances by new business processes and the use of information technology. For example, over the last 12 months we have seen an increase of over 40 per cent. in the number of hits on our jobsearch website. Encouraging our customers to use these new channels enables us to focus on those customers who need greatest help, through the intervention of personal advisers, for example.

You will see from the lists that we will retain a significant network of offices through which customers can access our services. Our current forecast is that when rollout is complete the total number of outlets from which our services can be accessed is likely to be around 1,000. On present plans, our network will be substantially complete by the Summer of next year.

I hope this summary of both the current position and our future plans is helpful.

Jobseekers (Nairn)

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals in the Nairn Jobcentre area are *(a)* in receipt of jobseeker's allowance and *(b)* required to sign on in person. [216580]

Jane Kennedy: As at December 2004 there were 174 jobseekers allowance claims in Nairn Jobcentre Plus Office including clerically held cases. There is one postal case, all others are required to attend in person.

However, it should be noted that in the period from 29 November 2004 to 8 April 2005, Nairn is piloting alternative methods to the current Fortnightly Jobsearch Review. Customers' participation in the pilot is voluntary and, for the 20 or so involved at any one time, less frequent attendance in person is allowed.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will consider the Nairn and District area for a future telephone pilot project for jobseeker's allowance. [216581]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. David Stewart, dated 22 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question on whether Nairn and District Area can be considered for a future telephone pilot for Jobseeker's Allowance. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I should explain that our Highland, Islands & Clyde Coast District, which includes Nairn, has 3 current pilots testing variations, including use of telephony, to the existing Fortnightly Jobsearch Review. Nairn is among the selected pilot locations along with Inverness, Buckie and Clydebank. Customer participation is voluntary and the position in Nairn is that about 20 customers are involved at any one time with 6 or 7 joining or leaving in a typical week.

The pilots aim to assess the impact alternatives to the current Fortnightly Jobsearch Review, such as maintaining contact by telephone and less frequent attendance in person, have on our core activity of helping people back into work. The pilots began in Inverness, Buckie and Clydebank on 11 October 2004 and in Nairn on 29 November 2004. A full evaluation of the outcomes, including whether the arrangements are suitable for wider implementation, will be carried out after the pilots end on 8 April 2005. At this stage I cannot confirm whether Nairn and District Area will continue with the pilot after 8 April 2005. I have asked the Manager for the Highland, Islands and Clyde Coast District to keep you informed.

I hope that this is helpful.

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214945]

Maria Eagle: The Department's accounting systems cannot differentiate the cost of official ministerial business cards, headed paper and compliment slips from other printing and stationery costs.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase of ministerial stationery is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and proprietary based on the principles set out in Government Accounting.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214892]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 624W.

National Insurance Numbers

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many national insurance numbers have been issued to *(a)* non-British EU citizens and *(b)* non-EU citizens in each month since January 2004; [214005]

(2) how many national insurance numbers have been issued to British citizens in each month since January 2004. [214006]

Mr. Pond: Annually, DWP receive from Inland Revenue's National Insurance Recording System a breakdown of overseas nationals entering the UK allocated a National Insurance Number. The latest information we have is up to and including May 2004 and is in the table.

National insurance numbers issued to non British EU and non EU citizens

Number

	January 2004	*February 2004*	*March 2004*	*April 2004*	*May 2004*
Non-British EU Citizens	8,000	7,600	11,700	6,400	8,000
Non-EU	24,900	24,400	39,100	21,300	20,400

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Allocations to Accession Country nationals are included as non-EU between January-April, then EU from May.
3. Not all National Insurance Numbers allocated by DWP are registered on NIRS2 e.g those allocated to pensioners.
4. Details from June 2004 to May 2005 are not yet available.

Source:

Supplied to DWP by Inland Revenue from the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS2)

Most citizens born in the United Kingdom receive their National Insurance Number (NINO) automatically at age 15-years and nine months through a link with the Inland Revenue Child Benefit system. Approximately 700,000 NINOs are allocated each year through this process.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in receipt of pension credit receive the severe disability amount; and what proportion they represent of all pension credit recipients. [216761]

Maria Eagle: At 31 August 2004, the most recent date for which this figure is available, approximately 584,600 households in receipt of pension credit in Great Britain, comprising 625,800 individuals, were in receipt of the extra amount payable to those with severe disability. These figures represent 22.4 per cent. of the total number of households in receipt of pension credit at that date and 19.8 per cent. of the corresponding number of individuals.

Notes:

1. Data has been taken from a 5 per cent. sample and is subject to a degree of sampling variation.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are *(a)* in receipt of carer's allowance and *(b)* have an underlying entitlement to carer's allowance; and what proportion each represents of all pensioners. [216762]

Maria Eagle: The requested information is in the table.

Carer's allowance: recipients and "underlying entitlement" cases of state pension age in Great Britain at 31 August 2004

	Number
Number of recipients	23,235
Number of recipients as a percentage of all pensioners	0.2
Number of underlying entitlement cases	197,305
Number of underlying entitlement cases as a percentage of all pensioners	1.8

Notes:
1. State pension age is currently 60 for females and 65 for males.
2. CA is paid in full to people of state pension age who do not have a state pension or at a reduced "top up" rate where state pension is paid at a lower weekly rate than CA. CA is not paid where the weekly rate of state pension equals or exceeds the weekly rate of CA. Such cases are known as "underlying entitlement" cases.
3. The percentages of pensioner population have been calculated using ONS mid 2003 population estimates for males aged 65 and over and females aged 60 and over in GB.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 and percentages to one decimal place.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in receipt of pension credit are *(a)* in receipt of carer's allowance and *(b)* have an underlying entitlement to carer's allowance; how many receive the carer's allowance; and what proportion they represents of all recipients in each case. [216763]

Maria Eagle: The information is given in the table. At 31 August 2004 there were a total of 429,600 recipients of carer's allowance.

Pension credit recipients also in receipt of or with an underlying entitlement to carer's allowance, Great Britain, 31 August 2004

	Households in receipt of pension credit	As a percentage of all pension credit households	Individual recipients of pension credit	As a percentage of all individual pension credit recipients
In receipt of carer's allowance	13,690	0.5	22,870	0.7
With an underlying entitlement to carer's allowance	76,430	2.9	125,240	4.0

Notes:
1. Data has been taken as at August 2004, the latest date for which the relevant carer's allowance figures are available.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
3. Figures for households in receipt of pension credit also in receipt of or with underlying entitlement to carer's allowance (i.e. the figures in the second column) exclude cases where the person to whom the pension credit award has been made is not the same as the person to whom the award of carers allowance has been made (i.e. where the partner of the pension credit recipient is in receipt of or with underlying entitlement to carer's allowance).
4. Individual recipients may include a small number of partners under the age of 60.
5. Carer's allowance is paid to people of state pension age where there is no entitlement to state pension or where state pension is paid at a lower rate than carer's allowance. If a low state pension is paid, a reduced rate of carer's allowance will be paid as a top-up.
6. Carer's allowance is not paid where the weekly rate of state pension equals or exceeds the weekly rate of carer's allowance. Such cases are known as "underlying entitlement" cases.

Source :
IAD Information Directorate, 100 per cent. sample.

Social Fund

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the National Audit Office report on the social fund published on 13 January; and if he will make a statement. [216095]

Mr. Pond: We welcome the report from the NAO; it recognises that the social fund plays an important role in helping people in financial hardship and is reaching many of those in greatest need. The report found that there were £3 million social fund payments made in the last financial year at a total cost of £854 million and acknowledges that the Department recovers the majority of social fund debt. Many of the recommendations in the report are already being taken forward.

Jobcentre plus intend to introduce a standard operating model for the social fund from April 2005, currently being piloted in Wales. Along with new management indicators from April 2004, the model aims to maintain and, where necessary, improve the speed and quality of decision making and customer service.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the speeches his special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210557]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1743W.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209576]

Maria Eagle: The information is not collected centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 23 February 2005

PRIME MINISTER

Helicopter Flight Cost

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Prime Minister from what budget the helicopter he used for his official engagements on 11 February was paid for. [217711]

The Prime Minister: There was no cost to public funds.

Honours

Tony Wright: To ask the Prime Minister how many recipients of each category of award in the honours system there were in each local authority area in each of the last five years. [216591]

The Prime Minister: The information requested is not held centrally and to obtain the information would incur disproportionate costs. Details of awards made by regions over the last five years were published in Sir Hayden Phillips' Review of the Honours System (2004), copies of which are available in the Library.

Iran

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to the oral answer of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1496 to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Jeremy Corbyn), what diplomatic means of engagement he has pursued with the Government of Iran since 9 February in respect of *(a)* the security of Iran, *(b)* the Iranian perception of the security of Iran, *(c)* Iran's relations with the United States and *(d)* the alleged development of nuclear weapons by Iran. [217029]

The Prime Minister: Our policy towards Iran is one of critical and conditional engagement. The UK, France and Germany (the "E3"), with European Union representatives, are engaged in a dialogue with Iran aimed at agreeing long-term arrangements for Iran's nuclear programme. These are intended to provide objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes. Working groups on political/security issues and nuclear issues met in Geneva on 9 February and 10–11 February respectively. A working group on technology/co-operation met on 8 February. Relations between Iran and the United States are a matter for those two countries.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Devolved Assembly

7. **Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the devolved assembly to re-convene. [216997]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier.

Ulster Scots

8. **Mr. Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to make announcements regarding cultural arrangements, appointments and other equality measures regarding Ulster Scots. [216998]

Angela Smith: The Government fully recognises the importance of cultural identity in Northern Ireland and has in hand a significant programme of work aimed at recognising it. The wide range of issues involved means that announcements are made as and when it is appropriate to do so.

Devolved Government

9. **Helen Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the prospects for restoring devolved Government in Northern Ireland. [216999]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier.

10. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the impact of the suspension of the Assembly on the democratic process in Northern Ireland. [217000]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Belfast Agreement envisaged a Northern Ireland Assembly and a power-sharing Executive, both made up of locally-elected representatives. The Government continues to believe that this represents the best long-term guarantee of peace and stability in Northern Ireland and I regret that current circumstances make it impossible to restore those institutions at present.

However, this does not erode the democratic process altogether in Northern Ireland. This House—including those Members with Northern Ireland constituencies—continue to hold myself and my ministerial colleagues to account for our administration of Northern Ireland under Direct Rule.

Education Boards

11. **Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the financial position of the education boards in Northern Ireland; and what steps are being taken to improve that position. [217001]

Mr. Gardiner: Between 1999–2000 and 2005–06 total spending on education has increased by 56 per cent. Total funding per pupil has increased by 64 per cent. In the budget for 2005–06 I have increased the allocation to the ELB centre budgets by £19 million over the previous year; that is almost 6 per cent.—from £333 to £352 million at a time when inflation is running at 2.5 per cent. and pupil numbers are declining.

The priority now for all ELBs is to develop plans that reflect Government education policy and ensure that services are managed and delivered within budget.

Cross-border Trade (Motor Vehicles)

12. **Mr. Walter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on cross-border trade in second-hand motor vehicles. [217002]

Angela Smith: The number of second hand vehicles imported into Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland has reduced considerably over the last five years, from a figure of 2,889 in 2000 to 959 in 2004.

Security Situation

13. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation in Northern Ireland. [217003]

Mr. Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier to the right hon. Member for Bracknell (Mr. Mackay).

Peace Process

14. **Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Northern Ireland peace process. [217004]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier.

15. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the economic impact in Northern Ireland of the peace process. [217005]

Mr. Gardiner: The Northern Ireland economy has performed remarkably well over the past decade with high levels of economic growth, a strong labour market and increasing visitor numbers. I believe this can be attributed in part to the increased stability and confidence provided by the peace process.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what sums have been paid to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety by the Home Office and National Asylum Support Service in respect of asylum seeker support in each year since 1996–97; and if he will make a statement. [217125]

Angela Smith: The following table details the monies paid to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety by the Home Office and the National Asylum Support Service as reimbursement for asylum seeker support.

	Amount paid £000
1996–97	0
1997–98	0
1998–99	0
1999–00	0
2000–01	0
2001–02	112
2002–03	150
2003–04	280
2004–05	124

Census

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the penalties are for refusing to complete a decennial population census form for Northern Ireland; how many successful prosecutions there were for that offence in connection with the censuses for *(a)* 1981, *(b)* 1991 and *(c)* 2001; and if he will make a statement. [216852]

Mr. Pearson: The current maximum penalty for refusing to complete a census form or answer any question in the census is £1,000. No prosecutions were brought in 1981, while there were five and two successful prosecutions in 1991 and 2001 respectively.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the penalties are for unlawfully disclosing personal information from closed decennial population censuses for Northern Ireland; how many successful prosecutions there have been for that offence since 1990; and if he will make a statement. [216853]

Mr. Pearson: The current maximum penalty for unlawful disclosure of personal information supplied in the census is, on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both. On conviction on indictment, an individual is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or a fine or both. There have been no prosecutions since 1990.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what requests his Department has received from members of the public who do not want their personal census details to be released before the Northern Ireland records are 100 years old. [216854]

Mr. Pearson: Records from Northern Ireland censuses conducted under the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 are currently closed indefinitely. There have been no requests of the nature described.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if consideration has been given to commissioning an independent survey to discover whether the people of Northern Ireland are in favour of the re-establishment of 49 or 59-year confidentiality periods which applied to Northern Ireland decennial population census records for 1901 and 1911; and if he will make a statement. [216855]

Mr. Pearson: Records from Northern Ireland censuses conducted under the Census Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 are currently closed indefinitely. In due course, consideration will be given to introducing legislation to open records after 100 years in line with the rest of the UK. No consideration has been given to commissioning a survey of the nature described.

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assurances of confidentiality were given on the decennial population census for Northern Ireland in 2001. [216856]

Mr. Pearson: The following statement appeared on the cover of the 2001 census form.

"The information you provide is protected by law and treated in strict confidence. The information is only used for statistical purposes, and anyone using or disclosing census information

improperly will be liable to prosecution. Census forms will be held securely under the terms of the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923."

Publicity material for the 2001 Census also stated that

"by law the census form and the information it contains is kept secret and cannot be divulged to anyone."

Mr. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the years when the householders' forms for the 1928 to 2001 population censuses for Northern Ireland were destroyed. [216857]

Mr. Pearson: Since 1928 there have been censuses in 1937 and 1951 and decennially thereafter with an additional mid-term census in 1966.

The Public Record Office Northern Ireland (PRONI) is the custodian of all Northern Ireland census returns from all censuses with the exception of the 2001 census. None of these forms have been destroyed. Images of the 2001 census forms have been taken and will shortly be delivered to PRONI.

Children's Fund

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether all projects established under the Children's Fund will continue to receive funding. [217600]

Angela Smith: All projects funded under the current three year Children's Fund cycle will receive their full allocation from existing Children's Fund monies.

Education Action Zones

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resources are being committed to funding education action zones in North and West Belfast; and from what sources. [217416]

Mr. Gardiner: Some £6 million is expected to be available over the next three financial years for the implementation of the Education Action Zone (EAZ) initiative across Northern Ireland. The bids presently being developed include proposals from the BELB for EAZ provision in North and West Belfast.

EU Grants

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what procedures are in place in his Department to ensure that EU regional development grants are used in accordance with the European Commission rules. [217282]

Mr. Pearson: In Northern Ireland EU structural funds expenditure must comply with the requirements of the procedural guide "Government Accounting in Northern Ireland" (GANI) and EU regulations guidance on European Commission rules contained in the EU structural funds operating manual for Northern Ireland.

Compliance is ensured through a system of both management (Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No. 438/2001) checks that must be carried out on all projects and a system of a minimum of a 5 per cent. sample check (Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 438/2001). Certifying bodies must satisfy themselves that these checks have been carried out before making claims to the Commission (Article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 438/2001). EU expenditure is also subject to internal audit and the Northern Ireland Audit Office reviews.

Health Trusts

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are employed by each of the health trusts covering *(a)* North Belfast and *(b)* West Belfast, broken down by (i) gender and (ii) religion and community background. [217415]

Angela Smith: Information requested is provided in the following tables.

Staff employed by each of the health and social services trusts covering North and West Belfast by (i) gender as at February 2005

Headcount

Health and social service trust	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Homefirst (Whiteabbey Hospital)	15	152	167
Mater Infirmorum	324	987	1,311
North and West Belfast	631	3,043	3,674
Royal Group of Hospitals	1,667	5,170	6,837
Total	2,637	9,352	11,989

Staff employed by each of the health and social services trusts covering (a) North Belfast and (b) West Belfast by (ii) religion and community background as at February 2005

Headcount

Health and social services trust	*Protestant*	*Roman Catholic*	*Other/not stated / unknown*	*Total*
Homefirst (Whiteabbey Hospital)	108	47	12	167
Mater Infirmorum	412	738	161	1,311
North and West Belfast	1,458	1,998	218	3,674
Royal Group of Hospitals	2,494	3,999	344	6,837
Total	4,472	6,782	735	11,989

Nurses

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many episodes of physical abuse occurred against nurses in hospitals in Northern Ireland in the last year. [217302]

Angela Smith: The information is not available in the form requested for the last year and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, during the first 6 months of the financial year for which figures are available (1 April 2004–30 September 2004) a total of 1176 incidents were recorded of physical abuse against nurses in hospitals in Northern Ireland, out of a total of 1977 recorded incidents of physical abuse against HPSS staff during the same period.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [213811]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The information is not held in the format requested by the hon. Member.

The Northern Ireland Office (excluding its agencies and NDPBs) has spent the following on:

(a) Provision of parking spaces for civil servants

Between 1997–98 and 1999–2000 the cost of parking spaces was captured under the expense code "property rental" and is not separately identifiable.

In 2000–01 the expense codes were amended so that the cost of parking spaces could be identified separately. The costs from 2000–01 to 2003–04 are provided as follows.

£

	Cost of parking spaces
2000–01	106,357
2001–02	152,616
2002–03	187,416
2003–04	196,633

(b) Parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants

The amount spent on parking tickets and penalties cannot be identified separately as these costs are all captured under "other travel costs".

Regional Rate

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the percentage change in the regional rate in Northern Ireland was in each of the last five years. [211877]

Mr. Pearson: The following table gives the percentage increase in the domestic and the non-domestic regional rates from the 2000–01 financial year.

Between 2000–01 and 2004–05 the average household rate bill increased from £394 to £509, an increase of £115. The average increase for England for this period was £270.

Regional rate percentage increases

Percentage

	Domestic regional rate increase	*Non-domestic regional rate increase*
2000–01	8.0	4.6
2001–02	7.0	3.3
2002–03	7.0	3.3
2003–04	6.0	3.3
2004–05	8.8	3.3

Suicides (North Belfast)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what strategy is in place in north Belfast to tackle suicides, with particular reference to young people. [216418]

Angela Smith: The North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust's Strategy for the Prevention of Suicide includes gender specific health education campaigns and education tools for schools aimed at promoting positive mental health and raising awareness of suicide, support for primary care, home-based early intervention on a 24-hour 7-days a week basis, the provision of support and training for community based counselling services and support for those affected by suicidal behaviour.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been spent on tackling suicides in north Belfast in each year since 2000. [216419]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available, as it is not possible to disaggregate the amounts spent specifically on tackling suicide from the services that are involved.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people normally resident in Northern Ireland have been assessed and accepted for *(a)* heart, *(b)* lung and *(c)* heart and lung transplant waiting lists in each of the last three years; how many have received transplants; and how many have died whilst waiting for transplantation. [216666]

Angela Smith: Information on the number of people normally resident in Northern Ireland who have been assessed and accepted for heart, lung and heart and lung transplant waiting lists and the number of people who have died whilst waiting for heart, lung and heart and lung transplantation in each of the last three years is not available.

Information on the number of people normally resident in Northern Ireland who have received heart, lung and heart and lung transplants in each of the last three years is provided in the following table:

Number who received transplants

	1 January 2002 to 31 December 2002	*1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003*	*1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004*
(a) Heart transplants	4	2	8
(b) Lung transplants	3	3	1
(c) Combined heart and lung transplants	—	1	2

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what he is doing to tackle the number of trolley waits in hospitals in Northern Ireland. [217303]

Angela Smith: A regional programme of work is being taken forward to examine and improve the flow of emergency admissions through hospitals and to reduce the numbers of trolley waits. All trusts were required as part of this regional programme to undertake a snapshot survey to identify delays in the hospital system. A regional workshop will be held later this month to examine the results of these surveys and consider how best to address the issues arising from them. All of this work is being overseen and monitored by a regional steering group comprising representatives from health and social services boards and trusts.

In preparation for the extra demands that would be made on services during the winter months, an additional £2 million recurrent and £6 million non-recurrent funding was made available to the Northern Ireland health service in 2004–05. This money has been used to provide a range of services, including

additional acute and community nursing staff, enhanced primary and community care provision, and additional hospital capacity.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Common Agricultural Policy (Africa)

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on agricultural markets in Africa. [217420]

Hilary Benn: The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in its current form, impacts on agricultural markets in Africa by increasing world supply, thus lowering world prices; by artificially raising EU prices; by heavily subsidising exports; by undermining world price stability and by limiting access to our markets through the use of high import tariffs.

This imposes high costs on developing countries. Empirical research has shown that amongst rich countries, the EU is responsible for the biggest costs to developing country farmers. Reform of the CAP could increase developing countries' food and farming income by $7.5 billion per year, which could significantly reduce poverty for those producers in Africa.

DFID and the UK are committed to reform of the CAP in order to facilitate freer and fairer agricultural trade between developing countries, including in Africa, and the EU. This issue is being analysed in the Commission for Africa Report, expected in March 2005.

DFID will continue to press for reforms on the EU side including by weakening the link between EU farm support and domestic production to discourage over production (which lowers the world market price), and providing better market access by reducing tariffs and will also continue to build supply-side capacity of agricultural producers including infrastructure and technological development to improve quality and competitiveness of African products.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215799]

Hilary Benn: I refer the member for Tatton to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Financial Secretary to HM Treasury (Mr. Timms), on Monday 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column. 75W.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Pupil Referral Units

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the average number of pupils in a pupil referral unit was in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each local education authority in the last year for which figures are available; [216865]

(2) how many places were *(a)* filled and *(b)* available in pupil referral units in (i) England, (ii) each region and (iii) each local education authority on the latest date for which figures are available. [216867]

Derek Twigg: Information on the number of pupils in Pupil Referral Units is shown in the following table.

Information on the number of places available in Pupil Referral Units is not collected centrally.

Pupil referral units: number of pupils January 2004—by local education authority area

	Number of pupils
England	13,038
North-east	833
Darlington	21
Durham	11
Gateshead	90
Hartlepool	55
Middlesbrough	77
Newcastle upon Tyne	116
North Tyneside	60
Northumberland	3
Redcar and Cleveland	120
South Tyneside	158
Stockton-on-Tees	51
Sunderland	71
North-west	2,171
Blackburn with Darwen	81
Blackpool	210
Bolton	66
Bury	106
Cheshire	0
Cumbria	66
Halton	33
Knowsley	109
Lancashire	371
Liverpool	144
Manchester	411
Oldham	0
Rochdale	115
Salford	107
Sefton	92
St. Helens	15
Stockport	9
Tameside	55
Trafford	52
Warrington	31
Wigan	43
Wirral	55
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,389
Barnsley	71
Bradford	173
Calderdale	45
Doncaster	140
East Riding of Yorkshire	16
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	57
Kirklees	173
Leeds	196
North East Lincolnshire	49
North Lincolnshire	55
North Yorkshire	23
Rotherham	40
Sheffield	152

Pupil referral units: number of pupils January 2004—by local education authority area

	Number of pupils
Wakefield	47
York	152
East Midlands	1,022
Derby	166
Derbyshire	31
Leicester	114
Leicestershire	115
Lincolnshire	215
Northamptonshire	150
Nottingham	166
Nottinghamshire	65
Rutland	0
West Midlands	1,356
Birmingham	350
Coventry	6
Dudley	18
Herefordshire	40
Sandwell	126
Shropshire	20
Solihull	54
Staffordshire	73
Stoke-on-Trent	23
Telford and Wrekin	53
Walsall	104
Warwickshire	160
Wolverhampton	100
Worcestershire	229
East of England	1,086
Bedfordshire	105
Cambridgeshire	262
Essex	284
Hertfordshire	122
Luton	25
Norfolk	38
Peterborough	16
Southend-on-Sea	23
Suffolk	147
Thurrock	64
London	2,719
Inner London	1,267
Camden	37
City of London	0
Hackney	47
Hammersmith and Fulham	189
Haringey	105
Islington	119
Kensington and Chelsea	44
Lambeth	109
Lewisham	146
Newham	50
Southwark	100
Tower Hamlets	230
Wandsworth	85
Westminster	6
Outer London	1,452
Barking and Dagenham	217
Barnet	59
Bexley	51
Brent	101
Bromley	100
Croydon	350
Ealing	133
Enfield	92
Greenwich	70
Harrow	35
Havering	21
Hillingdon	28
Hounslow	55
Kingston upon Thames	1
Merton	16
Redbridge	74
Richmond upon Thames	13
Sutton	17
Waltham Forest	19
South-east	1,386
Bracknell Forest	29
Brighton and Hove	0
Buckinghamshire	78
East Sussex	29
Hampshire	268
Isle of Wight	16
Kent	153
Medway	142
Milton Keynes	56
Oxfordshire	127
Portsmouth	40
Reading	31
Slough	54
Southampton	30
Surrey	142
West Berkshire	58
West Sussex	92
Windsor and Maidenhead	19
Wokingham	22
South-west	1,076
Bath and North East Somerset	7
Bournemouth	9
Bristol, City of	132
Cornwall	0
Devon	77
Dorset	112
Gloucestershire	181
Isles of Scilly	0
North Somerset	34
Plymouth	141
Poole	20
Somerset	61
South Gloucestershire	55
Swindon	68
Torbay	53
Wiltshire	126

Source:
Annual Schools Census

Pupil:Teacher Ratios (York)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average pupil-to-teacher ratio in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in York was in each year since 1996–97. [217624]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table provides pupil and staff information for maintained primary and secondary schools in the City of York constituency in each January from 1997 to 2004, the latest information available.

	Maintained primary schools[1]		*Maintained secondary schools*[1]	
	Pupil:teacher ratio[2]	*Pupil:adult ratio*[3]	*Pupil:teacher ratio*[2]	*Pupil:adult ratio*[3]
2004	21.8	14.4	16.0	12.3
2003	21.6	14.9	15.9	13.0
2002	21.7	15.3	16.1	13.1
2001	22.8	17.0	16.7	14.3
2000	22.9	18.0	16.5	14.4
1999	23.1	18.5	16.5	14.9
1998	24.4	19.8	16.2	14.3
1997	23.8	20.2	16.1	14.4

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Based on the full-time equivalent of qualified teachers.
[3] Based on the full-time equivalent of all teaching and support staff (excluding administration and clerical staff).
Source:
Annual School Census

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Climate Change

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to *(a)* encourage environmental protection and *(b)* reduce the UK's contribution to climate change. [216796]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Defra's five year strategy, "Delivering the Essentials of Life" was published in December 2004 and sets out the Department's approach to environmental protection and sustainable development.

The UK remains on course to achieve its Kyoto target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent. below base year levels by 2008–12.

The Government recognises that measures in addition to those contained in the UK Climate Change Programme published in 2000 will be needed to achieve the domestic goal of a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010.

The current review of the UK Climate Change Programme will give the opportunity for the Government to look carefully at whether to introduce new policies and measures, and/or strengthen existing ones. The review will also consider the action that the UK will need to take to ensure it is on course to make "real progress by 2020" towards the ambitious longer-term goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by some 60 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2050, as set out in the Energy White Paper (2003).

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was raised by the climate change levy in the last year for which figures are available; and how this income was spent. [217070]

John Healey *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the Climate Change Levy Bulletin for November 2004 published by HM Customs and Excise which is available at www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=climate.

Environmental Protection

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking in the West Midlands to protect the environment. [216797]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* A wide range of regional activities on the environment are co-ordinated and prioritised through the West Midlands Regional Assembly's Regional Environmental Partnership, to which many of Defra's agencies actively contribute. Although only formed recently, it is currently considering a number of sectors, including waste, energy, biodiversity, urban design, Water Framework Directive, area-based approaches, etc. This group also contributes to the implementation and review of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The work of individual agencies is very varied, but includes the following:

Environment Agency

The priorities of the Environment Agency are set out in its corporate strategy, entitled "Making it happen". They are as follows:

An enhanced environment for wildlife
Cleaner air for everyone
Improved and protected inland and coastal waters
Restored, protected land with healthier soils
A "greener" business world
Wiser, sustainable use of natural resources
Limiting and adapting to climate change
Reducing flood risk

English Nature

(i) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): There are 439 SSSI in the West Midlands region and currently 65 per cent. are either in favourable or recovering management condition. Only around 5 per cent. have been classified as declining in management condition. In some cases improvements in management condition are secured by English Nature through management agreements under its Wildlife Enhancement Scheme and in others by the Rural Development Service through agri-environment schemes. On other sites improved management has been achieved with support from the Heritage Lottery fund, for example at Cannock Chase and Sutton Park under the Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage initiative.

One major outstanding issue which relates to the condition of river and other wetland SSSIs is diffuse pollution, invariably from agricultural sources. Under the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme a specific pilot scheme is now underway to tackle diffuse pollution issues on the river Teme through collaborative working among both relevant agencies including the Integrated Agency confederation and the Environment Agency together with local individuals and groups.

(ii) Biodiversity: The Government is supporting the co-ordination the of six Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Partnerships operating in the West Midlands and the delivery of specific nature conservation actions for a selection of each area's most threatened habitats and species. This ranges from restoration of lowland heathland in Staffordshire and Worcestershire to the survival of water voles in Birmingham and Herefordshire. The region's Biodiversity Strategy (to be launched March 2005), and the associated regional biodiversity audit and regional habitats targets work, has derived from strong Government engagement with and facilitation of partnership outputs. The ODPM's Regional Planning Guidance (June 2004) incorporates policy intent to achieve effective protection and measurable gains in the conservation status of 23 priority habitats by 2010.

England Rural Development Programme (ERDP)

The Rural Development Service, through its West Midlands offices, operates a range of agri-environment schemes as part of the ERDP. Expenditure under these in 2003–04 was as follows:

	£000
Countryside Stewardship Scheme	5,878
Environmentally Sensitive Areas	3,491
Organic Farming Scheme	1,330

The new Environmental Stewardship scheme will shortly be introduced, and will replace the above schemes. It will address these issues:

biodiversity

maintenance, enhancement and protection of landscape quality and character

protection of the historic environment

natural resource protection

promotion of public access (HLS only)

genetic conservation

flood protection

Protected landscapes

There are five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty wholly or partly within the region:

Cannock Chase

Cotswold Hills (part)

Malvern Hills

Shropshire Hills

Wye Valley (part).

The Peak District National Park lies partly within the West Midlands but is administered from the East Midlands.

These organisations co-ordinate their activity through the West Midlands Protected Landscape Forum, led by the Countryside Agency.

Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission recently led a partnership to produce a Regional Forestry Framework. An action plan for the region is currently being developed.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the adaptation to scientific and technical progress of the Directive on water intended for human consumption met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [216258]

Mr. Morley: The Committee did not meet between 1 July 2003 and 31 December 2004.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of the Directive on bathing water, (ii) Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of the Directive on the quality of fresh water needing protection or improvement in order to support fish life and (iii) Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of the Decision establishing a common procedure for the exchange of information on the quality of surface fresh water in the Community met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if she will make a statement. [216719]

Mr. Morley: None of these Committees met during these three presidencies.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee for the adaptation to scientific and technical progress of the Directive on protection of water against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217242]

Mr. Morley: The information requested is as follows:

Italian Presidency—July to December 2003

The Committee met on 7 November 2003 when three delegates from the UK attended.

Irish Presidency—January to June 2004

The Committee met on 23rd June 2004 when four delegates from the UK attended.

Dutch Presidency—July to December 2004

The Committee met on 2 December 2004 when four delegates from the UK attended.

All the meetings were held in Brussels.

The meetings present opportunities for the UK to discuss and promote a UK perspective on aspects of implementation of the Directive, for example, promotion of current UK scientific knowledge and thinking.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005,

cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

European Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects that the European Commission will accept the revised UK National Allocation Plan in order to allow British business to participate in the European emissions trading scheme. [217212]

Margaret Beckett: We recognise that UK operators wish to begin full participation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme as soon as possible. The Government are continuing their dialogue with the Commission with a view to finding a solution which addresses the concerns of both sides and which will enable allocation as soon as possible.

The monitoring and reporting aspects of the scheme commenced on 1 January 2005. UK operators are already able to participate in the forward market. The Government have published the provisional list of installation-level allowances in order to give industry as much certainty as possible about how many allowances they will receive. However, we recognise that operators can only begin trading on the spot market after allowances have actually been issued.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the most recent communication from the European Commission on the status of the revised UK National Allocation Plan. [217213]

Margaret Beckett: Discussions with the European Commission on the proposed amendments to the UK National Allocation Plan for phase 1 of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (2005–07) are still continuing, with a view to finding a solution which addresses the concerns of both sides as soon as possible.

TRANSPORT

A39

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured on the A39 in each of the last five years. [217406]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Fatal and seriously injured casualties on the A39: 1999–2003

	Casualties	
	Killed	*Serious*
1999	6	52
2000	8	59
2001	5	46
2002	11	62
2003	7	53

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the level of congestion on the A39 in Bridgwater. [217407]

Mr. Jamieson: The A39 through Bridgwater is not part of the Trunk Road network, and consequently my Department has not undertaken an assessment of the level of congestion in Bridgwater.

The road in question is the responsibility of Somerset county council, the local highway authority. It is understood that journey speeds on the A39 in Bridgwater have been monitored twice, in 2001 and 2004. The results showed a 7 per cent. and 11 per cent. decrease in peak and off-peak speeds respectively. However, partly as a result of the completion in January 2003 of the Bridgwater Northern Relief Road, these decreases were considerably lower than on other routes in the town.

Leigh Guided Busway

Andy Burnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make an announcement with regard to the outstanding planning issues related to the Leigh Guided Busway. [217060]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department has just finished exchanging written representations between Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) and interested parties on the extensive additional environmental information provided by the GMPTE last October. GMPTE have also recently provided clarification of some detailed drafting points on their proposed Transport and Works Act Order. We have concluded in the light of all this further information that it is not necessary to re-open the earlier public inquiry into this scheme. We are now considering the substantial amount of new information that has been submitted since the inquiry, in the light of the earlier Inspector's report, and intend to decide this application as soon as we reasonably can.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much City of York Council has received in *(a)* block grant and *(b)* specific grants for transport purposes in each year since it became a unitary authority; and if he will make a statement on investment in public transport in York. [217622]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has approved nearly £34 million of block grant to City of York council for transport capital between April 1996 and March 2005. Of this £34 million, £7.724 million was for maintenance and £26.151 million for integrated transport improvements. Also £3.239 million was provided for the B1228 Peasholme Bridge scheme, along with a further £1.06 million in targeted bus grants. The annual amounts of funding are listed in the following table.

The investment in public transport made in York has contributed towards a substantial increase in bus patronage—up by nearly a quarter in three years—and the development of a high quality set of park and ride services. The Department designated the council as a

centre of excellence for transport planning (specifically for cycling and park and ride) back in 2001. It has recently invited the council to apply to be a centre of excellence for local transport delivery. This recognises the council's proven track record in delivering transport improvements on the ground.

£ million

City of York Nature of Funding	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01
Capital maintenance	0.306	0.435	0.378	0.900	0.712
Integrated block	0.772	0.880	0.770	1.195	1.550
Major schemes[2]	2.262	0.977	0	0	0
Targeted bus grants [1]	n/a	n/a	0.250	0.070	0.310
Total	3.34	2.292	1.398	2.165	2.572

£ million

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Capital Maintenance	1.095	1.155	1.281	1.462
Integrated Block	4.900	5.000	6.600	4.484
Major Schemes[2]	0	0	0	0
Targeted Bus Grants[1]	0.090	0.110	0.110	0.120
Total	6.085	6.265	7.991	6.066

n/a = Not available.
[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant, and Bus Challenge funding.
[2] Funding for Major Scheme B1228 Peasholme Green Bridge

M60

Andrew Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in discovering the reasons for flooding on the M60 between Denton and Hollingwood, Oldham. [216516]

Mr. Jamieson: The surface water problems that occur at specific areas on the M60 result from a combination of wide carriageways and the road alignment and crossfall. These cause rainwater to have a long and slow path off the carriageway to the drains, resulting in the formation of a continuous water film on the road surface in heavy rain.

The design of the motorway complied with the Highways Agency's standards current at the time of its design. Changes in drainage design guidance to deal with wide carriageways were subsequently issued by the Agency in 1999.

Remedial overnight works to reduce surface water on the section of the motorway between Junction 24 at Denton and the Medlock River, south of Junction 22, are planned for spring/summer 2005. Further assessment is being carried out on the section between the Medlock River and Junction 19, following which the necessary remedial works will be undertaken.

Meridian Trains

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has held concerning the future use of the Meridian trains built for Midland Mainline which have now been declared surplus to requirements. [217114]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* I understand that sixteen four-car Meridian trains have been successfully introduced into service on Midland Mainline and will continue to operate throughout the life of the franchise. There are also seven nine-car Meridians which are not yet in service. Discussions about them continue between the owning Rolling Stock Company and Midland Mainline. Careful consideration will be given to any proposal for their possible future use.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213838]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002.

The cost of providing parking for DfT civil servants in the Department's agencies in 2002–03 was £86,291 and in 2003–04 was £92,733. These costs represent the cost of any additional parking provided for staff over any spaces that may be provided as part of the lease of a building where identifying these figures would involve disproportionate cost. DfT Central did not incur any expenditure on providing parking spaces in either year.

It is departmental policy that staff are personally responsible for meeting the costs of parking tickets or penalties and these details would not be separately recorded.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what initiatives his Department is taking to reduce the numbers of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216641]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department and its Agencies are committed to managing sickness absence effectively and are taking action on the recommendations made in the "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector" report published in November 2004.

Initiatives that are being pursued include more robust recording and monitoring of absence levels and reasons for absence, better provision of management information and training for managers, earlier involvement of occupational health advisers and a review of current policies and procedures.

TREASURY

Council Tax (Chorley)

Mr. Lindsay Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many properties there were in each council tax band in the Chorley borough council area in 2003–04. [217601]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of dwellings in each council tax band for properties, in Chorley borough council area, at 7 April 2003 was:

Band	*Number of dwellings*
A	13,771
B	9,616
C	8,064
D	5,213
E	3,998
F	1,582
G	701
H	62

The council tax list, maintained by the listing officer of the Valuation Office Agency, is updated at regular intervals throughout the financial year. At 7 April 2004, the number of properties in each band were:

Band	*Number of dwellings*
A	13,806
B	9,652
C	8,213
D	5,370
E	4,124
F	1,623
G	715
H	62

Departmental Policies (Huddersfield)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement, using statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, on the effects on Huddersfield of the working and child tax credits; and what the average change in level of income has been for those receiving the credits in Huddersfield since their introduction. [217460]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the total number of families that benefit from tax credits is only available for the United Kingdom as a whole. This information can be found in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics".

Information on the number of in-work families receiving tax credits in each constituency appear in "Child and Working Tax Credits. Geographical analyses".

Both these publications can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Information on the average change in income for those families that receive tax credits is not available.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Customs Section of the Joint Committee (EEC-Switzerland-Liechtenstein) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [217923]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Sub-committee EEC-Canada met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217925]

Dawn Primarolo: The committees are the responsibility of the European Commission. Member states are not involved.

Mobile Phones (Tax Benefits)

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions his Department has held with the Department of Health regarding the potential health implications of tax and national insurance benefits available to employers who supply mobile phone and associated contracts to employees and their families. [217705]

Dawn Primarolo: The Treasury and the Department of Health have regular and on-going discussions on a wide variety of topics.

Stamp Duty

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost for 2005–06 of stamp duty relief in designated disadvantaged wards. [217483]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest estimate of the amount of disadvantaged area relief forecast to be given in 2004–05 is published at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/tax_expenditures/table1–5.pdf.

This estimate will be updated in the Budget 2005 report. An initial forecast for 2005–06 will be published at PBR in the autumn.

Tax Credit (Overpayment)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases of tax credit overpayments the Inland Revenue has decided in accordance with page 9 of the Code of Practice 26, "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" not to collect *(a)* all and *(b)* part of the overpayment to avoid causing hardship in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [215780]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* None. However, there are a number of measures to protect against hardship being caused by the recovery of an overpayment.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Improvement Districts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the maximum increase in business rates allowed in a Business Improvement District is. [216297]

Mr. Raynsford: There is no statutory upper limit on the size of the BID levy. It is for those developing BID proposals to agree the amount payable with those liable to pay the BID levy within a BID area. The legislation provides for all those liable to contribute towards BID schemes to be able to vote on BID proposals and they will be able to judge for themselves whether or not the proposal and its financial implications offers value for money.

Departmental Policies (Warrington, South)

Helen Southworth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Warrington south constituency, the effects on Warrington South of his Department's policies and actions since it was established. [213762]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the United Kingdom. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

Warrington borough council was awarded a place on Round 3 of the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) programme in July 2003, with initial funding of £18.3 million for 2004–05 and 2005–06, to help improve council stock to the decent homes standard. In November 2004 the Arms Length Management Organisation, Golden Gates Housing, qualified to access this funding by achieving a two star (good) rating from the Housing Inspectorate.

Since April 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also provided £16 million of Supporting People grant to Warrington metropolitan borough council, to enable it to deliver housing related support services to vulnerable people in the area. Currently this provides over 3900 dwellings of support to a range of people-including homeless families, older people, people with learning disabilities and young people at risk.

More broadly, since May 2002 (when the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established) we have been able to increase the total amount of Government grant given to local authorities by £11.1 billion. This is a 22 per cent. increase in real terms. Warrington has received average annual increases in formula grant of 6.5 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

EU Grants

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what procedures are in place in his Department to ensure that EU regional development grants are used in accordance with European Commission rules. [217279]

Yvette Cooper: European Structural Funds programmes are required to operate in accordance with European Commission Regulations. As Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund programmes in England, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister operates a management and control system which the Commission has agreed fully meets its regulatory requirements.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent representations he has received on mismanagement of EU regional development grants; and if he will make a statement. [217394]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not aware that there have been representations on any specific cases in relation to mismanagement of the European Regional Development Fund within England, for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is the Managing Authority. If the hon. Member has a particular concern perhaps he will write to me.

Fire Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from fire and rescue service regional management boards regarding regional control rooms; and what proportion of such representations has indicated support for the project. [216613]

Mr. Raynsford: All the Chairs of fire and rescue service regional management boards (RMBs) wrote last year to express support for the FiReControl project, in some cases subject to reassurance on financial issues. All the RMBs have commented on the Outline Business Case and responded to the recent consultation paper on FiReControl finance and governance. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is considering those comments and will publish the response shortly. The South West RMB has also requested an independent inquiry into the provision of a regional control centre for the South West, which has been refused.

Homes for All Initiative

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated market value is of the public sector land holdings identified by him for the construction of housing under the Homes for All initiative. [217335]

Keith Hill: It is too early to estimate the market value of the public sector land holdings since negotiations are still in progress about the size and scope of the various

land holdings which will be used as one of the delivery mechanisms for the creation of further sustainable communities as set out in our Homes for All document.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact on house prices of withdrawing previously identified surplus land sites from open market sale for use in the Homes for All initiative. [217336]

Keith Hill: Surplus land is not being withdrawn from sale. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's recently published Five Year strategy "Homes for All" makes it clear that much of the surplus public sector land will be used for housing development and to tackle housing shortages including the provision of affordable and key worker homes.

There are effective arrangements in place to continue to dispose of surplus sites for housing and other uses. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises that not all sites will be suitable for housing development.

English Partnerships will handle a proportion of the public sector sites. Where residential development is proposed they will ensure that the land is sold in the open market with a planning framework which will deliver the balance of market and affordable homes that meets Government the local planning requirements. That means ensuring higher design and quality standards are being delivered alongside higher housing numbers bringing a mixture of tenure and prices to the market. This will be delivered through private sector developers.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether developments of housing constructed on public sector land under the Homes for All initiative will be exempt from the requirements of existing local plans *(a)* to provide social rented housing and *(b)* to provide financial contributions for off-site infrastructure re-enforcement. [217337]

Keith Hill: Housing development constructed on public sector land under the Homes for All initiative will not be exempt from local plan requirements for social rented housing or financial contributions for off-site infrastructure works.

Housing Assistance (South Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will give financial assistance towards additional rented housing in South Lancashire. [216558]

Keith Hill: The North West Regional Housing Board is currently consulting on priorities for housing investment throughout the North West, for the next Regional Housing Strategy. This will influence decisions on spending on affordable housing in South Lancashire.

Local Government

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he last met trade union representatives to discuss proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme. [214395]

Phil Hope: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and I have had a number of meetings with the trades unions and others to discuss the amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendments) (No.2) Regulations 2004 due to come into force on 1 April. The last occasion was on 17 February 2005 with senior representatives from UNISON, the T&G, the GMB, UCATT and AMICUS, along with representatives of the Local Government Association and the Employers' Organisation.

In addition, officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have had, and continue to have, regular contact in person and via correspondence with the trades unions, local authority representatives and other key Local Government Pension Scheme stakeholders.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Correspondence

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Normanton of 8 November 2004 and 17 December 2004. [216133]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Response was sent out at the beginning of the week commencing 14 February. Due to an administrative error this case was not responded to earlier.

European Constitution

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government sought legal advice regarding the impact of the Charter of Fundamental Rights within the EU Constitution on industrial relations law in the UK. [214352]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It would not be appropriate for me to comment on whether legal advice has or has not been sought by the Government with regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights within the EU Constitution on UK industrial relations law. This is a position that is covered by the Exemption contained in Section 35 *(1) (a)* of the Freedom of Information Act.

Fireworks

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the Fireworks Act 2003 on the number of firework-related accidents in Hartlepool [213289]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The fireworks injury statistics for the 2004 period are as yet not available. My Department expects to be in a position to publish the figures in early March 2005.

With regard to the number of injuries sustained by the use of fireworks in Hartlepool, it should be noted that the figures collected are not broken down by parliamentary constituency, but rather in terms of UK region and NHS Trust.

Manufacturing Advisory Service

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the rate of referrals of

businesses from Business Links to the Manufacturing Advisory Service was in 2003–04, broken down by region. [217180]

Jacqui Smith: Based on figures provided by INBIS Ltd., MAS National Network Managers, the rate of referrals of businesses from Business Links to the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) from 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2004 are as follows:

Region	*Number*
East	18
East Midlands	123
London	80
North-east	182
North-east	292
South-east	378
South-west	68
West Midlands	273
Yorkshire and the Humber	117
Total	1,531

Note that the structure of business support in Wales is significantly different from that in England and that as a result the statistics for Wales are not comparable. We have therefore not included Wales in these statistics.

As indicated above these figures have been provided to us by INBIS Ltd. Although some of the regions have not kept statistics on the rate of referrals from Business Links to MAS for the whole of the period indicated they do provide a good representation of the rate of referrals for each of the regions.

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what strategy her Department is using to promote an increase in manufacturing investment. [216242]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Encouraging high value added investment is a priority in the Government's manufacturing strategy action plan. We are seeking to achieve this through a range of measures including; tax incentives such as enhanced capital allowances and R and D tax credits; and business support schemes such as the Grant for Research and Development and Selective Finance for Investment. We are also putting £320 million into the Technology Strategy Programme which supports collaborative R and D and technology transfer and have established the Manufacturing Advisory Service which has provided manufacturing businesses with £108 million of added value and is showing companies the value of investing in lean manufacturing best practice.

More fundamentally we are seeking to maintain the stable macroeconomic environment we have achieved in recent years and within which business can invest with confidence in new products, processes and skills.

Minimum Wage

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what checks are made on the payment of the minimum wage within the Greater London area to ensure that the proper rates are paid. [209257]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Inland Revenue, who enforce the minimum wage on behalf of the DTI, respond to all complaints about underpaying of the minimum wage.

The Revenue also make use of their own data to make proactive visits on employers throughout the UK to check whether they are paying their workers the minimum wage.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to review the penalties imposed on companies found paying their employees below the minimum wage. [215883]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Since the minimum wage was introduced in April 1999 the Inland Revenue have imposed 133 penalty notices on employers who they found were not paying their workers the minimum wage.

A penalty notice imposes a financial payment equal to twice the hourly amount of the adult minimum wage per worker for each day of continuing non-payment of the minimum wage.

The Government keeps their enforcement strategy under regular review.

Nuclear Power

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the papers on nuclear power which officials of her Department prepared as part of the contribution to the Energy White Paper 2003; and if she will place copies in the Library. [199660]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The following papers on keeping the nuclear option open (KNOO) were prepared for the DTIs Energy Advisory Panel and contributed to the work on the Energy White Paper:

KNOO Scoping Paper (EAP 11.06.02-P3)

KNOO Summary Paper (EAP 01.10.02-P3)

KNOO Miniprojects

These papers are now over two years old and some of the information that they contain will be out of date. Nevertheless it is hoped that their release will contribute to the continuing debate on nuclear power as a future energy source in the UK. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

In addition, the long-term costs of nuclear power were covered in the work commissioned by DTI on options for a low carbon economy. The resulting paper "DTI Economics Paper No. 4: Options for a Low Carbon Future—Phase 2" can be viewed on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/phase2.pdf

Plumbing Industry (Black Country)

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what evidence she has collated on availability of JIB-PMES assessors related to the Construction Skills Certification Scheme within the plumbing industry in the Black Country; and if she will make a statement. [216032]

Jacqui Smith: I would like to confirm that it is not the responsibility of my Department to collate this information.

The Construction Skills Certification Scheme is owned and managed by Construction Skills Certification Scheme Ltd., representing construction employers, trade unions and clients. The Government has no responsibility for this scheme and its decision-making.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Northern Ireland (Collusion Investigation)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Solicitor-General on what date the Director of Public Prosecutions received papers prepared by Sir John Stevens arising from her investigation into collusion between Crown forces and loyalist paramilitaries; what further action was recommended; and what action has been taken in respect of prosecutions of these cases. [215699]

The Solicitor-General: There have to date been three investigations by Sir John Stevens into allegations of collusion, the most recent investigation having commenced in 1999.

The Director of Public Prosecutions is currently considering the product of the Stevens III investigation in two distinct but linked parts.

In respect of the first part, an investigation file was received by the DPP on 23 April 2002. Police inquiries were not complete at that stage and further information and investigations were requested by the DPP. Police recommendations as to prosecution were received by the DPP in June 2004. The advices of Senior Counsel were sought at an early stage and were obtained in March 2004.

In respect of the second part of the investigation files containing over 12,500 pages were received by the DPP in April 2003. Further information and investigations were required by the DPP and a final report was received on 27 April 2004. Police recommendations as to prosecution were received in November 2004. The advices of Senior Counsel were sought at an early stage and were obtained in December 2004.

The issues arising for consideration are complex and detailed and involved an examination of a substantial volume of documentation produced during the Stevens I and II investigations.

Final consideration is now being given to both parts of the investigation.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Cleaners

Simon Hughes: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission how many cleaners there are in *(a)* those parts of the Palace of Westminster for which the House is responsible, *(b)* Portcullis House, *(c)* 1 Parliament Street, *(d)* Norman Shaw North and *(e)* Norman Shaw South; how many of these are (i) full-time and (ii) part-time; and if he will make a statement. [216400]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Cleaners are employed in the House of Commons under contract to the Refreshment Department and the Department of the Serjeant at Arms. In addition the Department of the Serjeant at Arms and the Library employ cleaners who are staff of the House. The numbers are as follows:

	Contracted staff		*Directly employed staff*
Building	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
Palace of Westminster	36	36	20
Portcullis House	12	11	13
1 Parliament Street	5	5	4
Norman Shaw North	7	1	7
Norman Shaw South	8	—	4
Total	68	53	48

In addition there are three full-time contracted staff and seven part-time directly employed staff whose duties are carried out in a number of House of Commons buildings. It would not be meaningful to attempt to attribute them to any specific area.

The number of contracted cleaners given as employed in the Palace of Westminster covers those whose duties involve cleaning House of Commons areas only, since some cleaning in the House of Lords is carried out under the same contract.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer of 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 910–11W, on the terms of employment of contracted cleaners. I understand that the discussions referred to in that answer on pay rates and other terms and conditions of employment are continuing. The parliamentary authorities are keeping in close touch with developments. I hope that a solution acceptable to all those involved can be reached.

I would also like to emphasise that the current discussions do not in any way involve those cleaning staff directly employed by the House of Commons Commission.

Passes

Mr. Prisk: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission (1) what the total cost was of *(a)* implementing and *(b)* maintaining the visitor pass system in use until December 2004 for visitors to the Palace of Westminster; [217310]

(2) what the estimated cost is of *(a)* implementation and *(b)* maintenance of the adhesive visitor pass system to be introduced from February for visitors to the Palace of Westminster. [217311]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The cost of implementing the visitor pass system in use until December 2004 was £11,600 including VAT. Staffing and other overhead costs were negligible.

The cost of implementing the adhesive visitor pass system introduced in February 2005 is £2,740. Overheads will be negligible. The monthly maintenance cost (consumables) is estimated to be around £2,000 including VAT.

DEFENCE

A400M

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many A400M aircraft are to be ordered by the RAF; and when the first plane is expected to arrive. [216551]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom Government has ordered 25 aircraft. The first aircraft delivery is expected to be 2010.

Air Crash (Board of Inquiry)

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Chief of the Air Staff, the Air Officer Commanding No. 1 Group, the Air Officer Commander in Chief, and members of the RAF Directorate of Legal Services have met to discuss the Board of Inquiry into the crash of ZD 576. [217127]

Mr. Ingram: In preparation for appearing before the House of Lords Select Committee on Chinook ZD 576 in 2001, several meetings took place at which the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshals Wratten and Day, and the Director of Legal Services RAF were present.

Allied Rapid Reaction Corps

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the UK commitment to the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) will be when the ARRC takes over the International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan in 2006. [216542]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The scale of the Head Quarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corporation Group when it deploys to Afghanistan in 2006 and the United Kingdom's contribution has yet to be decided.

Army Deployment

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out the current location in the UK of each Army regiment; what the number of service and support personnel at each location is; and where available what the total running cost is for each site, including personnel costs. [214415]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* The most recently published UK location statistics for Service Personnel are provided in the July 2002 Tri-Service Publication (TSP) number 10 which is available in the Library of the House. The number of civilian personnel broken down by Government Office Region is available in UK Defence Statistics 2004, a copy of which is also available in the Library of the House. The total running cost for each site, including personnel costs is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost. I will write to the hon. Member with the current location of each Army regiment and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Chinook Helicopter

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Chinook HC 2 helicopter was given its airworthiness review; and if he will place a copy of the review in the Library. [217284]

Mr. Ingram: No airworthiness review has been conducted in respect of the Chinook HC 2.

Colombia

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent UK military aid has been given to the 4th Division of the Colombian Army or to individual brigades and battalions of the Division; and if he will make a statement. [216113]

Mr. Ingram: We do not provide generic military assistance to Colombian Army divisions, brigades or battalions as formations. The United Kingdom assistance is provided to selected individuals in the form of military education or training, or at sub-unit level to enable capabilities such as Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). Professional training provided to Colombian officers routinely incorporates human rights education. UK funded projects have provided human rights training through the Colombian military justice school, and have aimed to raise awareness of the armed forces on their role in prevention of displacement and protection of the rights of internally displaced persons.

Defence Estate (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what land in the Chorley constituency his Department *(a)* owns and *(b)* has a right to use. [216553]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence owns the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association at Devonshire Road, Chorley. We do not have any rights to use other land in the area.

There may be some other sites owned or used by organisations associated with MOD, but which are not recorded centrally.

Defence Export Services Organisation

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Ministers will be attending the Defence Export Services Organisation symposium on 9 March. [216821]

Mr. Ingram: For security reasons it is not our practice to publicise in advance the forward programmes of Ministers.

Departmental Policies (Blackpool)

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215615]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence's presence within Blackpool, South constituency currently consists of Weeton Barracks and an Army Cadet Force (ACF) centre at Parkinson Way.

Since 1997, the Talbot Road ACF in Blackpool, North has closed and one year ago the Yorkshire Street ACF in Blackpool, South was sold. As a result, Blackpool detachment ACF and Palatine ACF are now located at Parkinson Way.

On 11 June 2001 the then War Pensions Agency (WPA), located at Norcross in Blackpool, North constituency, transferred to MOD from the Department for Work and Pensions. WPA is now the Veterans Agency and employs 850 people from across Blackpool and the surrounding area.

Depleted Uranium Waste

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether depleted uranium waste has been deposited on the seabed of the Solway Firth as a result of use in Ministry of Defence training [215144]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence does not use Depleted Uranium during routine training. I also refer to the answer I gave on 11 January 2005, to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond).

Gloucestershire Regiment

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Back Badge awarded to the Gloucestershire Regiment after the Battle of Alexandria in 1801. [213465]

Mr. Ingram: A working group has been convened by the Colonel Commandant of the Light Division to address the wide range of issues, including dress and uniform, arising from the merger of the Gloucestershire element of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment with the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment to form a battalion in the Light Infantry. It is due to report in June 2005.

Infantry Regiments

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what plans he has for the HQ Barracks of the proposed Royal Lancashire and Border regiment; and if he will make a statement; [213323]

(2) what steps he will take to preserve the *(a)* name, *(b)* insignia and *(c)* badge of The Queen's Lancashire Regiment in the proposed Royal Lancashire and Border Regiment; and if he will make a statement. [213324]

Mr. Ingram: No decisions have been made on the future location of The King's Lancashire and Border Regimental Headquarters.

The Queen's Lancashire Regiment, in consultation with The King's Own Royal Border Regiment, and The King's Regiment, who will merge to form The King's Lancashire and Border Regiment, are in the process of determining their new common capbadge and uniform.

Iraq

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost has been to the UK Government of the deployment of private security companies in Iraq. [216040]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office employs two private security companies in Iraq, to provide armed protection for UK Government staff while travelling and to provide guards for the compounds of the British Embassy Offices. The cost of these contracts is approximately £50 million per annum.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many battalions stationed in Northern Ireland are being asked to provide companies for operations in Iraq. [217033]

Mr. Ingram: From the eight battalions currently under command of the General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland) (GOC(NI)), it is planned that one company of the 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers (currently based at Palace Barracks, Belfast) will be available to form part of our regular roulement of forces for Operation TELIC deploying to Iraq during April/May 2005. GOC (NI) keeps the security situation under close review and will ensure that sufficient forces are available to provide routine military support to the police and additional troops can be made available to him from Land Command, if required, for example during the marching season.

Maritime Coherency Study

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the purpose is of the Maritime Coherency Study: who is involved in it and when it will report. [216105]

Mr. Ingram: The purpose of the Maritime Coherence Study is to produce a balanced, more coherent and affordable maritime programme, which places a stable and realistic demand on the UK naval shipbuilding sector. It is being led by the Equipment Capability Customer area of the Ministry of Defence and has involved stakeholders from the Front Line Commands, the Defence Procurement Agency and the Defence Logistics Organisation. Final decisions on the study will be taken in the current planning round, which is still under way.

MRSA

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* advice has been given and *(b)* precautions are taken against the spread of MRSA in military ambulances; and if he will make a statement. [216397]

Mr. Caplin: The majority of secondary care for armed forces personnel is provided at Ministry of Defence hospital units within host NHS hospitals. Ambulances used for transfer fall under the local health authority and will adhere to the procedures and precautions laid down by the local health authority.

Some military ambulances are retained by armed forces medical centres. Guidelines to prevent the spread of infection are provided at a single service level. These include staff protection and ambulance disinfection. The guidelines are in line with the current procedures recommended by the local health authorities.

Ambulances are also used by the armed forces for transfer of a small number of patients in Cyprus and Gibraltar. These ambulances follow the same infection control procedures as the UK based medical centres with staff referring to the local infection control manuals supplied by the single service infection control teams in the UK. A local infection control nurse is on hand to provide immediate support and advice where necessary.

MRSA has not been identified as a major problem for troops returning from military operations abroad. Nevertheless, when operating in field conditions staff are instructed on the importance of preventing the spread of any infection and are given specific guidelines to follow to prevent the spread of infection relevant to the particular theatre. Ambulances on operations are cleaned as per single service guidelines on the decontamination of equipment.

Uniform Suppliers

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where the four test houses which tested the fabric for the cut and sew camouflage uniform contract were; and whether the test confirmed that the fabric tested was the camouflage fabric to be used in the uniforms to be supplied. [215196]

Mr. Ingram: The test houses were in China and the United Kingdom. The tests confirmed that the fabric meets Ministry of Defence specification requirements.

It is the responsibility of the prime contractor to ensure that the fabric used for the production of camouflage uniforms continues to meet the specification for the finished items.

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many additional people have been taken on by *(a)* Coonen Textiles and *(b)* Watt and Stone Ltd as a result of the award to them of the cut and sew camouflage uniform contract. [215289]

Mr. Ingram: So far 17 new jobs have been created within Cooneen Watts & Stone Ltd as a result of this contract award, and in addition approximately 40 jobs have been safeguarded. It is anticipated that further jobs will be created during the life of the contract.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Composers (Television Programmes)

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will ask Ofcom to introduce a code of practice on contracts for composers commissioned to write music for television programmes. [217423]

Mr. Caborn: No. This is a competition matter and I understand it is currently the subject of a complaint to the Office of Fair Trading. Under their concurrency arrangement with the OFT, Ofcom will keep in touch with them on the matter. The Department has no powers to intervene in this area.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the Government provided for *(a)* support and *(b)* repatriation of British citizens in the first week after the Asian tsunami. [217037]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The total cost incurred in providing support to British citizens in the first week after the Asian tsunami is not yet available. Cost information is still being collected from those who provided assistance, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), other Government Departments, the police, local authorities and non-government organisations. The support effort continues and we expect the costs to amount to many millions of pounds. Assistance provided is outlined as follows:

The Emergency Response Team in the FCO was fully staffed and operating from 08.30 on 26 December with the telephone number advertised nationally. The Metropolitan Police Casualty Bureau was operational on a 24/7 basis, with up to 50 police call handlers on duty by 15.00 on 26 December.

14 Rapid Deployment Team (RDT) members were deployed to Sri Lanka on 26 December and 28 December. Further RDT support was deployed on 5 January. Two Disaster Victim Identification teams were deployed to Sri Lanka and Thailand on 29 December. Over 30 officers were deployed from other Missions to Thailand during the immediate crisis period. A temporary office was set up in a Phuket hotel at monthly rental of about £48,000.

From 1–6 January, 13 Police Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) were deployed overseas. 378 FLOs have been deployed in the UK and overseas to date.

BA charter flights from Bangkok and Brussels returned British citizens to the UK on 30 December and 31 December at a cost of approximately £215,000.

10 refrigerated units to store victims remains were sent to the region on 31 December at an initial cost of about £230,000.

A package to help victims of the Tsunami or their families was put in place on 28 December which includes assistance for: hospital expenses and medical repatriation; repatriation of the deceased in the absence of insurance; and for two family members to travel to the region.

Belarus

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which Minister will be attending the meeting to be hosted by Lithuania in March in respect of the future of EU relations with Belarus; and if he will make a statement. [217422]

Mr. MacShane: We have not yet received a formal invitation to attend any event in Lithuania.

Burma

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of

24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 147W, on Burma, for what reasons he will not provide the information requested. [215335]

Mr. Alexander: As the hon. Member will know, it is not our practice to disclose details of the positions taken by other member states in internal EU discussions. I therefore have nothing to add to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's earlier statement.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 10 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr S. Akhtar, transferred from the Home Department. [217283]

Mr. Mullin: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 21 February.

Detained British Citizens

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the countries in which British citizens and residents are being *(a)* lawfully and *(b)* unlawfully detained at the request of, or in co-operation with, the United States military or intelligence agencies; how many persons are detained in each country; and how many are under 18 years. [209046]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware of two British nationals being held as security internees by the coalition forces in Iraq. Both are held under the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546.

We are aware of five British residents currently being detained by the US at Guantanamo Bay.

None of the above are under the age of 18.

European Public Bodies

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the activity of the European Maritime Safety Agency in the UK in the last 12 months; and if he will list its publications and newsletters published over that period. [215228]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) provides technical advice to the Commission and the member states on maritime safety and prevention of pollution by ships. It assists with updating and developing new EU legislation, monitoring its implementation and evaluating the effectiveness of measures in place. Key areas of the Agency's work and study programme in the last 12 months have included technical work on improving the Port State Control inspection regime; scrutiny of the performance of classification societies (ship inspection bodies); a study of the investigation of maritime accidents; development of a vessel traffic monitoring and information system; and workshops on counter-pollution response and goal based safety standards.

The Administrative Board of EMSA, comprising representatives of each member state, the Commission and the shipping industry, met three times during 2004. Minutes of these meetings are available on the EMSA website www.emsa.eu.net together with details of the Agency's 2004 and 2005 work plans. EMSA's technical publications will also be available on its website.

Gibraltar

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to ensure that the legal system in Gibraltar prevents discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. [217340]

Mr. MacShane: Under the constitutional reform proposals, an assessment of the powers required by the UK Government will take full account of the fact that the UK is responsible for Gibraltar's compliance with EU law, including ultimately before the European Court of Justice. We wish to ensure that Gibraltar's constitution is in line with its international obligations, including the European Convention of Human Rights.

We have previously told the Gibraltar Government that we believe the age of consent should be equalised for homosexual and heterosexual couples to avoid a potential breach of Articles 8 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the length of queues at the border crossing between Spain and Gibraltar and *(b)* the average time taken to cross the border. [216061]

Mr. MacShane: The average delay during the day is between 15 to 30 minutes. However traffic delays occur at peak times of the day and particularly in the summer months, sometimes for up to two hours. This is unacceptable.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress in discussions with the Spanish authorities on repairs to the Royal Navy submarine docked in Gibraltar. [216062]

Mr. MacShane: HMS Sceptre left Gibraltar on 9 February as scheduled. Officials from Spain, the UK and the Chief Minister of Gibraltar discussed the issue of submarine visits to Gibraltar at the tripartite talks in Malaga on 10 February.

International Criminal Tribunal

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with other EU governments about the transfer of Ante Gotovina to the International Criminal Tribunal for War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia at The Hague. [214717]

Mr. MacShane: The UK Government shares the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Chief Prosecutor's concerns about the lack of full Croatian co-operation with the ICTY, as

reported to the UN Security Council in November 2004. I have had several conversations with EU member governments about the need to encourage Croatia to accept its international responsibility to deliver Ante Gotovina to The Hague as soon as possible, in order that negotiations can begin as planned on 17 March. Statements by successive meetings of the General Affairs and External Relations Council have upheld this obligation, which I welcome.

I also refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Western Isles (Mr. MacDonald) on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1105W.

Iraq

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of people killed in Iraq between 20 March 2003 and 4 April 2004, including Iraqis, coalition forces and other nationalities; and what sources he has used in calculating this figure. [210527]

Mr. Rammell: We have no way of reliably estimating the total number of Iraqi civilians killed between 20 March 2003 and 4 April 2004. I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on this subject of 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 92–95WS and the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Armed Forces (Mr. Caplin) on 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 541W to the hon. Member for Mid Norfolk (Mr. Simpson).

We understand from the Ministry of Defence that the number of UK service personnel killed between 20 March 2003 and 4 April 2004 is 59. The Ministry of Defence state that they do not keep records of Multi-National or coalition forces killed in Iraq. However, they say that open sources show that 721 Multi-National or coalition forces, including UK service personnel, were killed during that period.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the net migration into the Kurdish area of northern Iraq since 2003; and if he will make a statement. [213241]

Mr. Rammell: We have no information on migration into the Kurdish area of northern Iraq since 2003. To research this question further would involve our posts making extensive inquiries and commissioning specific research which could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Kurds

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the number of Kurdish people who *(a)* migrated from the northern part of Iraq during the Saddam Hussein regime to (i) Iran, (ii) Turkey, (iii) Syria and (iv) other countries and *(b)* have migrated to the northern part of Iraq since the end of the Saddam Hussein regime from (A) Iran, (B) Turkey, (C) Syria and (D) other countries; and if he will make a statement. [213236]

Mr. Rammell: We have asked our posts in the relevant countries, and UKDel Geneva, to obtain the information requested from the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). It has become clear from the information received that the available figures are incomplete. Furthermore, the categories used to collect data vary from country to country, making it extremely difficult to collate comparable statistics. In many cases, the figures for the ethnic background of refugees are unreliable and the Kurdish element in the overall total for refugees from Iraq is not identified. To obtain further information would involve our posts making extensive inquiries and commissioning specific research which could be compiled only at disproportionate cost. The information that we have obtained is set out as follows.

In Iran, in early 2003, before the "mainly" spontaneous repatriation movement, the UNHCR estimates that there were 63,000 camp based and identified non-camp based Iraqi Kurdish refugees. The UNHCR estimates that there are currently 20,000 Iraqi Kurds still in Iran. The UNHCR estimates that there are also some 8,000 Faili Iraqi Kurds in Iran. Some of these are included in the overall number of Iraqi Kurds.

In Syria, the largest single influx of Iraqi refugees occurred in 1991, when about 8,000 persons, mainly Kurds, arrived. There are currently 234 Kurds registered with the UNHCR office in Damascus.

In Turkey, the UNHCRs active caseload of Iraqi refugees and asylum-seekers totals 1,576 persons, of whom 227 (14.4 per cent.) are ethnic Kurds. The UNHCR in Turkey has also registered 1,146 Iranian refugees who previously resided in Iraq for varying periods. These refugees are ethnic Kurds who entered Turkey between 2001 and 2003, prior to the onset of hostilities.

Middle East

Diana Organ: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what progress has been made in ensuring that women are represented at the Palestine/Israel peace negotiations; [216907]

(2) whether he supports UN Resolution 1325, calling for women to be represented at the Palestine/Israel peace talks; [216908]

(3) what representations he has received concerning UN Resolution 1325, on representation of women at the Palestine/Israel peace talks. [216909]

Mr. Rammell: We supported UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. We are not aware of any representations to British Ministers concerning the application of UNSCR 1325 to the Middle East Peace Process. However, we support efforts to integrate women into the peace process.

We welcome the participation of Palestinian women in the municipal elections which took place in the West Bank on 23 December 2004. 46 of the 306 newly elected councillors are women. Around half of them won their seats owing to a provision in the electoral law reserving

at least two seats per council to women. We wish to see women continuing to play an active role in the Middle East peace process.

Nepal

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports his Department has received regarding the whereabouts of Krishna Pahadi, founding chairman of the Human Rights and Peace Society of Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [216709]

Mr. Alexander: Krishna Pahadi was arrested on 9 February and taken from the offices of the Human Rights and Peace Society of Nepal. We have made inquiries, but do not know where he is being held.

Immediately after the takeover of power by the King we issued a statement with our EU partners which expressed our grave concerns about restrictions on liberty and calling for human rights to be respected. Our ambassador in Kathmandu raised these issues, including the detention of activists and political leaders, directly with the King in an audience on 8 February. With other EU member states' ambassadors he also raised this with the new Nepalese Foreign Minister on 7 February.

We are at present uncertain how many human rights activists are being detained but we are keeping the situation under review and will continue to press for the immediate release of all political and human rights detainees.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the (A) Government and (B) royal family of Nepal regarding the whereabouts of Krishna Pahadi, founding chairman of the Human Rights and Peace Society of Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [216710]

Mr. Alexander: In an audience with the King on 8 February, our ambassador in Nepal raised our concerns about the suspension of civil liberties and called for the immediate release of all political and human rights detainees. In my statement of 1 February, I expressed the UK Government's grave concerns about the situation in Nepal and called for the immediate restitution of multi-party democracy. We understand that Krishna Pahadi was arrested on 9 February and have sought to find out where he is being detained. We will continue to press for the release of all political and human rights detainees.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department has made of *(a)* the number of people (i) arrested and (ii) detained under house arrest since the dissolution of the Government of Nepal by King Gyanendra on 1 February and *(b)* how many of these people are members of the (A) Communist Unified Marxist-Leninist Party and (B) People's Front; and if he will make a statement. [216731]

Mr. Alexander: On the information available to us we estimate that around 125 people were arrested following the actions by the King of Nepal on 1 February 2005, of whom nine were detained under house arrest. Because of media and other restrictions, we may not be aware of all those arrested, especially outside Kathmandu. Of the 125, 19 were members of the Unified Marxist Leninist party and one was a member of the United People's Front. A number of those detainees have now been released, although some party leaders still remain in detention.

Immediately after the takeover of power by the King we issued a statement with our EU partners which expressed our grave concerns about restrictions on liberty and calling for human rights to be respected. Our Ambassador in Kathmandu raised our concerns, including the detention of political leaders, directly with the King in an audience on 8 February. With other EU member states' ambassadors he also raised this with the new Nepalese Foreign Minister on 7 February.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the terms of the state of emergency proclaimed by King Gyanendra in Nepal on 1 February, with particular reference to public meetings and demonstrations; and if he will make a statement. [216732]

Mr. Alexander: The King's takeover of power in Nepal on 1 February was accompanied by the imposition of a state of emergency which included the suspension of many fundamental rights. These included the right to association, the right to freedom of expression, the right to property, the right against preventative detention and the rights of the press.

The UK is deeply concerned by the measures taken under the state of emergency and believes they undermine the institutions of democracy and increase the risk of instability in Nepal. Our Ambassador in Kathmandu raised our concerns directly with the King in an audience on 8 February. On 14 February my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary announced that we were recalling our Ambassador from Kathmandu for consultations in view of the seriousness of the situation.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the willingness of the leadership of the Royal Nepal Army to negotiate with the Maoists. [217323]

Mr. Alexander: The King's move to dismiss the Prime Minister and assume power outside the framework of a multi-party democratic system will unfortunately, probably put back the prospect of any negotiated settlement. In our view negotiation with the Maoists should be the responsibility of a representative civilian government, to which the Royal Nepalese Army is accountable.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many and what type of UK military personnel have worked with the Royal Nepalese Army during the past 12 months. [217324]

Mr. Alexander: In the past 12 months 20 UK military personnel have visited Nepal to assist and train the Royal Nepalese Army. This includes mechanical,

electrical and stores specialists, and one person who attended a mountain warfare course run by the Nepalese military. There have also been some individual visits in relation to the supply of short take-off and landing aircraft to the Government of Nepal.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likelihood of military success by the Royal Nepal Army against the Maoists. [217329]

Mr. Alexander: The UK has consistently held the view that there can be no military resolution and that a negotiated political settlement involving all parties offers the best way to resolve the conflict in Nepal and to create a stable democracy with good governance and respect for human rights. We will continue to press all parties for an early return to negotiations.

Somalia

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* impact on the stability of Somalia of and *(b)* likelihood of delays to the planned move of the Somali Government from Kenya to Somalia as announced by Prime Minister Mohamed Ali Gedi on 9 February; and if he will make a statement. [216728]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome Prime Minister Gedi's statement that the Transitional Federal Government will begin to return to Somalia on 21 February. We believe the establishment of a functioning government will help to restore stability and law and order and bring about an improvement in economic conditions for the population. Security remains a key concern, but discussions inside and outside Somalia are under way to assist the process of stabilisation and demilitarisation.

Any judgment as to the timing of the move must be for the Transitional Federal Government. Delays are possible but a successful outcome will be more important than timing.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the efforts undertaken by the *(a)* African Union and *(b)* Arab League to facilitate the move of the Somali Government from Kenya to Somalia on 21 February; and if he will make a statement. [216729]

Mr. Mullin: The African Union is actively supporting the Somalia peace and reconciliation process and has offered to provide a Peace Support Mission. It has also mandated the Inter-Governmental Group on Development countries, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda to provide troops and/or equipment as an interim peace support mission to provide security for the Transitional Federal Government after its relocation to Somalia.

The Arab League has also been asked by the Transitional Federal Government to provide peace support, and is considering the request.

Any deployment would be subject to confirmation by the Somali Parliament and UN Security Council authorisation.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the EU (i) have offered, (ii) are delivering and (iii) will be delivering to facilitate (A) the move of the Somali Government from Kenya to Somalia on 21 February and (B) the normalisation of the situation in Somalia after the government's move; and if he will make a statement. [216730]

Mr. Mullin: The British contribution to the reconciliation process leading to the creation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) will be £365,000. Further assistance for the Government's relocation to Somalia and its immediate needs has been set aside, but the scale and timing of the disbursements will have to be decided in consultation with the TFG and in the light of developments. Further substantial UK bilateral aid to Somalia will be available if the TFG can create the security conditions in which it can be delivered effectively.

A number of European Union member states as well as other members of the International Community have contributed to the reconciliation process and are considering making further contributions. The European Commission has been the principal donor of EU funds to the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, including for the relocation of MPs and conference delegates; and is considering how it may support the Transitional Federal Government's relocation plans.

Uganda

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the government of Uganda regarding *(a)* military incursions into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and *(b)* the illegal exploitation of natural resources from the DRC. [216916]

Mr. Mullin: We regularly discuss the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with the Ugandan Government. I last raised the subject with President Museveni during my visit to Uganda in August. We have consistently reminded Uganda to play a constructive role in the DRC peace process, and of its obligations to respect the DRC's territorial integrity.

We are working to end the illegal exploitation of natural resources so that the DRC's mineral wealth can be used for the benefit of the Congolese people. We have urged regional governments on several occasions to do more to prevent illegal resource exploitation.

Venezuala

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Venezuela on further entrenchment of democracy in the region. [215759]

Mr. Rammell: During my recent visit to Venezuela, I encouraged the Venezuelan Government to work for national reconciliation following the presidential recall referendum in 2004.

We continue to work with governments, NGOs and other donors on good governance issues in Venezuela and the wider region.

Further details about the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) work in the field of promoting democracy are contained in Chapter 8 of the FCO's annual human rights report for 2004, available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/humanrights.

CABINET OFFICE

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what involvement he has had in co-ordinating policy across Departments in respect of the answering of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [217135]

Mr. Milburn *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor has the policy lead on the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am a member of the Cabinet Committee MISC 28 whose terms of reference are to

> "oversee the Government's strategy of Freedom of Information and the commencement of the Freedom of Information Act 2000".

Government Vehicles

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what recent representations he has received concerning the external marking of dual fuel vehicles within the Government car fleet; [216622]

(2) what steps he is taking to ensure that dual fuel vehicles in the Government car fleet are externally marked as such for the protection of fire fighters in the event of a fire or accident involving such vehicles. [216623]

Mr. Miliband: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car and Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr. Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library and will be printed in the *Official Report*.

Letter from Nick Matheson to Mr. Philip Hammond, dated 23 February 2005:

The Minister for the Cabinet Office has asked me in my capacity as the Chief Executive responsible for the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to reply to your Parliamentary Questions the external marking of LPG powered cars.

GCDA has received no representations about the external marking of LPG powered vehicles. There is no legal requirement for such vehicles to be externally marked and so we do not add any extra markings to our car fleet over and above those provided by the manufacturers or LPG converter companies.

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213789]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office is committed to providing access to training for staff and developing them to their full potential. However, it is not possible to provide information on costs of staff training days and staff development days held away from the Department since 1997, as these costs are not separately identifiable on the Department's accounting system. It cannot therefore be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215801]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the answer he received from my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary of the Treasury (Mr. Timms) on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the take-up of the *(a)* Access to Work Scheme, *(b)* Job Introduction Scheme and *(c)* New Deal for Disabled People was in each region in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many requests for early entry into (i) other New Deal programmes and (ii) Workstep were received. [214638]

Maria Eagle: The available information on the take-up of the Access to Work programme, the Job Introduction Scheme and the New Deal for Disabled People programme is in the tables.

Access to Work—starts to the programme

Jobcentre Plus region/country	*New beneficiaries—from April 2003 to March 2004*	*Existing beneficiaries—on 31 March 2003*	*Total*
East of England	967	1,289	2,256
East Midlands	1,699	988	2,687
London	1,058	2,207	3,265
North East	750	743	1,493
North West	1,637	2,562	4,199
Scotland	1,475	2,396	3,871
South East	1,546	2,225	3,771
South West	1,695	1,758	3,453

Access to Work—starts to the programme

Jobcentre Plus region/country	New beneficiaries—from April 2003 to March 2004	Existing beneficiaries—on 31 March 2003	Total
Wales	973	2,537	3,510
West Midlands	1,279	1,426	2,705
Yorkshire and Humber	2,354	1,280	3,634
Total	15,433	19,411	34,844

Notes:
1. New beneficiary figures relate to people receiving Access to Work assistance for the first time, and data are for the financial year April 2003-March 2004.
2. Existing beneficiary figures relate to people who were new beneficiaries in a previous financial year and who continued to receive help in the financial year April 2003-March 2004.
3. Data provided are for the latest complete financial year.

Source:
DWP Disability and Rehabilitation Division

Job Introduction Scheme—spend and average numbers helped

Jobcentre Plus region/country	Total spend (£)	Average numbers helped
East of England	60,992	135
East Midlands	41,879	95
London	42,577	95
North East	90,356	200
North West	63,503	140
Scotland	98,346	220
South East	103,971	230
South West	82,931	185
Wales	93,914	210
West Midlands	125,915	280
Yorkshire and Humber	90,370	200
Total	894,755	1,990

Notes:
1. Information on numbers of people starting the Job Introduction Scheme is not collected. Figures for numbers helped through the Job Introduction Scheme are based on a Job Introduction Scheme participant spending an average period of six weeks on the programme at a cost of £75 per week.
2. Expenditure figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.
3. Average numbers helped figures are rounded to the nearest five.

Source:
DWP Disability and Rehabilitation Division

New Deal for Disabled People—registrations with New Deal for Disabled People Job Brokers

Jobcentre Plus region/country	Number of registrations
Scotland	5,110
North East	5,770
North West	6,780
Yorkshire and Humberside	3,640
Wales	6,900
West Midlands	3,390
East Midlands	2,440
East of England	1,900
South East	3,160
London	3,850
Great Britain	49,850

Notes:
1. Data are latest available information and relates to the total number of registrations in the period October 2003 to September 2004.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and total may not sum due to rounding.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate

There is no early entry criteria for the New Deal 50 plus programme and all entrants must have been in receipt of a relevant qualifying benefit for six months. People joining New Deal for Disabled People can have immediate entry as long as they are in receipt of a qualifying benefit. People joining New Deal for Partners can have immediate entry to the programme as soon as their partner makes a claim for a qualifying benefit. All single parents with a youngest child under the age of 16, who are not working, or working less than 16 hours a week, can join New Deal for Lone Parents immediately.

There are a range of eligibility criteria for entry onto the Workstep programme. However, when a person does not meet the criteria, discretionary decisions can be made to enable early entry to take place. Between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004, a total of 59 discretionary decision applications were received by Jobcentre Plus, of which 54 were accepted. Between 1 April 2004 and 31 December 2004, a total of 115 discretionary decision applications were received, of which 109 were accepted.

Information on early entrants to the New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus programmes is in the table.

Early entrants to New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus

	New Deal for Young People	New Deal 25 plus
Total starts	160,660	95,820
of which:		
Early entrants	29,590	20,000

Notes:
1. Data refer to the period October 2003-September 2004—latest available figures.
2. Figures refer to total starts and could include people who have started these programmes more than once.

Source:
New Deal Database, DWP Information Directorate

Incapacity Benefit

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people received incapacity benefit in each *(a)* local authority and *(b)* parliamentary constituency in the last period for which figures are available; and what proportion of the working population these totals amounted to in each case. [214639]

Maria Eagle: Working age population estimates are not available by parliamentary constituency. The available information has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people who received incapacity benefit had a net benefit receipt of *(a)* zero and *(b)* less than £20 a week after assessment with other means-tested benefits in the last period for which figures are available. [215056]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the tables.

Working age claimants of incapacity benefit (IB) or severe disablement allowance (SDA) by amount of income support received: August 2004

Number

	All IB/SDA claimants	*IB/SDA claimants not also in receipt of income support*	*IB/SDA claimants also in receipt of income support*
All IB/SDA claimants	2,661,000	1,390,300	1,270,700
Weekly amount of income support			
Zero	1,390,300	1,390,300	n/a
£0.01 to £19.99	167,800	n/a	167,800
£20 and over	1,102,900	n/a	1,102,900

n/a = Not applicable.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding
2. Working age claimants are men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Working Age Client Group sample.

Housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB) recipients also claiming incapacity benefit (IB) or severe disability allowance (SDA) by weekly amount of HB/CTB, and whether or not income support is also in payment: May 2003

Number

	All IB/SDA claimants also in receipt of HB/CTB	*IB/SDA claimants also in receipt of HB/CTB but not also in receipt of income support*	*IB/SDA claimants also in receipt of HB/CTB and also in receipt of income support*
All IB/SDA claimants also in receipt of HB/CTB	670,000	280,000	390,000
Weekly amount of HB/CTB			
£0.01 to £19.99	150,000	60,000	90,000
£20 and over	510,000	220,000	290,000

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten thousand. The totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. The figures are based on a one per cent sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
3. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
4. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
5. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.
6. All overlaps between HB and CTB recipients have been removed.

Source:

Housing benefit and council tax benefit management information system, annual one per cent sample, taken in May 2003.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time taken is for the completion of a personal capability assessment for *(a)* incapacity benefit claimants and *(b)* income support claimants in each year since 1997. [215110]

Maria Eagle: Doctors spend as long as is required to carry out an appropriate assessment for each individual claimant. Some types of disabling conditions will take longer than others to assess, depending on the nature of the individual's physical and/or mental disabilities.

No breakdown is available by which benefit is in payment.

The available information is in the table.

National average time taken to complete the personal capability assessment

	Minutes
2000	37.8
2001	37.1
2002	35.2
2003	35.8
2004 (January to August)	36.9

Note:

The information requested is not available for the period 1997 to 1999

Source:

Atos Origin

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average time taken to process a claim for incapacity benefit was in each year since 1975; [215246]

(2) what the average time taken to process a claim for income support was in each year since 1975; [215250]

(3) what the average time taken to process a claim for income-based jobseeker's allowance was in each year since 1975; [215251]

(4) what the average time taken to process a claim for contribution-based jobseeker's allowance was in each year since 1975. [215252]

Mr. Pond: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Howard Flight, dated 23 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply directly to your questions concerning the average time taken to process a claim for Incapacity Benefit, Income Support, Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance and Contribution-Based Jobseeker's Allowance in each year since 1975. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus sets internal performance measures for managing its workloads in addition to the published targets set by Ministers. These internal measures include clearance times for Incapacity Benefit, Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance. Currently, these internal measures are being met.

You will see from the following tables that the Average Actual Clearance Time for each of the benefits shown has increased, although our performance targets are still being met. The upward trend in clearance times reflects the greater emphasis on secure and accurate payment of benefit. Changes to the Claims and Payments regulations in 1997 put the onus of proof on customers to provide supporting evidence for a claim.

Increasing effort has been applied to enforcing this regime and we believe that this has been reflected in reductions in fraud (fraud and error losses have reduced by 37 per cent. between 1998 and 2004).

There has also been a significant period of change across the Department; the creation of Jobcentre Plus and The Pension Service involved considerable movement of staff between the two agencies and consequently required the training

of new benefit processing officers.

Incapacity Benefit

Figures are only available from April 1998. The available information is in the table.

Average processing times for incapacity benefit claims.

Calendar year	*Average actual clearance time (days)*
April-December 1998	11.9
1999	15.9
2000	16.0
2001	15.7
2002	16.2
2003	15.7
2004	16.9

Source:
Central Data Unit for figures up to and including July 2004; Management Information Systems Programme 04 (MISP04) from August 2004 to December 2004.

Income Support

Figures are only available from April 1994. The available information is in the table.

Average processing times for income support claims

Calendar year	*Average actual clearance time (days)*
April to December 1994	5.6
1995	6.1
1996	7.0
1997	7.6
1998	8.8
1999	9.2
2000	9.2
2001	9.9
2002	8.7
2003	10.3
2004	10.9

Source:
Central Data Unit for figures up to and including July 2004; Management Information Systems Programme 04 (MISP04) from August 2004 to December 2004.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Figures are not available broken down by type of Jobseeker's Allowance. Figures are only available from 1997. The available information is in the table.

Average processing times for jobseeker's allowance claims

Calendar year	*Average actual clearance time (days)*
1997	8.1
1998	8.7
1999	9.7
2000	9.1
2001	9.6
2002	10.2
2003	10.8
2004	12.0

Source:
Central Data Unit for figures up to and including July 2004; Management Information Systems Programme 04 (MISP04) from August 2004 to December 2004.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list other benefits available to incapacity benefit recipients; and what changes there have been in recipient numbers of each benefit in each of the last five years. [217425]

Maria Eagle: The key benefits available to incapacity benefit claimants are income support, disability living allowance, housing benefit and council tax benefit. The information on the total numbers receiving these benefits is in the table.

Income support, disability living allowance, housing benefit and council tax benefit caseloads in Great Britain, 2000–04 (at May each year)

As at May:	*Income support*	*Disability living allowance*	*Housing benefit*	*Council tax benefit*
2000	3,810,500	2,130,500	4,033,300	4,830,100
2001	3,927,900	2,240,500	3,874,400	4,673,400
2002	3,929,800	2,353,500	3,812,600	4,601,700
2003	3,982,200	2,475,000	3,796,400	4,627,800
2004	2,171,500	2,585,800	3,879,400	4,800,200

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. From November 2003 income support figures are severely affected by the introduction of pension credit, which replaced minimum income guarantee on 6 October 2003. Pension credit cases are not included in the figures in the table.
4. Disability living allowance figures are adjusted to take out late terminations.
5. Housing benefit and council tax benefit figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
6. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
7. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.

Source:
Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples and Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in May 2000 to 2004.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people left incapacity benefit, broken down by destination, in the last period for which figures are available. [217426]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the following table.

All incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance terminations in the quarter ending 31 August 2004, by reason for termination

	Number
All terminations	125,300
Closed certificate	35,700
Death of claimant	7,100
Retirement pension award	16,700
At request of claimant	15,200
Did not attend medical	8,500
Did not return questionnaire	3,700
Failed own occupation test	800
Failed personal capability assessment	27,600
Return to work and also applied for 52-week linking	6,600
Other reason	3,300

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance and credits-only cases.

3. Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters. For illustration purposes, total incapacity benefit only terminations for August 2003 increased by 34 per cent. in the year following their initial release.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. sample.

Income-related Benefits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the budget has been for *(a)* income support, *(b)* the disability premium, *(c)* incapacity benefit and *(d)* other income-related benefits in each of the past five years. [217424]

Mr. Pond: The available information is in the following table.

Benefit expenditure in real terms, 2004–05 prices — *£ million*

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Income support for people aged under 60	9,346	10,044	10,434	10,239	10,369
Of which:					
With a disability premium	4,057	4,398	4,701	4,563	4,719
Income support/minimum income guarantee/pension credit for people aged 60 and over	4,256	4,557	4,868	4,708	4,896
Incapacity benefit	7,644	7,530	7,324	7,095	6,861
Jobseeker's allowance (income-based)	3,148	2,710	2,318	2,210	2,091
Housing benefit and discretionary housing payments	12,457	12,426	12,577	13,268	12,722
Council tax benefit	2,827	2,865	2,914	2,975	3,342

Notes:

1. All figures have been rounded to the nearest million pound.
2. Figures quoted for 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are actual outturn and those quoted 2003–04 are estimated outturn.
3. Income support expenditure has been provided separately for people aged under 60 and people aged 60 and over. Expenditure for those aged 60 and over includes minimum income guarantee and pension credit.
4. It is not possible to accurately state expenditure on the disability premium paid within income support. Rather than make any assumptions about the level of disability premium expenditure, all expenditure on people who receive a disability premium has been included.
5. Incapacity benefit is not an income-related benefit.

Source: DWP expenditure tables.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in receipt of income support with disability premium left the benefit, broken down by destination, in the last period for which figures are available. [217427]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Terminations of income support (IS) with disability-premium (DP) claimants between 1 December 2003 to 29 February 2004

	Number
All IS DP terminations in period	44,800
Moved to jobseekers allowance within 91 days of termination	4,000
Moved to IS and/or incapacity benefit within 91 days of termination	10,400
Moved to pension credit within 91 days of termination	6,700
Other destination	23,700

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and are subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. Only the first destination has been taken into account. The claimant may have had more than one benefit claim to one or more benefits within the 91 day period. However we have recorded their first claim only.
4. Other destinations are all claimants who have not had a claim to jobseekers allowance, income support, incapacity benefit or pension credit within 91 days of their IS DP claim terminating. They may have returned to one of these benefits at a later date, received another benefit, started employment, died, or left income support for an unknown reason.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. "Terminations' dataset

Pathways to Work

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department has spent on the Pathways to Work Programme since it was created; what his estimated expenditure on these pilots is for the next three years; and what the cost has been *(a)* per client and *(b)* per incapacity benefit claimant in the relevant area. [214634]

Maria Eagle: The information concerning expenditure is in the tables.

Expenditure on Pathway to Work pilots

	£
Jobcentre Plus services	16,252,190
Customer payments	6,154,550
Other categories of payment	24,586,450
Total	46,993,190

Note:

1. The figure for Jobcentre Plus services is actual spend. The figures shown for customer payments and other categories are estimated. These estimates are based on the anticipated volume of customers who will access the various elements of provision and the average cost of that provision.

Source:

DWP administrative data.

Estimated expenditure on Pathway to Work pilots over the next three years

	£
2005–06	84,300,000
2006–07	148,800,000
2007–08	165,900,000

Note:

These estimates are based on the anticipated volume of customers who will access the various elements of provision and the average cost of that provision.

As the pilots are still at a relatively early stage it is not possible to give a meaningful figure for the average cost per client or per incapacity benefit claimant in the relevant area. This is because there will be a disproportionate number of customers in the early stages of the pilot (compared to the steady state) and because early figures include an element of start-up costs.

Telephone Helplines

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many telephone helplines his Department sponsors; and how many calls each helpline received on the latest date for which figures are available. [212009]

Maria Eagle: The following table lists DWP helplines and the approximate number of inbound calls each helpline deals with on a weekly basis.

	Sites	*Approximate number inbound calls per week (network)*
Child Support Agency		
CSA national helpline	7	15,000
Disability and Carers Service		
Benefit inquiry line	1	33,200
Disability living allowance/attendance allowance	1	109,000
The Pension Service		
Pension centres	24	249,810
Pension credit application line (outsourced to Ventura)	1	46,840
Retirement pension teleclaims	1	11,478
Retirement pension forecasting team	1	29,516
Winter fuel helpline	1	10,866
Inherited SERPS	1	436
Pension guide orderline	1	542
Pension information line	1	1,453
Pensions direct	1	20,822
International pension centre	1	4,679
Jobcentre Plus		
Employer direct	11	41,538
Of which:		
From employers	—	38,100
From jobcentre plus offices	—	3,438
Jobcentre plus direct: jobseeker direct	17	220,855
Jobcentre plus direct: first contact	39	98,879
Debt Management		
Debt centres (debt recovery service which is not specifically a helpline service)	10	16,236
DWP		
National benefit fraud hotline	1	2,989

Note:
Figures are updated on a monthly basis and are correct as at 2 February 2005.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Disabled People will reply to the letter of 13 December from the hon. Member for Northavon regarding a constituent, Karen Walker. [217430]

Maria Eagle: I have replied to the hon. Member today.

New Deal

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of people who entered the new deal for *(a)* young people and *(b)* partners have found sustained employment since each programme was launched (i) in total and (ii) broken down by constituency. [216944]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal has been successful in helping more than 1.2 million people into work and new deal for young people has contributed to this success by helping more than half a million young people into employment.

People who return to jobseeker's allowance after finding a job through the new deal have added to their skills and experience, making it easier for them to find a job in the future. In addition, when they re-enter the new deal, people move into work sooner than they did the first time they were on the programme because they have recent experience of work, and have more jobsearch skills.

Between April 1999 and March 2004, 7,820 people started the new deal for partners programme, of which 1,870 people have gained a job. Information on new deal for partners is not available at constituency level. A measure of sustainability is not available for new deal for partners.

The available information has been placed in the Library.

Five-year Strategy

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether, under the plans published in his Department's five-year strategy, a claimant suffering from a condition which is serious enough to prevent them from doing any kind of work for a period of time, but which is expected to be temporary, would receive the rehabilitation support allowance or the disability and sickness allowance; [215547]

(2) what scope there would be, under the plans published in his Department's five-year strategy, for claimants to move from the rehabilitation support allowance to the disability and sickness allowance and vice versa. [215568]

Maria Eagle: Rehabilitation and support allowance will be for people with less severe impairments that can be well managed with the right support and so need not be a major long- term obstacle to getting back to work. Disability and sickness allowance will focus more on those with the most severe impairments where the health problem or disability will, for some time, form a very significant obstacle to getting back to work. However, we know many people with severe impairments still do work, and want to do so. Disability and sickness allowance recipients will still be able to access any appropriate programme or financial support.

The basis of the division between the two benefits will be the severity of functional limitation as a result of a health condition or disability. Much more detailed work and consultation will be required in order for us to establish a settled boundary between the two allowances and how we provide for movement between the two.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Judicial Appointments

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time judicial officer appointments have been made in each year since 1975. [215189]

Mr. Lammy *[pursuant to his reply, 9 February 2005, c. 1609W]:* I listed incorrect figures in tables 1A, 1B and 2. The amendments are now underlined in tables 1A, 1B and 2 as follows.

Table 2 is also amended to clearly show the separate figures for the Lord Chancellor's appointment of lay magistrates (excluding the Duchy of Lancaster) and appointments made in the Duchy of Lancaster (for which the Lord Chancellor does not appoint).

Tables 1A and 1B show full-time appointments for the calendar years 1975–1997. The figures include appointments of Judicial officers to full-time Tribunal posts for Tribunals administered by DCA (formerly Lord Chancellor's Department) but exclude those administered by other Government Departments (such as the Employment Tribunal and The Appeal Service and its pre 1999 predecessor The Independent Tribunal Service). These tables also include lay magistrates appointments from 1990 onwards.

The figures for the early years are drawn from very old records and as such cannot be verified as 100 per cent. correct.

Table 1A: 1975 to 1984

	Full-time appointments
1975	45
1976	46
1977	43
1978	57
1979	39
1980	65
1981	41
1982	53
1983	48
1984	62

Table 1B: 1985 to 1994 Full-time and Lay Magistrates appointments

	Full-time	*Lay magistrates*
1985	53	n/a
1986	82	n/a
1987	54	n/a
1988	60	n/a
1989	54	n/a
1990	55	2,059
1991	92	2,017
1992	120	2,070
1993	127	2,062
1994	91	1,593
1995	110	1,843
1996	100	1,682
1997	66	1,573

n/a = Not available.

Table 2: 1998–99 to 2003–04 Full-time, part-time (fee paid) and Lay Magistrates appointments

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Full-time	148	95	198	125	156	126
Part-time	486	369	555	790	541	354
Total	634	464	753	915	697	480
Lay magistrates:						
Lord Chancellor Appointments	1,278	1,423	1,366	1,474	1,410	1,478
Appointments in the Duchy of Lancaster	n/a	n/a	252	312	213	280
Total	1,278	1,423	1,618	1,786	1,623	1,758

n/a = Not available.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps his Department is taking to reduce the numbers of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216631]

Mr. Lammy: We are developing new attendance management policies and systems to be introduced in the spring. These will place greater accountability on managers to deal with absence and take into account recommendations of the recently published Managing Attendance in the Public Sector report. They will introduce a more robust approach to reviewing absence on both short and long-term sickness focusing on earlier management interventions. Our overall approach revolves around building management capability, through training and support, to underpin the new policies.

In the medium term we have work under way to better understand patterns of sickness absence and what actions will have the greatest leverage to bring overall absence levels down. This will enable us to develop a revised attendance management strategy.

HEALTH

Animal Insulin Supplies

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the recent interruption of supply of animal insulin from CP Pharmaceuticals. [210219]

Ms Rosie Winterton: CP Pharmaceuticals (now Wockhardt UK) experienced production difficulties, but these have now been fully resolved and supply of all affected products will be back to normal by mid February to early March. There has been available a minimum of one presentation of each of the company's animal insulins at all times.

Anti-depressants

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's review of tricyclic drugs will take account of the safety of future classes of anti-depressant drug. [215711]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The committee on safety of medicines' expert working group on the safety of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors has made recommendations for the conduct of future clinical trials of antidepressants. A copy of its report is available in the Library. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency will take forward these recommendations within the European drug regulatory system.

Assertive Outreach Teams

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the powers available to assertive outreach teams to assist them in carrying out their functions. [216153]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As set out in the mental health policy implementation guide (2001), assertive outreach is responsible for providing the full range of interventions to support the service user and his/her carers for sustained periods. Assertive outreach staff should have the skills and training to co-ordinate care and provide a broad range of interventions, including the delivery of care and treatment under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Care Standards

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to ensure that persons making applications to the Commission for Care Standards Inspection in different areas are not required *(a)* to furnish and *(b)* to pay for separate Criminal Records Bureau checks in respect of each application to a different office. [216524]

Dr. Ladyman: All care workers and registered providers of care homes, domiciliary care agencies and adult placement schemes must have a Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) check before they start work. Access to a check is through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). Therefore, a PoVA check also includes a CRB check.

The requirement for charging for a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check is set out in the Police Act 1997. There is no provision in the legislation for allowing an application to be made without payment of a fee.

Children's Burns Unit (Newcastle)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what review his Department is undertaking of children's burns units; and whether the closure of the children's burns unit at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle is under consideration. [216495]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The national burn care group is considering options for reconfiguration of specialist burns services across England and Wales. Decisions have not yet been made regarding the development of burn care centres and any proposals for change will be subject to a full public consultation process.

Chorley Hospital

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many babies were born at Chorley Hospital in each of the last three years; and how many mothers and babies transferred to Chorley after childbirth at Preston in the last period for which figures are available. [216208]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The numbers of live births occurring in Chorley and District Hospital in 2001 to 2003 are shown in the table.

	Number
2001	252
2002	210
2003	229

Source:
Office for National Statistics.

Information about the transfer of mothers and babies to a specific hospital is not collected centrally.

Correspondence

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Minister of State will reply to the letter dated 30 November 2004 about the projected overspend by the Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals Trust. [217328]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The hon. Member's original letter was not received in the Department. We now have a copy and we will reply as soon as possible, and within the Department's target time for reply of 20 days.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 546W on dentistry, how many dental practices were on the nhs.uk database, including those not registering new patients; how many were registering new patients; how many were not registering new patients but providing occasional NHS treatment to non-registered patients; and how many were not registering new patients or providing occasional NHS treatment to non-registered patients. [215993]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* As of 31 December 2004, there were 8,931 general and personal dental practices in England.

On 10 February 2005, there were 8,447 general and personal dental practices shown on the nhs.uk website as able to accept at least one category of patient for registration or occasional treatment under the national health service.

The number of general (GDS) and personal dental service (PDS) practices shown on the website either as willing to register new NHS patients and/or accept them for occasional treatment on 24 November 2004, is shown in the following table.

	GDS	PDS	Total
Registering children aged 0 to 18 years for NHS treatment	3,533	164	3,697
Registering charge exempt adults for NHS treatment	2,615	143	2,758
Registering charge paying adults for NHS treatment	2,273	139	2,412
Providing occasional NHS treatment to non registered patients	1,281	134	1,415

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of *(a)* adults and *(b)* children are registered with dentists (i) operating under General Dental Service contracts, (ii) operating under Personal Dental Service contracts and (iii) in total. [216145]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the percentage of adults and children registered with dentists operating under general dental service (GDS) contracts, operating under personal dental service (PDS) contracts and the total. These figures are for England as of 31 December 2004.

	Population (Million)	Registered with dentist Number (Million)	Percentage
Adult			
GDS	38.8	13.8	36
PDS	38.8	3.1	8
Total	38.8	16.9	44
Children			
GDS	11.1	5.7	51
PDS	11.1	1.1	10
Total	11.1	6.8	61
Total[1] adults and children			
GDS	49.9	19.5	39
PDS	49.9	4.2	8
Total	49.9	23.7	47

[1] Figures for total registrations regardless of age

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the names and addresses of the dentists in Kent still accepting new NHS patients; [216250]

(2) if he will list the dentists in Kent that have closed their lists to NHS patients during the last 12 months. [216251]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Under the Data Protection Act, we are not able to receive or pass on details relating to individual dentists.

The following table shows primary care trusts (PCTs) in the county of Kent, which are wholly or partially accepting the registration of new patients. Further information, including the addresses of dental practices, which are accepting national health service patients is available at www.nhs.uk. Information is not available centrally on individual dentists that have closed their lists to NHS patients.

PCTs	Total practices in PCT	Registering children aged 0 to 18 years for NHS treatment	Registering charge exempt adults for NHS treatment	Registering charge paying adults for NHS treatment
5CM—Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley	33	16	15	8
5FF—South West Kent	43	17	6	6
5L2—Maidstone Weald	43	16	2	2
5L3—Medway	40	24	17	12
5L4—Swale	14	4	5	3
5LL—Ashford	17	4	1	—
5LM—Canterbury and Coastal	30	6	1	—
5LN—East Kent Coastal	37	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
5LP—Shepway	20	4	2	—
Grand total	277	91	49	31

[1] Not accepting any new NHS patients for treatment.
Source:
nhs.uk website

In 2004, there were 37 "complete leavers" in the county of Kent in the last 12 months, as of 31 December 2004.

Departmental Budgets

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Department's central budgets for *(a)* 2006–07, *(b)* 2007–08 and *(c)* 2008–09 will be published. [217205]

Mr. Hutton: Central budgets for 2006–07 and 2007–08 are in the process of being finalised and will be published in due course. Central budgets for 2008–09 form part of the next spending review settlement.

Departmental Policies (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect on Chorley of his Department's policies and actions since 1997. [216239]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant

evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Chorley constituency. For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust (PCT) had fallen to zero, from 247 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Chorley and South Ribble PCT had fallen to 362, from 1,655 in June 2002.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Chorley and South Ribble PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days, an improvement from 54.5 per cent, in June 2002.

Chorley and South Ribble PCT's financial allocation increased to £188.2 million for 2004–05, a real terms increase of 6.9 per cent. This will increase to £266.7 million in 2007–08.

In June 2003, at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, 92.5 per cent., of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 97.1 per cent.

Between September 2002 and June 2004, the number of consultants at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 167 to 170.

In the Chorley local authority (LA) area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen from 218.1 in 1997 to 174.4 in 2003.

In the Chorley LA area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen to 128.6 in 2003, from 194.3 in 1997.

In April 2003, a new £700,000 dermatology and diabetes centre opened at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital.

In 2002, a new £1.6 million 30 bed medical ward was opened at Chorley and South Ribble Hospital.

A replacement computed tomography scanner was delivered to Royal Preston Hospital in November 2002.

The Royal Preston Hospital has received two additional linear accelerators; one in August 2001 and another in January 2002.

Sources:
Department of Health.
Office for National Statistics.

Diamorphine

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of whether Wockhardt's production of diamorphine will be sufficient to meet NHS requirements; and if he will make a statement; [213270]

(2) if he will list the alternative medicines his Department has recommended for use in the NHS for pain management while supplies of diamorphine are being addressed; whether these alternative medicines require additional equipment in order to administer them; and what additional resources are being made available to the NHS for pain management; [213271]

(3) what arrangements he has made with alternative *(a)* UK and *(b)* foreign suppliers of diamorphine to the NHS. [213272]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national health service Purchasing and Supply Agency is continuing to monitor the supply situation closely. Wockhardt has increased its production and these extra supplies are being distributed to the NHS.

The decision about transferring patients to alternative medicines is a clinical one and needs to be determined by the prescribing doctor, taking into account all the circumstances of a particular case. Interim clinical guidance was issued to healthcare professionals on 23 December 2004 and this is being updated by the Association for Palliative Medicine.

Equipment for administration of medicines is available through the normal channels.

The Department allocates revenue funding to primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. In the allocations for 2003–04 to 2005–06, none of the substantial growth money has been identified for specific purposes.

It is for PCTs, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use these funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services.

Departmental officials are in close contact with manufacturers of diamorphine regarding United Kingdom supply. However, the details are commercially confidential.

Fertility Treatment

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress his Department has made on the extension of the availability of in vitro fertilisation treatment to all who require it in all areas of England. [216462]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We have made it clear to primary care trusts (PCTs) that we are looking to those which provide no in vitro fertilisation treatment (IVF) to meet a minimum national level of provision of one cycle of IVF by April 2005. We know that PCTs are working together to commission services to take account of this and the clinical guideline produced by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. In the longer term, we expect the national health service to make progress to full implementation of the guideline.

Fluoride

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the maximum safe daily intake of fluoride. [214234]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are no known adverse effects on health at fluoride intakes below those causing clinical skeletal fluorosis. This condition appears to require fluoride intakes of at least 10 milligrams daily for at least 10 years. Skeletal fluorosis in the United Kingdom appears to be non-existent—with the exception of a reported case in 1966—see Webb-Peploe MM, Bradley WG (1966): "Endemic fluorosis with neurological complications in a Hampshire man"—Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry, Vol. 29, pp. 577–584.

General Practitioners

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there were for each 100,000 of population in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority and *(c)* each primary care trust in each year since 1997. [217059]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the number of general practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums) per 100,000 weighted population in England broken down by strategic health authority and by primary care trust in each year since March 2002 has been placed in the Library.

Information prior to 2002 is not available in a comparable format.

Health Expenditure (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average health expenditure per head of population in Chorley constituency was in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2005. [216204]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The expenditure per weighted head of population in the South Lancashire health authority (HA) area is shown in the table. It is not possible to provide information on the Chorley constituency area, nor figures for 2005.

South Lancashire HA

Period	*£ per head*
1996–97	609.98
2000–01	779.41

Notes:

1. Expenditure is taken from audited health authority accounts and summarisation forms which are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. The expenditure is the total expenditure accounted for by the health authority. Figures are given in cash terms.
2. Allocations per weighted head of population provide a much more reliable measure to identify differences between funding of health.
3. In many HAs, there are factors which distort the expenditure. These include:
the HA acting in a lead capacity to commission healthcare or fund training on behalf of other health bodies; and
asset revaluations in national health service trusts being funded through HAs.
4. The majority of general dental services expenditure is not included in the individual health authority accounts or summarisation forms and is separately accounted for by the Dental Practice Board (DPB). An element of pharmaceutical services expenditure is accounted for by the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA) and not by HAs. Total expenditure on these items by the DPB and the PPA cannot be allocated to individual health bodies and are therefore omitted from the answer.
5. For these reasons expenditure per head cannot be compared reliably between HAs or between different years.

Sources:

South Lancashire HA audited accounts 1996–97.
South Lancashire HA audited summarisation forms 2000–01.
Weighted population figures 1996–97 and 2000–01.

Health Funding (Huddersfield)

Mr. Barry Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was allocated to healthcare in the Huddersfield constituency in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [216880]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In 1997–98, revenue allocations were made to health authorities (HAs). In December 2002, primary care trusts (PCTs) were notified of their revenue allocations for 2003–04 to 2005–06, and the latest round of revenue allocations, covering the period 2006–07 and 2007–08, was announced on 9 February 2005.

The tables show the revenue allocations made to Calderdale and Kirklees HA for 1997–98, and to those PCTs covered by Calderdale and Kirklees for 2003–04 to 2005–06 and for 2006–07 to 2007–08.

Table 1: Calderdale and Kirklees revenue allocations 1997–98

£000

Calderdale and Kirklees HA	259,169

Table 2: Calderdale and Kirklees revenue allocations 2003–06

£000

	Allocation		
PCT	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Calderdale	182,246	198,557	215,534
Huddersfield Central	121,658	132,742	144,457
North Kirklees	149,007	163,617	178,807
South Huddersfield	67,967	74,050	80,382

Table 3: Calderdale and Kirklees revenue allocations 2006–08

£000

	Allocation	
PCT	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Calderdale	254,621	275,396
Huddersfield Central	172,344	186,412
North Kirklees	215,698	236,133
South Huddersfield	97,051	104,967

Health Funding (North Yorkshire)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on health service budgets in North Yorkshire. [217331]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Revenue allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs), to cover the period 2006–07 and 2007–08, were announced on 9 February 2005.

The table shows the allocations made to PCTs in North Yorkshire for the 2006–07 and 2007–08 revenue allocations:

Revenue allocations in North Yorkshire 2006–08

£000

	Allocation	
PCT	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Craven, Harrogate and Rural District	235,518	254,740
Hambleton and Richmondshire	129,360	139,918
Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale	198,010	216,805
Selby and York	307,131	335,917

Illegal Organ Trafficking

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to reduce illegal organ trafficking; and what discussions he has had with international bodies on such trafficking. [216177]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Human Tissue Act 2004 states that the trafficking of human organs is an offence and subject to legal penalties.

The Department continues to participate in formal discussions with the Council of Europe and the European Union about the prevention and control of organ trafficking.

Medical Devices Agency

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* fatal accidents and *(b)* adverse incident reports to the Medical Devices Agency there were in each year since 1997; and what the most common causes were. [216376]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information on total numbers of reported medical device related adverse incidents and reported incidents involving a fatality is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Reported medical device related adverse incidents, 1997–2004

	Total number of reported incidents	*Reported incidents involving a fatality*
1997	5,383	47
1998	6,298	79
1999	6,610	87
2000	7,249	92
2001	7,896	141
2002	8,756	175
2003	8,795	166
2004	8,840	179

For summary information and reporting purposes, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency groups the causes of medical device related adverse incidents into four categories:

Before delivery—issues relating to design, manufacture, quality control and/or packaging.

After delivery—relating to performance and/or maintenance failures and device degradation.

User error—where the device had not been used in accordance with the instructions for use.

No established link to device—where *(a)* the device was found subsequently to work as intended (possibly due to an intermittent fault, tampering, or user error) or *(b)* it was not available for inspection, or *(c)* because the report was made on precautionary basis.

The percentage of incidents falling into each of these categories in 2004 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Reported medical device related adverse incidents, 2004

Cause of incident	*Percentage[1] of all incident reports (number = 8,840)*	*Percentage[1] of reported incidents involving a fatality (number = 179)*
1. Before delivery	27	11
2. After delivery	29	14
3. User error	17	22
4. No established link to device	55	75

[1] Figures total more than 100 per cent. as multiple causes have been identified in some reports.

Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been sectioned under the Mental Health Acts in each of the last 10 years, broken down by *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* children. [214787]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* Information is not available in the requested format. Information on the number of detentions under Parts II, III and X the Mental Health Act 1983 of patients, on admission and subsequent to admission in national health service facilities, including high security psychiatric hospitals, and independent hospitals in England in each of the last ten and eight years (respectively) for which data are available is shown in the tables. Information on the gender of patients detained subsequent to admission to hospital is not collected. Nor is any information distinguishing adults from children.

Information on the gender of patients detained subsequent to admission and their age groups will be available via the mental health dataset in the future. This will provide local clinicians and mangers with better quality information for clinical audit, and service planning and management.

Number of detentions under the Mental Health Act 1983 of patients, on admission and subsequent to admission in national health service facilities (including high security psychiatric hospitals), in England, 1993–94 to 2003–04.

Number

	Total detentions (on admission and subsequent to admission) in NHS facilities	*Detentions on admission in NHS facilities*		*Detentions subsequent to admission in NHS facilities*
		Male	*Female*	
2003–04	43,847	13,371	11,419	19,057
2002–03	44,649	13,449	11,617	19,583
2001–02	45,563	12,980	11,510	21,073
2000–01	45,654	13,521	11,662	20,471
1999–2000	45,546	13,536	11,739	20,271
1998–99	46,003	13,679	11,956	20,368
1997–98	43,291	13,096	11,325	18,870
1996–97	40,516	12,358	10,438	17,720
1995–96	41,628	13,099	11,307	17,222
1994–95	40,275	13,054	11,524	15,697
1993–94	37,141	12,179	10,829	14,133

Figures exclude previous legislation (fifth schedule) and other acts.

A patient may be detained more than once.

Data on patients detained subsequent to admission were not collected in respect of high security psychiatric hospitals prior to 1996–97.

Data on patients detained subsequent to admission are not collected by gender.

Detentions subsequent to admission include changes from Section 136 to Sections 2 and 3.

Number of detentions under the Mental Health Act 1983 of patients, on admission and subsequent to admission in independent hospitals, in England, 1996–97 to 2003–04.

Number

	Total detentions (on admission and subsequent to admission) in independent hospitals	*Detentions on admission in independent hospitals*		*Detentions subsequent to admission in independent hospitals*
		Male	*Female*	
2003–04	1824	862	536	426
2002–03	1803	844	456	503
2001–02	2180	984	672	524
2000–01	1803	831	562	410
1999–2000	1961	829	577	555
1998–99	1840	761	489	590
1997–98	1445	545	414	486
1996–97	1295	464	431	400

Figures exclude previous legislation (fifth schedule) and other acts.

A patient may be detained more than once.

Data on patients detained subsequent to admission were not collected in respect of Independent hospitals prior to 1996–97.

Data on patients detained subsequent to admission are not collected by gender.

Detentions subsequent to admission include changes from Section 136 to Sections 2 and 3.

Mr. Lamley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of applications under section 2 of the Mental Health Act 1983 were *(a)* solely for the protection of other people, *(b)* solely in the interests of the health and safety of the patient and *(c)* for a combination of the two, in each year since 1997. [216157]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not centrally available.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* low, *(b)* medium and *(c)* high security beds there have been in the NHS in England in each year since 1997. [216162]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the requested format. Information on the total number of mental illness beds in wards open overnight and in secure units in national health service hospitals in each year since 1997 is shown in the following table.

Average daily number of available beds, wards open overnight, mental illness sector and secure units, England

	Available beds: wards open overnight: mental illness sector	*Available beds: mental illness sector: other ages: secure unit*
1996–97	37,640	1,575
1997–98	36,601	1,921
1998–99	35,692	1,747
1999–2000	34,173	1,882
2000–01	34,214	1,952
2001–02	32,783	1,848
2002–03	32,753	2,064
2003–04	32,410	2,557

Source:
Department of Health Form KH03.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to support primary care trusts in developing their commissioning capacity in mental health. [216163]

Ms Rosie Winterton: "National Standards, Local Action: Health and Social Care Standards and Planning Framework 2005/06–2007/08" (2004) sets out the framework for all national health service organisations and social service authorities to use over the next three financial years to take forward the NHS improvement plan.

The national specialised services mental health definition subset provides guidance to commissioners on securing effective collective planning arrangements that take into account the needs of a planning population considerably larger than that of a single primary care trust (PCT). A group led by the national director for mental health is currently reviewing the subset with a view to publish updated guidance later this year.

Local health communities should design the provision of their services for the treatment and management of mental health problems according to the standards set in the national service frameworks for mental health (1999), older people (2001) and children, young people and maternity services (2004) and in light of the clinical guidelines and technology appraisals published by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.

Further support for PCTs to commission mental health services is provided through the primary care mental health programme led by the London development centre of the National Institute for Mental Health in England. Relevant publications can be obtained from its website at www.nimhe.org.uk.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to assist those caring for sufferers of mental illness. [216170]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national service framework (NSF) for mental health provides a rationale and evidence base for a national standard for mental health services relating to carers of people with mental health problems. In accordance with the NSF, all individuals who provide regular and substantial care for a person on the care programme approach should have an assessment of their caring, physical and mental health needs repeated on at least an annual basis. People who provide regular and substantial care for a person on the care programme approach are also entitled to have their own written care plan, which is given to them and implemented in discussion with them.

The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 strengthens the rights of all carers to an assessment of their own needs as carers. It involves a right to a carer's assessment. It gives local councils mandatory duties to support carers by providing services to carers directly and in the provision of breaks, as well as, directly supporting carers by providing direct payment for carers' services.

In line with the NHS Plan, mental health provider trusts are recruiting 700 carer support workers to increase the breaks available for carers and to strengthen carer support networks. To consolidate the progress that is being made and to build on good practice and research, the Department published guidance entitled "Developing Services for Carers and Families of People with Mental Illness in 2002".

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of the total number of hospital inpatients detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 have appealed to mental health review tribunals since 1997. [216174]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested. However, information on the number of detentions and applications to mental health review tribunals is shown in the tables.

Number of detentions under the Mental Health Act 1983 of patients in national health service facilities (including high security psychiatric hospitals) and independent hospitals in England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Number
2003–04	45,671
2002–03	46,452
2001–02	47,743
2000–01	47,457
1999–2000	47,507
1998–99	47,843
1997–98	44,736

Notes:

1. Figures exclude previous legislation (fifth schedule) and other acts.

2. A patient may be detained more than once.

3. The data include short-term detentions under section 5 of the Mental Health Act 1983. Patients detained under section 5 cannot make applications to mental health review tribunals.

Number of applications to mental health review tribunals in England, 1997 to 2004 (calendar years)

	Number
2004	21,413
2003	21,634
2002	20,980
2001	20,368
2000	20,421
1999	19,709
1998	18,503
1997	15,687

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in England are estimated to be suffering from *(a)* mild to moderate and *(b)* severe mental illness. [216176]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Office for National Statistics published a report, "Psychiatric morbidity among adults living in private households, 2000" in Great Britain. It was found that 164 per 1,000 of the adult population suffered from neurotic disorder, which can be broadly regarded as mild to moderate mental illness. The prevalence rate for probable psychotic disorder was five per 1,000 and for personality disorder 44 per 1,000 of the adult population. These disorders can be regarded as severe mental illness.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve the quality of information management in mental healthcare. [216178]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A number of important initiatives are leading to major improvements in information management for mental healthcare.

The care programme approach model is an integral part of the national service framework for mental health, which was published in 1999 and has since been implemented across the national health service in England. It requires all providers of adult specialist mental health care to keep an electronic record of key information on all patients cared for together with details of the care they receive. This information should be accessible at any time by care practitioners.

The mental health minimum data set is a database containing a wide range of information on patients, details of the care they are receiving or have received and some of the outcomes of care. All providers of adult specialist mental health care are required to maintain this database and it provides a valuable resource for clinicians and service managers.

Information on mental health care is also included as an integral part of the national programme for information technology, which is currently being implemented.

Missed Appointments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people failed to attend appointments in *(a)* Chorley Hospital and *(b)* Preston Hospital in 2003–04. [216828]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not available in the format requested. However, information in relation to the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust, which includes Chorley and South Ribble District General Hospital and the Royal Preston Hospital, is shown in the table.

Consultant out-patient attendances—Lancashire Teaching Hospitals (RXN), 2003–04

Number

2003–04	First attendances		Subsequent attendances		Total attendances		Did not attend rate (percentage):	
	Seen	Did not attend	Seen	Did not attend	Seen	Did not attend	First attendances	Total attendances
Quarter								
1	20,505	2,244	55,770	7,405	76,275	9,649	9.9	11.2
2	21,216	2,563	55,980	8,152	77,196	10,715	10.8	12.2
3	22,179	2,806	55,159	8,019	77,338	10,825	11.2	12.3
4	23,302	2,586	58,199	8,027	81,501	10,613	10.0	11.5
Total	87,202	10,199	225,108	31,603	312,310	41,802	10.5	11.8

Source:
QMOP Department of Health quarterly return.

MRI Scans

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1336–7W, on MRI scans, what concerns were raised in the representations he has received; and what assessment he has made of the likelihood of Alliance Medical recruiting radiographers from other private providers who then recruit staff from the NHS. [217201]

Mr. Hutton: The representations raised issues about the procurement process, the cost of the contract and issues relating to the level of service, which Alliance Medical Limited is contracted to provide. The recruitment of radiographers from private providers is a matter for Alliance Medical Limited.

Nevirapine

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* recent research into the effects of the drug Nevirapine and *(b)* the consequences of that research for mother-to-baby transmission of HIV/AIDS. [215965]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The nevirapine product marketed as Viramune by Boehringer Ingelheim has a European authorisation, the terms of which are under frequent revision as new research information comes to light and in response to post-marketing safety update reports from the company. New research data and reports are reviewed by the European Expert Committee on Human Medicinal Products (CHMP) to see if the warnings and recommended uses of the product need to be changed. The United Kingdom feeds into that process, taking advice from the committee on the safety of medicines as necessary.

The British HIV Association (BHIVA) has reviewed its guidelines on the management of HIV infection in pregnant women and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, taking account of the recent research on nevirapine. BHIVA will be consulting on the revised guidelines shortly before they are published.

NHS Staff

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* graduate primary care workers, *(b)* gateway workers, *(c)* support time and recovery workers, *(d)* community development workers and *(e)* carer support workers are currently employed in the NHS. [216151]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The requested information is not yet available. Progress on the number of graduate primary care workers, gateway workers, support, time and recovery workers, community development workers and carer support workers employed in the national health service will be available when the Durham adult mental health service mapping is finalised in spring 2005.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS *(a)* hospital, *(b)* public health medicine and *(c)* community health service staff were employed in the main NHS staff groups in the Newcastle Primary Care Trust area in (i) 1996, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2004. [216491]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not available in the format requested. Data for Northumberland Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority, broken down by organisation, are shown in the table.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Service (HCHS): medical and dental staff within Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority by organisation—as at 30 September each year

Number (headcount)

		All medical and dental staff		
		1996	2001	2003
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear		2,231	2,622	2,861
of which:				
Cheviot and Wansbeck National Health Service Trust	RLK	121	0	0
Gateshead and South Tyneside HA	QDG	4	6	0
Gateshead Health NHS Trust	RR7	0	213	241
Gateshead Healthcare NHS Trust	RM7	31	0	0
Gateshead Hospitals NHS Trust	RE2	152	0	0
Gateshead Primary Care Trust (PCT)	5KF	0	0	13
Newcastle and North Tyneside HA	QDJ	9	21	0
Newcastle City Health NHS Trust	RNM	228	0	0
Newcastle PCT	5D7	0	28	31
Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust	RTD	0	1,136	1,190

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Service (HCHS): medical and dental staff within Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority by organisation—as at 30 September each year

Number (headcount)

		All medical and dental staff		
		1996	*2001*	*2003*
Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health Services NHS Trust	RNP	0	150	189
North Tyneside Health Care NHS Trust	RLC	151	0	0
North Tyneside PCT	5D8	0	0	13
Northgate and Prudhoe NHS Trust	RM6	20	17	23
Northumberland Care Trust	TAC	0	0	30
Northumberland Community Health NHS Trust	RLM	35	0	0
Northumberland HA	QDM	9	4	0
Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust	RE8	34	0	0
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear StHA	Q09	0	0	20
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust	RTF	0	380	408
South of Tyne and Wearside Mental Health NHS Trust	RW9	0	0	57
South Tyneside Health Care NHS Trust	RE9	94	248	221
South Tyneside PCT	5KG	0	0	10
Sunderland City Hospitals NHS Trust	RLN	340	366	406
Sunderland HA	QDN	7	10	0
Sunderland Teaching PCT	5KL	0	0	9
The Freeman Group of Hospitals	RAB	360	0	0
The Royal Victoria Infirmary and associated Hospitals NHS Trust	RCK	609	0	0
Wearside Priority Health Care NHS Trust	RLH	27	43	0

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Night Care

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* Derbyshire, *(b)* Leicestershire and *(c)* the East Riding of Yorkshire receive full or part-time night care at home funded by the local authority. [216481]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Information on the number of people receiving full or part-time night care at home is not centrally available.

The following table shows the number of contact hours of home care occurring out of hours or overnight in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and East Riding during a survey week in September 2003. Some of these hours will be delivered by council employees while others will be delivered by the private and voluntary sector.

Number and rate of contact hours of home care provided out of hours or overnight in September 2003[1]

Rounded numbers and rates

Councils with social services responsibilities	*Out of hours*[2]	*Overnight,*[3] *live-in*[4] *and 24 hour services*[5]	*Total*
Number of contact hours			
Derbyshire	6,500	11,100	17,600
Leicestershire	6,400	400	6,800
East Riding	500	500	1,000
Contact hours per 10,000 households			
Derbyshire	211	358	569
Leicestershire	263	16	279
East Riding	35	38	73

[1] Survey week in September 2003.

[2] Out of hours: services which are provided outside of the normal working day, but not including night sitting services, live-in or 24 hours services.

[3] Overnight services: night sitting services carried out on a regular or ad-hoc basis.

[4] Live-in services: Where the carer lives, either permanently or temporarily, in the home of the client, working for the local authority directly or under contract. It excludes informal carer arrangements with relatives or friends.

[5] 24 hours services: round the clock care provided by several workers on a shift basis.

Source:
HH1, Table 1

Nurse Numbers

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses were employed in *(a)* Sunderland Royal Hospital, *(b)* Hartlepool University Hospital and *(c)* Durham University Hospital in each year since 2001. [216092]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff in specified NHS trusts as at 30 September each year

Headcount

	2001	*2002*	*2003*
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust	1,450	1,475	1,543
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust	1,348	1,214	1,237
County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	n/a	n/a	1,946
North Durham Health Care NHS Trust	1,139	890	n/a
South Durham Health Care NHS Trust	1,324	1,004	n/a

n/a = Not applicable.

Note:
North Durham Healthcare NHS Trust and South Durham Health Care NHS Trust merged to form County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust on 1 October 2002.

Source:
Department of Health non-medical workforce census.

Obesity

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of women were classified as obese in *(a)* England and *(b)* each region in each year since 1990, broken down by socio-economic group. [216374]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information is not available in exactly the form requested. Figures available from the health survey for England are shown in the tables. The tables give, for England, the percentage of women who are obese (with a body mass index over 30) from 1991, when the health survey began, to 2003 by social class and for the period 1998 to 2003 by Government office region. Figures prior to 1998 are not available by Government office region. The samples sizes available in the health survey do not allow robust estimates to be calculated for each region broken down by social/economic status.

Prevalence of obesity among women by survey year and social class

Aged 16 and over with a valid height and weight measurement

	Social class of head of household[1]						*1991–2003*
Women	*I*	*II*	*IIIN*	*IIIM*	*IV*	*V*	*Total*
Percentage							
1991–1992[2]	11	15	20	21	16		
1993	11	13	13	20	22	24	16
1994	12	14	15	20	22	22	17
1995	12	14	14	20	24	22	17
1996	13	15	16	21	22	27	18
1997	10	15	20	23	26	24	20
1998	15	18	19	24	25	28	21
1999	21	18	21	21	24	31	21
2000	19	17	19	26	26	32	21
2001	14	20	21	27	31	28	23
2002	16	18	22	25	29	35	23
2003	18	19	21	28	29	29	23
Bases							
1991–1992[2]	1,219	493	912	681	3,430		
1993	579	2,210	1,239	2,149	1,106	440	8,037
1994	433	2,000	1,184	2,016	1,168	458	7,884
1995	465	2,112	1,147	1,979	1,056	453	7,729
1996	461	2,255	1,230	2,043	1,135	424	8,064
1997[3]	261	1,160	671	1,100	655	230	4,254
1998	471	2,231	1,193	1,983	1,201	429	7,730
1999[3]	248	1,049	585	1,000	557	157	3,699
2000[3]	198	1,193	654	806	496	189	3,703
2001	412	2,278	1,304	1,710	1,078	386	7,414
2002[3]	244	1,077	614	775	516	178	3,509
2003	456	2,329	1,192	1,581	999	322	7,090

[1] I—Professional, II—Managerial technical, IIIN—Skilled non-manual, IIIM—Skilled manual, IV—Semi-skilled manual, V—Unskilled manual.

[2] The sample sizes in 1991 and 1992 were smaller than in subsequent years and for reporting purposes the estimates from both years were combined. In addition, the figures for social classes I and II, and IV and V were combined.

[3] In these years, the focus was on special groups such as children, ethnic minorities and older people. The sample for the special groups was boosted and the sample for the general population correspondingly halved to about 8,000 adults. The figures are based on the general population sample.

Source:

Health Survey for England

Prevalence of obesity among women by Government office region: Aged 16 and over with both valid height and weight measurements, 1998 to 2003

BMI (kg/m²)

	Government office regions[1]									
	North East	*North West*	*Yorkshire and the Humber*	*East Midlands*	*West Midlands*	*East of England*	*London*	*South East*	*South West*	*England*
Women										
Percentage										
1998	22.9	21.3	21.7	22.1	25.8	21.6	19.5	19.3	19.4	21.2
1999	17.3	21.3	20.0	27.7	22.0	20.1	20.3	17.8	23.1	21.1
2000	22.0	22.7	19.7	24.8	26.3	19.3	21.8	19.4	17.4	21.4
2001	24.9	21.0	25.4	24.9	27.6	23.8	19.9	21.8	24.1	23.5
2002	19.8	24.6	24.0	27.6	25.4	22.1	25.5	19.3	16.6	22.8
2003	24.6	24.7	24.1	24.3	28.3	24.7	20.9	19.5	21.8	23.4
Bases										
1998	484	1,082	819	763	671	862	960	1,216	826	7,730
1999	225	530	401	401	381	433	395	551	381	3,699
2000	245	519	437	416	327	414	440	536	368	3,703
2001	494	1,001	800	703	800	865	800	1,132	814	7,414
2002	222	505	387	344	355	390	411	564	331	3,509
2003	468	1,006	667	678	778	825	837	1,119	712	7,090

[1] Figures prior to 1998 not available by Government office region.

Source:

Health Survey for England.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of *(a)* men and *(b)* women were classified as obese in each region in each year since 1997. [217057]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures available from the Health Survey for England are shown in the table. For those respondents with a valid height and weight measurement from which the body mass index (BMI) could be calculated, it gives the proportion of men and women classed as obese by Government Office Region for the period 1998–2003. Figures prior to 1998 are not available by Government Office Region. The prevalence of obesity at the national level is given for 1997.

Proportion of adults classed as obese (BMI> 30) by Government Office Region and sex aged-16 and over with both valid height and weight measurements, 1997–2003

Percentage

	Government Office Region				
	North east	North west	Yorkshire	East Midlands	West Midlands
Men					
1997	—	—	—	—	—
1998	14.9	16.2	19.0	23.0	16.0
1999	24.9	22.3	17.2	19.3	17.5
2000	25.5	19.4	21.3	20.7	22.0
2001	24.7	20.5	21.6	23.4	23.3
2002	28.8	22.1	26.3	26.1	24.7
2003	23.9	24.5	26.3	24.0	23.2
Women					
1997	—	—	—	—	—
1998	22.9	21.3	21.7	22.1	25.8
1999	17.3	21.3	20.0	27.7	22.0
2000	22.0	22.7	19.7	24.8	26.3
2001	24.9	21.0	25.4	24.9	27.6
2002	19.8	24.6	24.0	27.6	25.4
2003	24.6	24.7	24.1	24.3	28.3
Bases men					
1997	—	—	—	—	—
1998	410	936	705	639	592
1999	173	506	331	348	303
2000	192	489	376	348	304
2001	437	840	662	611	700
2002	170	462	331	291	263
2003	368	849	560	574	629
Women					
1997	—	—	—	—	—
1998	484	1082	819	763	671
1999	225	530	401	401	381
2000	245	519	437	416	327
2001	494	1001	800	703	800
2002	222	505	387	344	355
2003	468	1006	667	678	778

Percentage

	Government Office Region				
	East of England	London	South East	South West	England
Men					
1997	—	—	—	—	17.0
1998	16.3	15.3	18.4	15.6	17.3
1999	18.5	17.6	15.4	18.0	18.7
2000	21.1	19.1	21.2	21.0	21.0
2001	20.2	18.8	20.2	18.9	21.0
2002	19.5	16.0	21.5	18.3	22.1
2003	24.5	18.4	20.5	23.1	22.9
Women					
1997	—	—	—	—	19.7
1998	21.6	19.5	19.3	19.4	21.2
1999	20.1	20.3	17.8	23.1	21.1
2000	19.3	21.8	19.4	17.4	21.4
2001	23.8	19.9	21.8	24.1	23.5
2002	22.1	25.5	19.3	16.6	22.8
2003	24.7	20.9	19.5	21.8	23.4
Bases men					
1997	—	—	—	—	3685
1998	743	797	991	743	6600
1999	400	323	492	327	3204
2000	383	367	452	348	3260
2001	764	665	889	694	6267
2002	343	337	466	306	2969
2003	728	727	930	601	5966
Women					
1997	—	—	—	—	4254
1998	862	960	1216	826	7730
1999	433	395	551	381	3699
2000	414	440	536	368	3703
2001	865	800	1132	814	7414
2002	390	411	564	331	3509
2003	825	837	1119	712	7090

Note:
Figures prior to 1998 not available by Government Office Region.
Source:
Health Survey for England.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the spearhead primary care trusts and the constituencies that they cover in the south-west. [216924]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* There are no spearhead primary care trusts within the south-west. The spearhead group list consists of the local authority areas that were in the bottom fifth nationally for three or more of the following five factors:

Male life expectancy at birth,

Female life expectancy at birth,

Cancer mortality rate in under 75s,

Cardio vascular disease mortality rate in under 75s,

The index of multiple deprivation 2004 (local authority summary), average score.

Note:
Data for the first four factors are for the period 1995–97.

Regulation

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost to local authorities of implementing new statutory and regulatory duties that were the responsibility of his Department which have come into force since May 2001. [216900]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 22 February 2005]:* The Department provides the financial resources needed by local authorities to deliver their adults' personal social services commitments and most appropriately meet the needs of the local community. Responsibility for children's personal social services transferred to Department for Education and Skills from 1 April 2004.

Whilst the Department is responsible for establishing overall social care policy, it is for local authorities themselves to manage the implementation of new

statutory or regulatory changes, including the attribution of appropriate resources, in accordance with locally determined priorities.

The Department publishes regulatory impact assessments in relation to new statutory and regulatory duties. These show that the cost to local authorities of implementing such new duties since May 2001 can be estimated at around £43 million, with a further £159 million shared between local authorities and other organisations.

Residential Care

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the people in residential care in 2002–03 were disabled. [216043]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* This information is not collected routinely. However, from the 2001 census there were around 304,000 people living in residential care, who reported having a limiting long-term illness. This represents some 94 per cent. of all those living in residential care at the time of the census.

Wells Report

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the Wells Report. [211261]

Ms Rosie Winterton: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health does not currently intend to publish the Wells Report.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Disorder

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his Department's strategy for tackling the problems of alcohol-related disorder in towns and city centres. [216755]

Ms Blears: The Government are taking forward work to tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder through the Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme. Recent achievements include: the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns which took place over the summer and winter last year, the introduction of new fixed penalty notices for minor alcohol offences from November last year and the launch of the first tranche of the Tackling violent Crime Programme—providing extra help to those areas which have the highest volumes of violent crime. We are also working with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to develop guidance for local authorities to help them manage the night-time economy.

To build on this work, the Government published a consultation document called "Drinking Responsibly" on 21 January 2005 outlining new policy proposals for tackling the problems of alcohol-related disorder. The proposals included: Alcohol Disorder Zones for town and city centres, Drinking Banning Orders, a review of the penalties associated with alcohol-related crimes and new police closure powers for premises selling to under-age children. Replies to the proposals in the consultation paper are due by the 28 February 2005. We will consider all of the responses before making any final decisions on the proposals.

Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the activities in the UK of Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra since January 2002; and if he will make a statement. [216718]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Any information suggesting illegal activity by any individual or group will be investigated by the appropriate authorities. Should anyone have evidence of criminal acts being carried out they should take it to the police in the first instance.

Anti-terrorism Measures

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many anti-bomb litter bins have been installed in major metropolitan areas. [215349]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Individual local authorities, transport operators and site owners providing litter bins in public places will determine numbers, distribution and type to be provided. We do not hold information about the number of blast resistant litter bins installed.

Correspondence

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will instruct the Visa Correspondence Section of UK Visas to respond to correspondence from the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West, regarding a case involving Qamar Zamanai Mansoori and Fareda Ui-Haz Sadique (Now Fareda Bano). [204772]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

UKVisas replied to the hon. Member on 16 December 2004. UKVisas also corresponded by e-mail with the hon. Member's office on 18 January, 1 February and 8 February.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the number of recorded crimes in *(a)* the North West and *(b)* Lancashire in 2004; and what percentage were cleared up. [215324]

Ms Blears: The latest available information on recorded crime and detections for the North West and Lancashire is for 2003–04 and is published in Table 7.04 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin 10/04; a copy of which is available in the Library.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Criminal Cases Review Commission expects to start and to complete the Stage 2 Review of *(a)* the case of Derek Jack Tully and *(b)* a case received on 10 February which had the same priority. [216587]

Paul Goggins: It is not the practice to give specific information about a particular case. Cases in the Stage 2, at-liberty queue currently being allocated to a Case Review Manager are, on average, 30 months old. Cases in the Stage 2, in-custody queue currently being allocated to a Case Review Manager are, on average, 19 months old. The Commission would expect applications received in February 2005 to wait a comparable time, but this is subject to other factors such as the need to prioritise certain cases and the time taken to complete case reviews in progress. The majority of cases (some 77 per cent.) are, however, allocated for review with minimal delay, because they are assessed as requiring less than five caseworker-days' work.

It is not possible to estimate how long the review of a case will take until it has been allocated to a Case Review Manager.

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the level of resources the Criminal Cases Review Commission would need to eliminate queues of cases by March 2006; and what targets for reduction in queues Ministers have set. [216588]

Paul Goggins: There has been no assessment made by the Home Office of the level of resources required by the Criminal Cases Review Commission to eliminate queues of cases by March 2006. Ministers have not currently set targets for reduction in queues.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206871]

Paul Goggins: The table lists the criminal offences in this Department's legislation passed in the sessions 2002–03 and 2003–04. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 contains 55 offences; most of them are codifications of the pre-existing law.

Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003

Section 34(1)	Failure by a financial institution to comply with a requirement imposed under a customer information order.
Section 34(3)	False statement made by a financial institution in purported compliance with a customer information order.
Section 39	The same offences in Scotland.
Section 42	Disclosure by an institution or its employee of specified facts about a financial investigation.

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

Section 4(1)	Remaining on or entering premises in contravention of a closure notice.
Section 61	Failure to comply with a direction to leave land etc.

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Section 1	Rape.
Section 2	Assault by penetration.
Section 3	Sexual assault.
Section 4	Causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent.
Section 5	Rape of a child under 13.
Section 6	Assault on a child under 13 by penetration.
Section 7	Sexual assault of a child under 13.
Section 8	Causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity.
Section 9	Sexual activity with a child.
Section 10	Causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity.
Section 11	Engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child.
Section 12	Causing a child to watch a sexual act.
Section 13	Child sex offences committed by young persons.
Section 14	Arranging or facilitating the commission of a child sex offence.
Section 15	Meeting a child following sexual grooming etc.
Section 16	Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity with a child.
Section 17	Abuse of position of trust: causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity.
Section 18	Abuse of position of trust: sexual activity in the presence of a child.
Section 19	Abuse of position of trust: causing a child to watch a sexual act.
Section 20	Abuse of position of trust: acts done in Scotland.
Section 25	Sexual activity with a child family member.
Section 26	Inciting a child family member to engage in sexual activity.
Section 30	Sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder impeding choice.
Section 33	Causing a person with a mental disorder impeding choice to watch a sexual act.
Section 34	Inducement, threat or deception to procure sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder.
Section 35	Causing a person with a mental disorder to engage in or agree to engage in sexual activity by inducement, threat or deception.
Section 36	Engaging in sexual activity in the presence, procured by inducement, threat or deception, of a person with a mental disorder.
Section 37	Causing a person with a mental disorder to watch a sexual act by inducement, threat or deception.
Section 38	Care workers: sexual activity with a person with a mental disorder.
Section 39	Care workers: causing or inciting sexual activity.
Section 40	Care workers: sexual activity in the presence of a person with a mental disorder.
Section 41	Care workers: causing a person with a mental disorder to watch a sexual act.
Section47	Paying for sexual services of a child.
Section 48	Causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography.
Section 49	Controlling a child prostitute of a child involved in pornography.
Section 50	Arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography.

Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003

Section 52	Causing or inciting prostitution for gain.
Section 53	Controlling prostitution for gain.
Section 57	Trafficking into the UK for sexual exploitation.
Section 58	Trafficking within the UK for sexual exploitation.
Section 59	Trafficking out of the UK for sexual exploitation.
Section 61	Administering a substance with intent that sexual activity takes place.
Section 62	Committing an offence with intent to commit a sexual offence.
Section 63	Trespass with intent to commit a sexual offence.
Section 64	Sex with an adult relative: penetration.
Section 65	Sex with an adult relative: consenting to penetration.
Section 66	Exposure.
Section 67	Voyeurism.
Section 69	Intercourse with an animal.
Section 70	Sexual penetration of a corpse.
Section 71	Sexual activity in a public lavatory.
Section 91	Offences relating to notification by sex offenders.
Section 113	Offence of breach of a sexual offences prevention order or an interim sexual offences prevention order.
Section 122	Offence: breach of foreign travel order.
Section 128	Offence: breach of a risk of sexual harm order or an interim risk of sexual harm order.

Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act 2004

Section 2	Entering the UK without a passport etc.
Section 4	Trafficking people for exploitation.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213796]

Fiona Mactaggart: Individual directorates within the Home Office have responsibility for allocating resources for external development opportunities; they identify the appropriate development for their staff according to business needs, and within their own budgets. The Home Office offers staff a comprehensive programme of development opportunities, and they are encouraged to use the most cost effective method to meet their needs.

Information is not collected centrally on the cost of staff training and development days held away from the Department.

Further information on departmental costs of staff training over the years since 1997 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Credit Cards

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many credit cards for official expenditure are held by his Department. [206434]

Fiona Mactaggart: In the core Home Office, its Executive Agencies and NDPBs, Government Procurement Cards (GPC) are used for official expenditure on low value reimbursable items up to the value of £500 (e.g. last minute travel, overnight accommodation (B&B), conference booking or a training course). At present the Department holds 1,889 GPC cards.

Other than GPC cards, the Department does not hold any credit cards for official expenditure.

Departmental Polices

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210325]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Clwyd, South constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the North Wales Police Force increased by 256 from 1,369 to 1,625. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 21 CSOs on North Wales' streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, North Wales has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 5 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 4 per cent.

North Wales police will receive £78.0 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 3.76 per cent. (£2.8 million) over 2004–05. North Wales benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the Force would have received £1.9 million less. General grants funding to North Wales has increased by 28.3 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, North Wales will also receive around £9.5 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour. social behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales

and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. For example, nine CCTV projects in the Clwyd, South area (which includes the three Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) of Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire) received a total of £666,835 under the CRP.

Since 2001, a number of successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and specific projects. These include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001 under these initiatives, a total of £1.97 million has been allocated to the Clwyd, South area. A further £1.42 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the National Assembly for Wales for CSP capacity building across Wales.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In the three Community Safety Partnerships that include Clwyd a total of 11 antisocial behaviour orders are currently in force as of 11 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the futurebuilders fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

This year, 2005, is the Year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org .

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, including statistical information relating as directly as possible to the constituency, the effect on Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency of his Department's policies since 8 June 2001. [206839]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 2001 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Cleveland Police Force increased by 290 from 1,407 to 1,697. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 75 CSOs on Cleveland streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 2001–02 and 2003–04, Cleveland has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 21 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 12 per cent.

Cleveland Police Force will receive £90.9 million in general grants in 2005–06, an increase of 4.67 per cent. (£4.1 million) over this year. This is significantly higher than the minimum increase of 3.75 per cent. guaranteed to all forces. Cleveland Force also gains £0.2 million from the 2003–04 Amending Report, bringing their overall grant to £91.1 million. General grants funding to Cleveland Police Force has increased by over 14 per cent. between 2001–02 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Cleveland will receive next year around £4.7 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. For example, six CCTV projects in the Middlesbrough CDRP area received a total of £791,179 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These

initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £1,290,644 has been allocated to Middlesbrough CDRP under these initiatives. A further £1.45 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the North East for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Middlesbrough set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Middlesbrough a total of 32 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 1 February 2005. Middlesbrough is also one of 50 communities across the country that have been designated as 'Together Action Areas' and are set to get extra help to tackle antisocial behaviour. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and their policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the House Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Middlesbrough has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Middlesbrough Drug Action Team amounted to £2.07 million, rising to £2.78 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency can be obtained from the Middlesbrough Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the futurebuilders fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

To support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued, the Home Office funded a Community Cohesion Pathfinder in Middlesbrough over 18 months to September 2004. This invested £150,000 via the local authority and £90,000 via voluntary and community sector partners. The Pathfinder focused on young people, education, and sports and cultural activities. Outcomes included a Listening Schools project bring together parents and school staff, inter-faith working, training of young people in community involvement and cultural activities celebrating diversity. A Pathfinder Youth Champions scheme in Middlesbrough also ending September 2004 produced a total of 45 young community champions engaged in the regeneration of their community through project-based activities.

This year, 2005, is the year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org .

The Government's Time Ltd. Development Fund (2002 to 2005) has invested £125,538 in Middlesbrough aimed at increasing the number of people involved in community and voluntary activities.

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215613]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government has put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Blackpool South constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Lancashire Police Force increased by 332 from 3,247 to 3,579. The Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 117 CSOs on Lancashire

streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Lancashire has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 41 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 39 per cent.

Lancashire Police Force will receive £190.8 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 4.31 per cent. (£7.9 million) over last year. Lancashire Police also gains around £0.4 million from the Amending Report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 4.52 per cent. General grants funding to Lancashire has increased by 14.5 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2000–01 and by 13.5 per cent. between 2001–01 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Lancashire will also receive £17.4 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The crime reduction programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Two CCTV projects in the Blackpool CDRP area received a total of £666,350 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 crime and disorder reduction partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £1.05 million has been allocated to Blackpool CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.3 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the North West for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Blackpool set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle anti-social behaviour and nuisance. In Blackpool a total of 20 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 10 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and its policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government has invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focussing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Blackpool has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Blackpool Drug Action Team amounted to £1.05 million, rising to £1.53 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Blackpool South constituency can be obtained from the Blackpool Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams

The Government is working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk

This year, 2005, is the year of the volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the

constituency, the effects of his Department's policy since 1997 on Dudley, North constituency; and if he will make a statement. [213145]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Dudley, North constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the West Midlands Police Force increased by 895 from 7,113 to 8,008. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 134 CSOs on West Midlands streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, West Midlands has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 35 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 28 per cent.

West Midlands Police Force is receiving £426.5 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 6.81 per cent. (£27.2 million) over this year. West Midlands also gains around £0.8 million from the Amending Report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 7.0 per cent. General grants funding to West Midlands has increased by 34 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, West Midlands will also receive around £29 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Four CCTV projects in the Dudley CDRP area as a whole received a total of £286,459 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £1.6 million has been allocated to the Dudley CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.03 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the West Midlands for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Dudley set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Dudley a total of 29 antisocial behaviour orders are currently in force as of 9 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and its policy is set out in the 10-year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Dudley has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Dudley Drug Action Team amounted to £1.9 million, rising to £2.4 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Dudley, North constituency can be obtained from the Dudley Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams_.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. For 2003–04 to 2005–06 Dudley Racial Equality Council is receiving a £291,431 Connecting Communities Grant from the Home Office to improve the access of black and ethnic minority people to jobs and services.

Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

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Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency, the effects on Preseli Pembrokeshire of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211321]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Dyfed-Powys Police Force increased by 160 from 1,005 to 1,165. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 11 CSOs on Dyfed-Powys streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Dyfed-Powys has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of three per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of two per cent.

Dyfed-Powys Police Force is receiving £52.2 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 3.75 per cent. (£1.9 million) over 2004–05. Dyfed-Powys benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the Force would have received £1.3 million less. General grants funding to Dyfed-Powys has increased by 24 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Dyfed-Powys will also receive around £6 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Two CCTV projects in the Pembrokeshire CDRP area received a total of £234,900 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime Safety Partnerships (CSPs, formerly CDRPs) in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £496,631 has been allocated to Pembrokeshire CSP under these initiatives. A further £1.42 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the National Assembly for CSP capacity building across Wales.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Pembrokeshire set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Pembrokeshire a total of 11 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the futurebuilders fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

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Mr. Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Reading, West constituency, the effects on Reading, West of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215818]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Reading, West constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Thames Valley police force increased by 408 from 3695 to 4103. The Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 18 CSOs on Thames Valley streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Thames Valley police force area has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 11 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 29 per cent.

Thames Valley police will receive £220.6 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 3.75 per cent. (£7.9million) over last year. Thames Valley benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the force would have received £4.1 million less. General grants funding to Thames Valley has increased by 28.9 per cent. between 1997–08 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Thames Valley will also receive around £23.8million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The crime reduction programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. One CCTV project in the Reading CDRP area received a total of £749,500 from the CRP and one CCTV project in the west Berkshire CDRP area (which includes part of the Reading west constituency) received a total of £16,500 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 crime and disorder reduction partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include communities against drugs, the safer communities initiative, the small retailers in deprived areas scheme and the building safer communities fund. Since 2001, a total of £1.56 million has been allocated to Reading CDRP and £587,626 to west Berkshire CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.57 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the south east for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a prolific and other priority offenders (PPO) scheme in Reading and in west Berkshire set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's crime reduction website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Reading a total of 12 antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) have been issued and in west Berkshire a total of four ASBOs have been issued as of 17 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling drug misuse is a priority of this Government and its policy is set out in the 10 year national drug strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the updated drug strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focussing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Reading and west Berkshire has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the drugs intervention programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for reading drug action team amounted to £1.71 million, rising to £2.01 million in 2004–05. For west Berkshire drug action team, the 2003–04 allocation amounted to £597,102, rising to £729,165 in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Reading, West constituency can be obtained from the Reading drug action team and west Berkshire drug action team for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by £1.5 million people between

2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

Investment is also being made in voluntary and community sector infrastructure under the ChangeUp Scheme, so that frontline groups and organisations can access the support and expertise they need to improve and expand. £100,000 has been made available to the Reading area and £100,000 has been made available to the west Berkshire area in 2005 to take forward this work.

Reading borough council also participates in the south east community cohesion learning network which is managed by the Government Office for the south east. The network is made up of representatives from 16 south east community cohesion priority areas including local authority officers, the police, and other regional organisations with an interest in community cohesion. The network facilitates the sharing of information, learning and good practice on community cohesion issues in the region.

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Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effects of his Department's policies to combat antisocial behaviour in Rochdale. [217372]

Ms Blears: The Government's TOGETHER campaign helps local people and agencies to tackle and not tolerate antisocial behaviour. TOGETHER applies across all England and Wales including the hon. Member's constituency.

Rochdale has a comprehensive antisocial behaviour strategy, and this is prioritised in Rochdale's Police Reassurance project and plans. This sets out how different delivery agencies are working together to synchronise the effort and impact on antisocial behaviour.

Rochdale has also introduced an alcohol ban scheme, which is a joint project between the Community Safety Team, Trading Standards, pubs, clubs and the police. Any person involved in alcohol related incidents outside or near to a public house or nightclub will be banned for 6 or 12-months from all the pubs and clubs involved in the scheme.

Between April 2004 and December 2004, Rochdale has seen a 4.9 per cent. reduction in neighbourhood problems such as youth nuisance, criminal damage, public disorder and domestic disputes.

52 ASBOs have been issued since 1999 and over 30 acceptable behaviour contracts issued and signed by individuals.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Wokingham constituency, the effects on Wokingham of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215980]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government has put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Wokingham constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Thames Valley Police Force increased by 408 from 3,695 to 4,103. The Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 18 CSOs on Thames Valley streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, the Thames Valley Police Force area has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 11 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 29 per cent.

Thames Valley Police will receive £220.6 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 3.75 per cent. (£7.9million) over 2004–05. Thames Valley benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the force would have received £4.1 million less. General grants funding to Thames Valley has increased by 28.9 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Thames Valley will also receive around £23.8 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The crime reduction programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. One CCTV project in West Berkshire CDRP (which includes part of Wokingham constituency) received a total of £16,500 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 crime and disorder reduction partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £774,136 has been allocated to Wokingham CDRP and £587,626 to West Berkshire CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.57 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the south-east for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Wokingham and West Berkshire set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. Two antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in Wokingham and four in West Berkshire as of 17 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and its policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government has invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focussing on the four strands of:

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Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Wokingham and West Berkshire have seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Wokingham Drug Action Team amounted to £568,685, rising to £693,422 in 2004–05. For West Berkshire Drug Action Team, the 2003–04 allocation amounted to £597,102, rising to £729,165 in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Wokingham constituency can be obtained from the Wokingham Drug Action Team and West Berkshire Drug Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams

The Government is working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk

Investment is also being made in voluntary and community sector infrastructure under the ChangeUp Scheme, so that frontline groups and organisations can access the support and expertise they need to improve and expand. £100,000 has been made available to the Wokingham area in 2005 to take forward this area of work. Further information on the aims of ChangeUp can be found on the Home Office Website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/developing/index.html

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Forensic Medical Examiners

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of forensic medical examiners are women *(a)* in England and Wales, *(b)* in the Cleveland Police area and *(c)* in the north-east of England. [215573]

Paul Goggins: This information is not held centrally.

Imitation Firearms

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted for possession of an imitation firearm in a public place under section 37 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. [217389]

Ms Blears: Offences under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 37 came into force on 20 January 2004. Statistics of court proceedings for 2004 will be published in the autumn of 2005.

Immigration Status (Notification)

Mr. Collins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects Mrs. Moreton of Carr Bank, Milnthorpe, Cumbria to receive written notification of her immigration status and the return of her passport and other personal documentation as undertaken in letters from the Immigration Minister to the hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale dated 17 November 2004 and 4 February 2005; and if he will make a statement. [216843]

Mr. Browne: Written confirmation of Mrs. Shoreton's immigration status was sent to her on 8 February. Her passport and personal documentation were enclosed.

Intercept Evidence

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his decision not to bring forward proposals to allow the use in court of intercept evidence. [216695]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement I laid before the House on 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 19WS.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an assessment has been made of the *(a)* nature and *(b)* extent of intercept evidence in the cases of the Belmarsh detainees. [216696]

Mr. Charles Clarke: As stated in my written statement on 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 19WS, the Home Office-led review concluded that intercept would not have made a critical difference in bringing prosecutions against the Belmarsh detainees. It would not be appropriate to disclose details of any intercept relating to the Belmarsh detainees.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the use made of intercept evidence in court in other countries. [216697]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office-led review looked at the experience of a range of other countries, all of which regard intercept product as a valuable contribution to evidence used in their courts. However, the review found that there was no evidence that other countries do better than the UK in securing the convictions of terrorists or serious criminals through the use of intercept as evidence.

The review found that the United Kingdom could not simply transplant the evidential regimes of other countries because our legal system is very different, being both adversarial and subject to ECHR considerations. No other country examined had a statutory basis for intelligence agencies to assist law enforcement agencies as is the case in the United Kingdom. The review underlined the importance and value of the unparalleled co-operation between the United Kingdom's intelligence and law enforcement agencies but noted that this would be at risk, in a way that did not apply to the same extent to other jurisdictions, if there was a possibility that sensitive capabilities and techniques might be exposed.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether special court procedures could be introduced to enable intercept evidence to be used in court. [216698]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I am not at present persuaded that special court procedures would significantly alter the balance of risks and benefits of using intercept evidence in court.

Kimberley Quinn

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he requested that a policeman be stationed outside Kimberley Quinn's home. [203227]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have not issued any instructions surrounding this matter. My right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield Brightside (Mr. Blunkett), the former Home Secretary has stated that he too did not issue operational instructions to the Met Police and has never had a conversation about this with them.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish details of the occasions on which Mrs. Quinn visited his Department. [203248]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There are no records of any occasions when Mrs. Quinn visited the Department.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions Mrs. Quinn travelled in the Home Secretary's car without him; if he will list the *(a)* origin, *(b)* distance and *(c)* destination of those trips; on how many of these occasions documents were also taken in the car; and whether those documents were of time-sensitive importance. [203249]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office holds no record of Mrs. Quinn travelling in the former Home Secretary's car.

Licensing Act

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted under (i) section 172, (ii) section 172A and (iii) section 173 of the Licensing Act 1964 in each year since 1997; how many landlords have had their licences revoked due to breach of these provisions; and if he will make a statement. [212060]

Ms Blears: Statistics from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database on the number of people prosecuted and convicted under sections 172, 172A and 173 of the Licensing Act 1964, England and Wales, 1997–2003 is contained in the following table.

Statistics for 2004 will be available in the autumn.

No central data are available on the reasons why a justices' licence is revoked by the licensing justices. Statistics on revocations are also only collected triennially. The numbers of revocations since 1997 is therefore as follows.

Number of persons proceeded against and found guilty at magistrates courts for certain offences under the Licensing Act 1964, England and Wales, 1997–2003[1]

		1997		1998	
Offence description	*Statute*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
Permitting drunkenness or riotous conduct on the premises or selling liquor to a drunken person	Licensing Act 1964 s.172	9	4	22	11
Relevant person working in licensed premises to permit drunkenness or violent behaviour etc.	Licensing Act 1964 s.172A as added by Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 s.32	—	—	—	—
Person in licensed premises procuring intoxicating liquor for a drunken person or aiding a drunken person to obtain drink	Licensing Act 1964 s.173	3	2	5	3

		1999		2000	
Offence description	*Statute*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
Permitting drunkenness or riotous conduct on the premises or selling liquor to a drunken person	Licensing Act 1964 s.172	13	10	10	2
Relevant person working in licensed premises to permit drunkenness or violent behaviour etc.	Licensing Act 1964 s.172A as added by Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 s.32	—	—	—	—
Person in licensed premises procuring intoxicating liquor for a drunken person or aiding a drunken person to obtain drink	Licensing Act 1964 s.173	2	1	—	—

		2001		2002		2003	
Offence description	*Statute*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*
Permitting drunkenness or riotous conduct on the premises or selling liquor to a drunken person	Licensing Act 1964 s.172	10	5	7	4	8	6
Relevant person working in licensed premises to permit drunkenness or violent behaviour etc.	Licensing Act 1964 s.172A as added by Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 s.32	—	—	1	—	—	—
Person in licensed premises procuring intoxicating liquor for a drunken person or aiding a drunken person to obtain drink	Licensing Act 1964 s.173	—	—	1	—	1	—

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Number of justices' licences revoked in England and Wales, 1998, 2001 and 2004

						Licensed		
Year to 30 June	*Public house etc.*	*Restaurants*	*Residential*	*Combined restaurant and residential*	*Licensed clubs*	*Total on*	*Total off*	*Total on and off*
1998	165	34	6	2	8	215	102	378
2001	99	21	8	1	3	132	51	183
2004	186	50	18	8	11	273	81	354

Source:
Department of Culture, Media and Sport

Litherland House

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide an account of expenditure on Litherland house, Bootle, since the start of his Department's occupancy. [216746]

Fiona Mactaggart: Home Office Pay and Pensions Service took occupation of Litherland house in June 1998. The following table details the combined rent and service charges that have been paid by the Department in each financial year since occupation. The figures quoted do not include capital expenditure or other costs such as furniture and staffing.

Litherland house—combined rent and building service costs

Financial year	*Cost (£)*
1998–99	198,101.54
1999–2000	360,263.55
2000–01	338,974.83
2001–02	497,031.46
2002–03	419,447.27
2003–04	553,630.50
2004-January 2005	366,626.00

Notes:

1. The figures reflect the dates that rent and service charge invoices were actually levied and paid.
2. There is an outstanding invoice for £35,000 (relating to the 2002–03 year) which is currently in dispute.
3. On 1 April 2002, additional space was rented in Litherland house as well as training facilities within The Triad office complex in Stanley road. The Triad accommodation is charged to the Litherland house budget.
4. HOPPS leased further accommodation in India buildings, in June 2004. This is charged to the Litherland house budget.

Ministerial Residence

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) is residing in the official residence of the Secretary of State for the Home Department. [209870]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There are a number of former Ministers and Prime Ministers who continue to receive special security requirements after leaving office. We therefore take into account the assessment of the threat to them. On this basis, the Prime Minister has agreed that the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside can continue to have use of the official residence while his security arrangements are reviewed, and appropriate measures can be put in place.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of maintenance of his official residence was in each year since 1997. [209872]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The costs of maintenance were as follows:

	Maintenance (£)
1997–98	2,581
1998–99	14,849
1999–2000	2,055
2000–01	6,457
2001–02	1,386
2002–03	[1]37,338
2003–04	877
2004–05	[2]3,130

[1] Includes roof works of £12,342
[2] to date
Note:
All costs exclude VAT as this is recoverable

Miscarriages of Justice (Compensation)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedure *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Assessor follows in assessing the compensation for victims of miscarriages of justice who are entitled to compensation under section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. [216087]

Paul Goggins: Although the Home Secretary decides in principle whether compensation should be paid, the assessment of the amount of compensation is undertaken by an Assessor, appointed by the Home Secretary under section 133(4) of the 1988 Act, who is experienced in the assessment of damages. The current Assessor is Lord Brennan QC. Each case is considered on the basis of the circumstances relating to that individual claimant.

The assessment is made on the basis of written submissions setting out the relevant facts. When the claimant or the claimant's representative is informed that a payment will be made, they are invited to submit to the Claims Assessment Team, in the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, any information or representations which they would like the Assessor to take into account when considering the amount of compensation to be paid. The Claims Assessment Team prepares a draft memorandum based on this material.

The draft memorandum will be sent to the claimant, or the claimant's representative, for their comments. Factual inaccuracies in the draft memorandum will be corrected and a copy of any comments made by the claimant will be sent to the Assessor with the memorandum. The Assessor may, through the Claims Assessment Team, seek further information or clarification arising from the material placed before him. For example, he may ask them to instruct independent accountants to advise him as to the reasonableness of certain pecuniary loss claims.

In reaching his assessment, the Assessor will apply principles analogous to those governing the assessment of damages for civil wrongs. The assessment will take account of pecuniary and non-pecuniary loss arising from the wrongful charge or conviction and loss of liberty that results from it. The Assessor will take into account any reasonable expenses, legal or otherwise, incurred by the claimant in reversing the conviction or pursuing the claim for compensation.

National Offender Management Service

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how a contestability model for the Probation and Prison Services in England and Wales will avoid increasing bureaucracy. [204974]

Paul Goggins: The development of a contestability model, will be designed in order to drive up the quality of interventions and management of offenders.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Vision for the National Offender Management Service was endorsed at the NOMS Performance Board on 24 January. [215998]

Paul Goggins: The Vision for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) was endorsed at the NOMS Executive Board on 24 January 2005.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he expects the introduction of contestability in the National Offender Management Service to contribute to the Vision Statement aim of working together to reduce re-offending. [216001]

Paul Goggins: Contestability is the principle that best quality and best value for money is achieved through ensuring that services are opened up to competition. The procurement of high quality services to offenders will contribute to the reduction of re-offending.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the employers will be of offender managers under the proposed National Offender Management Service structure. [216117]

Paul Goggins: As I announced on 20 July 2004, offender managers will remain employed by Probation Boards. As the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) develops, however, this will involve changes to the role of Boards and to the management relations between Regional Offender Managers (ROMs) and offender managers. Detailed feasibility work and consultation will be undertaken before any final decisions are made with regard to organisational change.

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has evaluated on the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in reducing crime. [216219]

Ms Blears: It is difficult to determine exactly the impact of Neighbourhood Watch activity in reducing crime in isolation from other crime reduction interventions. The 2000 British Crime Survey found that 75 per cent. of respondents thought that Neighbourhood Watch schemes were effective in preventing crimes such as burglary, the percentage being similar for members and non-members of Neighbourhood Watch schemes.

Home Office Research Findings 150, published in 2001, gives further information.

Opinion Polling

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what areas his Department conducted opinion polling in each of the last three years. [200984]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* The Home Office undertakes a wide range of research activities that support the development of information led policy, including surveys of public perception and focus groups of the public that consider Home Office issues and its related areas of responsibility.

The department conducts or commissions such work only when it is justified by the specific needs of a particular policy or programme and when this is the most economical, efficient and effective way to achieve the purpose. Consulting and involving the public helps inform both policy formulation and the delivery of better quality public services.

Areas where opinion polls (as opposed to other forms of market and opinion research) have been conducted in the last three years are:

Antisocial behaviour
CCTV
Community engagement
Community penalties
Forensic science services
Identity/Entitlement cards
Impact of graffiti
Passports
Race equality
Sentencing
Victims
Voluntary organisations
Youth justice

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Totnes on 27 January, about the Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration in Westminster Hall, ref. 212226. [216245]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* I replied to the hon. Member on 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1419W.

Police

Mr. Colman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether ethnic background is a factor taken into account when allocating training places to candidates who have been selected for the Metropolitan police. [215969]

Ms Blears: In allocating training places at Hendon, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) tries to ensure that as far as possible every course intake has a diverse range of recruits taking account of gender and ethnicity. This is in response to their commitment to build a work force which is more representative of the communities they serve.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of pension provision to the West Midlands police force was in each of the last 10 years; and what percentage of the total budget of the force this represented in each year. [210192]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The information is set out in the table.

	Net pensions expenditure (£000)	Proportion of net expenditure (percentage)
1995–96	34,304	10.4
1996–97	34,530	10.2
1997–98	44,073	12.2
1998–99	42,215	11.5
1999–2000	43,192	11.3
2000–01	47,209	12.0
2001–02	52,585	12.8
2002–03	54,220	13.0
2003–04	55,239	12.5
2004–05	58,094	12.6

Source:
Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy Police Statistics—actuals 1995–96 to 2002–03 and estimates 2003–04 and 2004–05.

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Departmentif he will place in the Library a table showing the percentage of officers of each rank above inspector in each constabulary who are *(a)* women and *(b)* from ethnic minorities. [216935]

Ms Blears: A copy of a table showing the percentage of officers of each rank above inspector in each constabulary who are *(a)* women and *(b)* from ethnic minorities has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* uniformed officers and *(b)* civilian staff there were in each police authority area in the North East region at (i) 31 March 2003 and (ii) 31 March 2004; and what these figures are per head of police authority population. [216489]

Ms Blears: The latest information on police service strength was published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 13/04, 'Police Service Strength England and Wales, 31 March 2004'.

The available information for the North East Region is given in the table:

Number

	Police officers		Police staff		Community support officers		Traffic wardens	
	2003[1]	2004[1]	2003[1]	2004[1]	2003[1]	2004[1]	2003[1]	2004[1]
Cleveland	1,592	1,697	694	764	37	77	7	8
Durham	1,662	1,701	602	600	10	28	15	4
Northumbria	4,018	4,061	1,457	1,495	0	51	59	56
North East Region	7,272	7,459	2,754	2,859	47	155	81	68
Per 100,000 population								
Cleveland	294	314	128	141	7	14	1	1
Durham	281	288	102	102	2	5	2	1
Northumbria	290	294	105	108	0	4	4	4
North East Region	289	297	109	114	2	6	3	3

[1] As at 31 March each year.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the amount of time senior police officers spent providing information for Government Regional Offices in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [203021]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not collected, nor is it possible to make any reliable estimate.

Home Office Regional Directors and their teams in the Government Offices for the Regions have an important part to play in helping to secure local delivery of the Government's objectives in respect of crime, substance misuse and community cohesion. This inevitably requires them to meet regularly with key partners in their areas including, of course, the police. I know that Government Offices do all they can to ensure that dialogue is productive, and bureaucracy kept to a minimum.

Police Finance

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the percentage increase in precept was for each policy authority in England in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04. [211451]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* The information is set out in the following table.

Annual percentage increase

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Avon and Somerset	7.5	14.8	33.9
Bedfordshire	4.9	12.0	18.7
Cambridgeshire	8.9	39.0	19.8
Cheshire	5.9	13.7	19.8
Cleveland	6.0	38.3	25.1
Cumbria	7.6	10.9	30.1
Derbyshire	6.0	22.0	21.5
Devon and Cornwall	5.0	19.4	39.9
Dorset	9.3	12.2	19.2
Durham	7.2	14.2	23.5
Dyfed-Powys	6.4	7.9	26.5
Essex	4.5	9.4	19.7
Gloucestershire	5.2	14.6	51.7
Greater Manchester	3.1	6.5	33.1
Gwent	12.1	13.3	25.2
Hampshire	7.2	27.3	29.5
Hertfordshire	6.5	11.9	21.3
Humberside	42.2	11.2	18.5
Kent	8.1	22.2	28.9
Lancashire	8.5	8.8	18.6
Leicestershire	11.4	26.1	10.0
Lincolnshire	4.5	5.0	10.1
Merseyside	5.0	11.0	7.2
Metropolitan	30.7	9.9	21.9
Norfolk	16.0	20.0	21.5
Northamptonshire	4.2	26.8	23.6
Northumbria	6.9	4.5	9.7
North Wales	5.4	16.7	31.5
North Yorkshire	9.7	41.5	76.1
Nottinghamshire	7.7	21.4	28.3
South Wales	6.4	5.0	15.2
South Yorkshire	6.0	18.0	27.3

Annual percentage increase

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Staffordshire	13.1	7.0	25.3
Suffolk	9.9	22.3	33.2
Surrey	4.6	16.1	40.1
Sussex	6.5	18.1	39.9
Thames Valley	6.9	14.0	44.6
Warwickshire	9.8	19.5	15.2
West Mercia	6.0	33.1	14.6
West Midlands	4.5	8.2	15.0
West Yorkshire	3.6	24.8	17.0
Wiltshire	9.8	9.9	19.8

Source:
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and National Assembly for Wales

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the financial settlement for the Devon and Cornwall Police Authority was in each year between 1995–06 and 2004–05. [212054]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 31 January 2005]*: The information is set out in the table.

£ million

	General government grants[1]	Specific grants and capital provision[2]	Total
1995–96	122.9	3.6	126.5
1996–97	129.3	2.7	132.0
1997–98	133.0	2.7	135.7
1998–99	141.1	4.0	145.1
1999–2000	146.7	2.5	149.2
2000–01	150.2	5.8	156.0
2001–02	156.9	15.4	172.3
2001–02[3]	152.8	15.4	168.2
2002–03	156.7	16.9	173.6
2003–04	161.5	17.6	179.1
2004–05	166.7	18.8	185.5

[1] General government grants comprise Home Office police grant, ODPM revenue support grant and national non-domestic rates.
[2] Includes funding from the crime fighting fund, rural policing fund, basic command unit funding, community support officer funding, special priority payments, the DNA expansion programme, capital provision, Airwave and the premises improvement fund.
[3] Figures for 2001–02 are not directly comparable with 2002–03 due to the change in funding arrangements of NCS/NCIS. Adjusted (lower) figures for 2001–02 are therefore included for future comparison.

Police Funding

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total revenue raised from police precepts was in each police authority in England and Wales for each year since 1996–97. [207956]

Ms Blears: The information is set out in the following table.

Revenue raised from police precept on council tax

£ million

	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Avon and Somerset	22.3	25.6	27.2	30.6	34.4	37.4	43.4	58.6	66.3
Bedfordshire	8.3	9.5	10.2	11.3	12.5	13.3	15.0	18.0	20.9
Cambridgeshire	10.2	11.7	11.2	12.3	14.9	16.5	23.1	28.0	32.6
Cheshire	14.9	17.1	18.3	19.4	21.2	22.6	25.9	31.3	35.0
Cleveland	7.2	8.6	7.6	9.9	10.4	11.2	15.5	19.5	22.4
Cumbria	8.0	9.2	11.6	12.6	13.7	14.9	16.6	21.8	25.7
Derbyshire	13.2	15.1	17.0	19.8	21.6	23.2	28.5	34.9	38.7
Devon and Cornwall	23.9	26.3	25.8	28.9	32.2	34.2	41.2	58.2	65.8
Dorset	14.9	16.6	18.6	20.7	22.7	24.9	28.1	33.8	37.9
Durham	7.7	8.9	8.3	8.7	9.1	9.9	11.4	14.1	16.4
Dyfed-Powys	7.9	8.2	10.2	12.6	14.9	16.1	17.5	22.4	26.1
Essex	25.9	29.3	34.1	36.1	40.2	42.5	46.8	56.5	60.8
Gloucestershire	8.7	10.0	11.4	13.8	15.8	16.8	19.4	29.6	33.0
Greater Manchester	33.8	40.2	42.0	45.0	47.1	48.9	52.2	69.8	75.5
Gwent	8.2	8.7	9.7	10.7	13.7	15.4	17.7	22.4	26.4
Hampshire	27.9	31.8	31.1	33.6	34.7	37.5	48.2	62.8	70.9
Hertfordshire	15.5	17.6	20.2	22.0	28.1	30.2	33.9	41.4	47.7
Humberside	11.7	13.4	13.6	14.3	15.9	22.7	25.5	30.7	35.9
Kent	25.2	28.7	27.2	29.8	31.9	34.8	42.8	55.9	63.0
Lancashire	19.4	22.9	23.1	25.2	27.6	30.2	33.1	39.6	45.9
Leicestershire	12.5	14.5	17.1	18.1	19.4	21.8	27.9	31.0	35.9
Lincolnshire	12.9	13.4	15.5	16.3	17.5	18.7	19.9	22.3	24.3
Merseyside	23.1	27.0	29.1	31.4	33.2	35.3	39.3	42.3	46.2
Metropolitan	160.0	181.8	222.3	241.3	248.2	324.6	361.4	443.7	521.3
Norfolk	11.4	13.0	14.0	17.0	19.3	22.6	27.4	33.7	39.0
Northamptonshire	12.1	13.4	13.4	15.1	16.0	17.0	22.0	27.7	32.2
Northumbria	18.4	21.3	19.4	20.3	21.2	22.9	24.1	26.6	28.1
North Wales	10.7	11.2	13.6	15.7	18.8	20.0	23.6	31.3	38.0
North Yorkshire	11.7	13.0	12.8	14.0	15.4	17.2	24.6	43.6	49.0
Nottinghamshire	13.7	14.9	16.4	18.7	20.0	21.7	26.5	34.4	38.1
South Wales	18.4	19.5	22.4	26.2	32.5	34.8	36.7	42.7	48.4
South Yorkshire	16.2	18.9	19.3	20.2	21.2	22.6	26.9	34.4	38.0
Staffordshire	15.5	17.7	23.6	25.8	27.5	31.5	34.0	43.1	47.5
Suffolk	9.8	11.3	11.7	12.6	13.9	15.5	19.1	25.7	28.7
Surrey	14.3	15.0	22.5	25.7	36.9	38.9	45.4	63.8	69.8
Sussex	25.6	29.1	29.0	30.6	32.2	34.6	41.1	57.9	63.4
Thames Valley	35.7	40.6	39.5	44.5	47.9	51.7	59.2	86.1	98.6
Warwickshire	8.1	9.2	11.0	12.8	14.0	15.7	19.0	22.1	24.1
West Mercia	17.2	19.7	21.0	23.4	29.8	32.0	43.0	49.7	57.9
West Midlands	33.8	39.6	36.6	38.4	41.3	43.3	47.2	54.5	61.3
West Yorkshire	26.9	31.8	31.8	33.5	36.2	37.9	47.8	56.1	64.7
Wiltshire	10.3	11.8	13.6	15.1	16.8	18.7	20.7	25.2	27.9

Source:
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and National Assembly for Wales.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of the police precept on band D council tax was in each policy authority in England and Wales for each year since 1996–97. [207957]

Ms Blears: The information is set out in the following table.

Police precept on council tax (band D)

£

	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Avon and Somerset	46.00	52.04	54.86	60.62	67.59	72.66	83.40	111.64	125.09
Bedfordshire	46.00	52.51	55.84	61.36	66.98	70.26	78.69	93.44	107.17
Cambridgeshire	45.00	51.03	48.24	52.11	62.46	68.04	94.59	113.31	129.33
Cheshire	45.00	51.16	53.86	56.28	61.06	64.66	73.54	88.10	97.71
Cleveland	46.00	54.87	48.43	62.55	65.58	69.51	96.13	120.22	136.84
Cumbria	51.00	58.20	72.35	78.27	84.23	90.60	100.48	130.71	150.28
Derbyshire	45.00	51.31	57.30	65.85	71.12	75.38	91.96	111.77	122.88
Devon and Cornwall	46.00	49.79	48.30	53.52	58.87	61.81	73.80	103.27	113.39
Dorset	57.00	63.59	70.61	77.13	84.42	92.25	103.50	123.39	135.36
Durham	45.00	52.20	48.60	50.40	52.65	56.43	64.44	79.56	91.53
Dyfed-Powys	46.57	48.42	59.58	72.99	85.41	90.90	98.10	124.11	142.65
Essex	48.00	54.09	62.28	65.07	67.95	71.01	77.67	92.97	99.27
Gloucestershire	45.00	51.17	57.74	68.90	77.98	82.05	94.01	142.59	156.71
Greater Manchester	46.00	54.10	56.28	60.22	62.72	64.66	68.86	91.65	98.52
Gwent	46.78	49.10	54.36	59.74	74.97	84.03	95.17	119.11	139.13
Hampshire	46.00	51.75	50.13	53.91	55.08	59.04	75.15	97.29	108.36
Hertfordshire	46.00	51.51	58.83	63.54	67.99	72.39	81.01	98.28	112.53
Humberside	46.00	52.47	52.47	54.81	60.30	85.77	95.40	113.04	129.96
Kent	46.00	51.59	48.41	52.48	55.73	60.26	73.64	94.95	105.66
Lancashire	46.00	53.25	53.41	57.69	62.60	67.89	73.86	87.57	100.70
Leicestershire	45.00	52.26	61.21	63.79	67.80	75.52	95.21	104.77	120.11
Lincolnshire	67.00	69.03	78.93	81.99	86.49	90.36	94.86	104.40	112.23
Merseyside	58.00	66.87	71.78	77.44	81.31	85.37	94.76	101.54	110.17
Metropolitan	56.00	63.27	76.48	82.51	90.95	118.85	130.59	159.13	184.08
Norfolk	45.00	50.58	53.64	64.35	72.09	83.61	100.35	121.95	138.69
Northamptonshire	64.00	70.56	69.29	76.08	79.65	83.00	105.25	130.09	149.43
Northumbria	46.00	52.73	47.67	49.82	52.06	55.65	58.15	63.80	66.93
North Wales	46.21	48.52	58.54	66.33	78.49	82.72	96.53	126.94	151.57
North Yorkshire	45.00	49.72	48.46	52.20	57.04	62.59	88.59	156.00	171.50
Nottinghamshire	46.00	49.78	54.32	61.55	65.17	70.17	85.17	109.30	120.12
South Wales	46.36	49.22	56.25	65.36	80.42	85.57	89.85	103.51	115.71
South Yorkshire	46.00	53.29	54.28	56.72	59.26	62.79	74.09	94.30	102.79
Staffordshire	48.00	54.74	72.42	78.86	83.43	94.37	100.93	126.50	138.44
Suffolk	45.00	51.39	52.38	56.16	61.11	67.14	82.08	109.35	119.70
Surrey	43.00	44.64	66.06	75.24	79.41	83.08	96.44	135.09	147.06
Sussex	46.00	51.66	50.94	53.19	55.53	59 13	69.84	97.74	105.12
Thames Valley	47.00	52.79	50.76	56.53	60.34	64.49	73.49	106.24	120.51
Warwickshire	47.00	52.24	62.09	71.18	77.57	85.17	101.78	117.30	126.55
West Mercia	45.00	50.87	53.64	59.00	74.06	78.50	104.50	119.80	137.69
West Midlands	46.00	53.20	48.99	51.19	54.77	57.21	61.88	71.16	80.08
West Yorkshire	45.00	53.17	52.41	54.76	58.73	60.82	75.92	88.81	102.06
Wiltshire	49.00	55.22	62.77	68.98	75.84	83.26	91.54	109.68	120.63

Note:
Figures for 1996–97 for England are not available to two decimal points.
Source:
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and National Assembly for Wales

Police Vehicle Collisions

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent on repairing police vehicles following collisions in London in each of the last three years for which figures are available, broken down by basic command unit; and how many injuries resulted from a police collision in London in each year. [210789]

Ms Blears: This is a matter for the Commissioner. I have asked him to write to the hon. Member and place a copy in the Library.

Police/Crime Statistics (Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of crime was in North Durham in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* the latest period for which figures are available. [214465]

Ms Blears: Statistics on the levels of crime specifically in North Durham are not collected centrally. Figures for the Durham police force area as a whole are as follows:

Recorded offences in Durham

	Number
1997	47,976
2001	48,613
2003–04	48,432

Because of changes to the coverage and counting rules in April 1998 and the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002, these data are not on a comparable basis.

Police/Media

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has given to police officers on briefing the media when a person is *(a)* arrested and *(b)* detained in custody. [216357]

Ms Blears: The Media Advisory Group of the Association of Chief Police Officers publish guidance notes on media handling in a range of operational situations. The notes aim to encourage consistency of practice by police forces but are issued only for their guidance. It is a matter for individual chief constables, in conjunction with their media advisers, to decide whether, and how, the notes should be implemented. The guidance notes are set out on http://www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/policieslist.asp, including Guidance Note 2 on individuals under investigation.

Policing

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the percentage change in *(a)* overall recorded crime, *(b)* burglaries and *(c)* vehicle thefts has been in Morecambe and Lunesdale since 1997. [216776]

Ms Blears: Statistics relating specifically to Morecambe and Lunesdale are not available centrally. Morecambe and Lunesdale comes within the Lancaster Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area and information at CDRP level is only available from 1999–2000.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much Government funding has been spent on policing in Morecambe and Lunesdale in each of the last 10 years. [216783]

Ms Blears: Central Government support to Lancashire constabulary is set out in the table. It is a matter for the Chief Constable and Police Authority to determine its final annual budget and decide how to deploy the available resources across the force area. The Chief Constable informs me that details of spending in Morecambe and Lunesdale are not available.

	General government grants[1] *(£ million)*	*Annual percentage change in general government grants*	*Specific grants and capital provision*[2] *(£ million)*
1997–98	146.9	—	2.2
1998–99	153.6	4.6	2.4
1999–00	155.9	1.5	2.2
2000–01	162.2	4.0	6.6
2001–02	168.1	3.6	18.2
2001–02[3]	164.0	—	18.2
2002–03	168.7	2.9	15.1
2003–04	177.1	4.9	15.4
2004–05	182.9	3.3	15.8
2005–06	190.8	4.3	17.4

[1] General government grants comprise Home Office Police grant, ODPM Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates.

[2] Includes funding from the Crime Fighting Fund, Rural Policing Fund, Basic Command Unit funding, Street Crime Initiative, Community Support Officer funding, Special Priority Payments, the DNA Expansion Programme, capital grant, Airwave and the Premises Improvement Fund. Total for specific grants in 2005–06 are an estimate.

[3] Figures for 2001–02 are not directly comparable with 2002–03 due to the change in funding arrangements of NCS/NCIS. Adjusted figures for 2001–02 are therefore included.

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers in Rochdale there were *(a)* in 1997 and *(b)* the latest date for which figures are available. [217374]

Ms Blears: Information on strength at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level is collected annually and reflects the position at the end of March. Information on BCU strength is only available from 2002.

Between March 2002 and March 2004 full-time equivalent police officer numbers for the Rochdale Metropolitan Borough (P) Division increased by 12.5 per cent. (from 409 in March 2002 to 460 in March 2004). The deployment of officers to BCUs is a matter for the Chief Constable (Michael Todd QPM) and within the Rochdale Metropolitan Borough (P) Division deployment of officers is a matter for the Divisional Commander.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been spent on policing per head of population in each police force in England and Wales in each year since 1997. [201416]

Ms Blears: The information is set out in the following table.

Government funding for police authorities is chiefly allocated using a funding formula that distributes resources on the basis of relative policing need. The formula is currently being reviewed to ensure it reflects modern policing needs. Funding is not, and never has been, distributed on a per capita basis.

Net revenue expenditure[1] *per head of population*[2]

Force	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Avon and Somerset	104.33	110.89	117.93	122.06	126.78	129.71	145.43	153.42
Bedfordshire	107.34	112.57	115.18	119.94	125.80	128.33	138.11	145.50
Cambridgeshire	98.98	104.42	105.37	110.52	116.43	124.35	139.64	148.06
Cheshire	106.33	109.28	115.34	116.95	123.96	126.96	145.92	144.27
Cleveland	134.89	145.77	153.38	159.04	164.11	173.22	191.42	202.16
Cumbria	125.87	127.47	131.65	136.72	143.55	147.95	163.48	175.23
Derbyshire	99.85	104.02	109.37	114.52	120.10	126.41	138.90	145.29
Devon and Cornwall	100.84	107.83	112.83	117.00	121.76	125.03	139.75	146.58
Dorset	102.74	107.22	111.93	117.42	122.60	125.86	137.81	146.02
Durham	123.70	122.79	130.95	138.18	144.48	147.06	161.83	170.56
Dyfed-Powys	107.14	104.98	117.18	123.12	130.83	135.37	147.44	155.85
Essex[3]	104.59	103.58	110.29	114.03	120.45	121.84	131.64	136.38
Gloucestershire	106.08	113.00	117.57	123.00	128.52	132.76	153.72	162.31
Greater Manchester	137.04	137.51	145.73	152.76	159.54	160.60	181.60	186.56
Gwent	116.12	121.64	127.19	136.62	144.95	151.40	166.47	177.23

Net revenue expenditure[1] per head of population[2]

Force	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Hampshire	103.80	106.49	112.04	115.54	121.40	127.41	139.25	146.11
Hertfordshire[3]	108.34	110.12	119.83	120.01	124.73	126.28	138.33	147.40
Humberside	119.46	126.95	128.79	134.64	145.43	149.42	163.38	172.78
Kent	112.30	112.74	118.94	122.76	130.41	134.31	147.41	154.67
Lancashire	118.70	124.46	127.71	133.23	138.91	141.33	153.13	161.01
Leicestershire	107.03	110.83	115.46	118.59	124.55	130.59	140.69	147.86
Lincolnshire	108.17	108.24	112.01	116.51	120.99	121.56	125.26J	129.37
Merseyside	157.18	169.15	175.75	180.05	188.84	191.38	207.73	216.65
Metropolitan	223.68	226.91	241.48	260.68	285.90	298.07	307.46	318.92
Norfolk	103.87	103.66	111.34	115.84	123.58	129.81	142.28	151.12
Northamptonshire	107.80	110.96	113.30	119.76	126.59	134.84	134.89	151.63
Northumbria	135.64	143.08	148.73	153.18	160.46	161.66	174.33	180.77
North Wales	107.93	101.51	119.97	127.80	136.00	142.09	157.70	172.44
North Yorkshire	98.33	102.55	105.99	111.05	116.87	125.60	152.09	161.52
Nottinghamshire	116.82	123.11	125.43	129.70	135.82	140.83	155.70	161.99
South Wales	129.83	130.60	137.45	144.59	152.12	156.53	171.58	180.18
South Yorkshire	127.34	128.12	134.92	137.77	143.72	147.04	163.61	170.89
Staffordshire	104.37	110.10	119.78	119.67	126.60	129.24	142.31	149.95
Suffolk	96.95	99.90	105.77	109.23	116.29	121.05	133.94	140.82
Surrey[3]	117.35	117.72	127.61	119.23	113.53	123.97	140.85	148.95
Sussex	107.79	109.94	111.32	116.43	121.37	124.67	141.19	147.77
Thames Valley	102.73	101.49	108.84	113.55	119.14	121.84	139.69	148.37
Warwickshire	102.28	103.91	109.54	116.51	123.37	129.00	138.85	144.12
West Mercia	96.74	101.76	98.95	110.60	116.80	125.93	133.31	141.97
West Midlands	136.56	139.49	145.02	150.20	156.38	158.65	172.72	178.82
West Yorkshire	133.80	131.79	135.58	142.66	148.49	152.68	166.13	174.09
Wiltshire	99.11	115.99	116.49	118.85	123.94	126.44	136.60	143.12

[1] Source of expenditure information: CIPFA Police Statistics—actuals 1997–98 to 2002–03 and estimates 2003–04; for 2004–05 net budget requirements submitted by authorities to Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and to the Welsh Assembly Government.
[2] Source for resident population figures: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Welsh Assembly Government, as used for police funding settlements.
[3] Population numbers affected by associated changes in boundaries of the Metropolitan police district in April 2000.

Prison Information Booklets

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the contractual obligations for privately managed prisons are in relation to the provision of information to prisoners. [215296]

Paul Goggins: Both public sector and privately managed prison establishments are obliged to adhere to the provisions contained in Prison Service Order 6710 on Prison Libraries, and which sets out the publications which must be held by all Libraries and made available to prisoners. These publications include relevant legislation, documents and manuals on the management of prisons and guidance on legal matters.

Prison Service Intranet

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether privately managed prisons have access to the Prison Service intranet. [215297]

Paul Goggins: Privately managed prisons do not currently have access to the Quantum IT infrastructure which supports the Prison Service intranet. Work commenced in January 2005 to provide these establishments with limited access to the electronic version of the Offender Assessment System (OASys).

Plans are in hand to allow privately managed prisons access the Quantum IT infrastructure from summer 2005.

Prisoners (Communication Costs)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to his Department was in each of the last three years for *(a)* prisoners' private letters, *(b)* prisoners' legal letters, *(c)* foreign national prisoners' telephone calls and *(d)* telephone calls made by prisoners on arrival in prison. [214988]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not collected centrally.

The Prison Service has a statutory obligation to assist prisoners to maintain external contacts as part of their rehabilitation. To this end, convicted prisoners are allowed to send one letter a week and unconvicted prisoners two at public expense by 2nd class post. Prisoners are required to meet the cost of any additional letters but Governors and Directors have the discretion to fund special letters in exceptional circumstances (such as when a prisoner is to be transferred, or is involved in legal proceedings).

Prisoners pay to make an estimated 25 million telephone calls a year. For Foreign National prisoners, Governors have the discretion to provide a free 5-minute call provided that the prisoner in question has not received a domestic visit in the preceding month. Governors also have the discretion to provide prisoners with access to an official telephone or make a call on their behalf to a close relative or partner within the first 24 hours of their arrival into prison. The only other occasion where prisoners are provided with calls at official expense is in urgent domestic circumstances involving a close relative or partner.

Prisons

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost was in the last

year of a place in each prison in *(a)* the Prison Estate and *(b)* privately run prison establishments: and if he will make a statement. [214365]

Paul Goggins: The average cost per place for each Prison Service and privately run establishment for the financial year 2003–04 is listed in the tables. These figures are not directly comparable since prisons vary widely in a number of factors which impact on costs such as the type of prison, category of security, levels of crowding, facilities and layout, location and the age of establishment.

A. Prison service establishments

Establishment	*Cost per place (£)*
Acklington	18,116
Albany	21,259
Ashwell	18,644
Askham Grange	24,564
Aylesbury	30,000
Bedford	32,594
Belmarsh	44,331
Birmingham	28,605
Blakenhurst	22,138
Blantyre House	22,987
Blundeston	27,849
Brinsford	30,859
Bristol	41,048
Brixton	33,244
Brockhill	43,767
Buckley Hall	25,014
Bullingdon	24,756
Bullwood Hall	41,877
Camp Hill	22,934
Canterbury	35,204
Cardiff	29,900
Castington	33,703
Channings Wood	21,775
Chelmsford	31,342
Coldingley	24,671
Cookham Wood	37,698
Dartmoor	22,182
Deerbolt	24,982
Dorchester	46,779
Dover	27,012
Downview	29,185
Drake Hall	23,722
Durham	40,353
East Sutton Park	27,378
Eastwood Park	31,621
Edmunds Hill	26,966
Elmley	21,417
Erlestoke	19,522
Everthorpe	21,038
Exeter	38,715
Featherstone	22,842
Feltham	43,209
Ford	14,328
Foston Hall	28,852
Frankland	44,603
Full Sutton	44,316
Garth	23,093
Gartree	26,992
Glen Parva	28,574
Gloucester	39,295
Grendon	24,163
Guys Marsh	19,796
Haslar	26,154
Haverigg	20,230
Hewell Grange	20,844
High Down	28,263
Highpoint	18,850
Hindley	34,577

A. Prison service establishments

Establishment	*Cost per place (£)*
Hollesley Bay	21,093
Holloway	45,461
Holme House	22,994
Hull	26,807
Huntercombe	38,011
Kingston	27,871
Kirkham	21,105
Kirklevington	17,021
Lancaster	41,263
Lancaster Farms	31,227
Latchmere House	19,366
Leeds	32,001
Leicester	45,381
Lewes	25,054
Leyhill	19,997
Lincoln	31,276
Lindholme	22,577
Littlehey	18,248
Liverpool	24,459
Long Lartin	36,387
Low Newton	29,507
Maidstone	20,875
Manchester	29,607
Moorland	22,200
Morton Hall	22,248
Mount	20,034
New Hall	40,449
North Sea Camp	15,034
Northallerton	39,046
Norwich	30,082
Nottingham	32,086
Onley	24,791
Parkhurst	32,194
Pentonville	29,595
Portland	24,579
Preston	36,184
Ranby	22,190
Reading	43,345
Risley	19,916
Rochester	23,124
Send	27,613
Shepton Mallet	34,542
Shrewsbury	42,890
Stafford	20,664
Standford Hill	18,182
Stocken	18,964
Stoke Heath	30,410
Styal	32,065
Sudbury	15,896
Swaleside	19,583
Swansea	41,215
Swinfen Hall	27,683
Thorn Cross	25,573
Usk-Prescoed	25,783
Verne	18,738
Wakefield	29,128
Wandsworth	27,437
Warren Hill	43,382
Wayland	17,659
Wealstun	20,876
Weare	21,158
Wellingborough	20,209
Wellington	43,564
Wetherby	32,621
Whatton	20,592
Whitemoor	49,885
Winchester	34,185
Woodhill	39,035
Wormwood Scrubs	24,739
Wymott	20,901

B. Privately run establishments[1,2]

	£
Altcourse	50,747
Ashfield	32,041
Doncaster	24,769
Dovegate	25,916
Forest Bank	26,080
Lowdham	24,499
Pare	39,645
Rye Hill	23,671
Wolds	21,861

[1] The costs for private prisons excludes capital charges (Cost of Capital, Cost of Capital Credit and Depreciation), making the figures comparable with the public prison service.
[2] HMP Bronzefield, a privately run prison, opened in June 2004 and is therefore excluded from this data.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the budget is for prison education in 2004–05; what allocation has been made to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [216738]

Paul Goggins: The Department for Education and Skills has a specified and non-transferable budget for offenders' learning and skills of £136 million in 2004–05, which rises to £152.5 million for each of the years 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08. This covers learning and skills in prison as well as for offenders in the community.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve rehabilitation for short-term and remand prisoners. [216803]

Paul Goggins: The introduction of Custody Plus, under the Criminal Justice Act 2003, will improve rehabilitation for all short-term prisoners by providing post-release supervision by the probation service of at least six months in all cases.

In the meantime, a range of interventions have been introduced for short-term prisoners to address pressing needs in health, basic skills, drugs, and job search and benefits advice. From April 2005, all local prisons will be required to carry out housing needs assessments for every new prisoner, including those serving short sentences and on remand. A drug rehabilitation programme specifically for short-term prisoners is already being rolled-out following a successful pilot launched in April 2004.

All prisoners, including those on remand, receive induction on admission to prison, which includes interviews on healthcare and resolving problems such as preserving accommodation, employment, and meeting family responsibilities.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the incidence of smoking in prisons in England and Wales was in the last period for which figures are available. [217209]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* This information is not routinely collected. In 1999 the report by the Office for National Statistics "Substance Misuse Among Prisoners in England and Wales" recorded that 78 per cent. of male sentenced, 85 per cent. of male remand, 81 per cent. of female sentenced and 83 per cent. of female remand prisoners were current smokers.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the policy of the Government are in relation to prisoners who do not wish to be exposed to the effects of passive smoking in their cells. [217210]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Each prison develops its own "no smoking" policy in line with current health and safety advice and taking into account the type of establishment it is, its population and the special needs of that population. Wherever possible prisoners should not be required to share accommodation with a smoker if they so request.

Sexual Assault Referral Centres

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sexual assault referral centres are now functional in England and Wales; where they are situated; and how many are funded *(a)* wholly and *(b)* partly by (i) primary care trusts, (ii) strategic health authorities and (iii) local police forces. [215571]

Paul Goggins: There are 13 Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) now functional in England and Wales, listed in the table. There are other examples of work between police and health services to provide services to victims of sexual assault that do not refer to themselves as 'SARCs', for example the STAR service in West Yorkshire. It should be noted that levels of service offered by the 13 SARCs vary.

The table shows the funding arrangements for existing SARCs. SARC funding arrangements are negotiated at a local level. The majority of SARCs are jointly funded by local police forces and primary care trusts. Strategic health authorities do not have responsibility for allocation of funding.

All percentages are approximate. Where information about exact funding contributions has not been available, the sources of funding are given.

SARCs	
St. Mary's Manchester	Accommodation and associated costs, plus ancillary staff, provided by Central Manchester and Manchester children's university hospitals trust. Staffing and running costs provided by Greater Manchester police (GMP)
The Haven Camberwell, London	50 per cent. London area PCTs 50 per cent. Metropolitan police
The Haven Paddington, London	50 per cent. London area PCTs 50 per cent. Metropolitan police
The Haven Whitechapel, London	50 per cent. London area PCTs 50 per cent. Metropolitan police

SARCs	
SAFE Centre, Preston, Lancashire	5 per cent. Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust 95 per cent. Lancashire constabulary
Juniper Lodge, Leicester, Leicestershire	25 per cent. Leicester City PCT 75 per cent. Leicestershire police
REACH, Northumbria	Jointly funded by: Northumberland health authority Sunderland health authority Gateshead and South Tyneside health authority Newcastle and North Tyneside health authority Northumbria police
Rowan Centre, Walsall, West Midlands	Management, running costs and maintenance of premises provided by Walsall teaching PCT Forensic medical examinations funded by West Midlands police
Codner, Derbyshire	Funded by Derbyshire police with contribution from Derbyshire rape crisis group
Dartford, Kent	Part-time manager and upkeep costs provided by Darent Valley hospital Forensic examination costs provided by Kent police
The Sanctuary, Swindon, Wiltshire	Jointly funded by local police and health. The centre is being extensively developed and new funding arrangements are currently being negotiated
The Milne Centre and Cabot Suite, Bristol	Funded out of sexual health clinic budget
Peterborough Cambridgeshire	Peterborough City PCT Cambridgeshire constabulary

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which sexual assault referral centres employ forensic nurses. [215575]

Paul Goggins: St. Mary's Centre in Manchester has employed a forensic nurse since March 2001, initially funded as a two-year pilot project by the Home Office Crime Reduction Programme. We do not know of any other Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) which employ forensic nurses at the present time, but are aware of plans in some centres to develop the use of forensic nurses to undertake forensic examinations of service users reporting rape or sexual assault.

Staff Custody Officers

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training arrangements are proposed for designated officers to act as staff custody officers in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill. [215293]

Ms Blears: The training arrangements for the post of custody officer will be identical to those undertaken by a police sergeant fulfilling the role.

Although Centrex have developed a national training programme for custody officers there is no formal qualification required before a police officer can take on the role of custody sergeant. It will remain a matter for individual force policy on training required before the appointment of police officers and police staff to this role.

National Occupational Standards for the Police Sector developed by Skills for Justice set out the competencies and skills required for authorising and managing police detention and form an Integrated Competency Framework. In terms of the custody officer, the competency framework focuses on the key areas of making detention decisions; managing the detention of individuals; and authorising and reviewing continued detention.

In addition, further work is under way with stakeholders and the National Centre for Policing Excellence on developing guidance on how these standards are to be achieved. This will be issued for consultation later this year and published in January 2006. Combined with the competency framework, we will have in place definitive standards for both police and police staff employed in the custody suite

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many civil servants from his Department have *(a)* faced disciplinary proceedings as a result of allegations of theft, *(b)* been charged with theft and *(c)* been dismissed following theft allegations in each year since 1997. [206401]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office and its Agencies currently have no records of disciplinary action taken relating to theft according to the central database set up in 2000–01. Figures recorded before the establishment of the database could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Student Visa Charges

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans his Department has to increase overseas student visa charges. [213699]

Mr. Browne: I refer my hon. Friend to my statement of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 69WS.

Violent Crime (Northumbria)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent offences involving

(a) violence against the person, *(b)* sexual offences and *(c)* robbery there were in each basic command unit of Northumbria police force area in (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04. [216485]

Ms Blears: The information requested is available on the Home Office website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/bcu2.xls

Departmental Policies

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Worcester constituency, the effects on Worcester of changes to his Department's policy since 1997. [213481]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Worcester constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the West Mercia Police Force increased by 325 from 2,040 to 2,365. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 67 CSOs on West Mercia streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, West Mercia has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 10 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 36 per cent.

West Mercia Police Force is receiving £111.8 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 3.75 per cent. (£4.1 million) over this year. West Mercia benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the Force would have received £2.5 million less. General grants funding to West Mercia has increased by 27 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, West Mercia will also receive around £10 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. One CCTV project in the Worcester CDRP area received a total of £643,832 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £446,583 has been allocated to the Worcester CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.03 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the West Midlands for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Worcester set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Worcester a total of 28 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 9 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and its policy is set out in the 10-year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Worcestershire has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Worcestershire Drug Action Team amounted to £2.5 million, rising to £1.5 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Worcester constituency can be obtained from the Worcestershire Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local

people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

This year, 2005, is the year of the volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org .

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Work Permits

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were issued in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004, broken down by capacity in which they were issued. [216898]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 22 February 2005]*: The table displays the number of work permits that were issued in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004, broken down by the capacity in which they were issued:

Work permit category	*2003*	*2004*
Business and Commercial	153,179	160,370
Sector Based Scheme	7,809	16,858
Training and Work Experience Scheme	5,980	4,204
Total	166,968	181,432

The figures for the Sectors Based Scheme for 2003 do not cover an entire 12 month period as the scheme started in May 2003.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 24 February 2005

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

23. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to the answer of 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 206–07W, on the Crown Prosecution Service, what progress has been made with the planned review of interaction between prosecutors and the police in the process from arrest to charge. [217649]

The Solicitor-General: A review of the charging arrangements in Nottinghamshire took place during December 2004. An action plan setting out a number of recommendations for improvement was provided to the Area after the review. Work on these actions has commenced and is being taken forward by the joint charging team.

A follow up visit to the Area, by the joint Crown Prosecution Service and police charging team to assess progress against the action plan, will be made in the spring.

24. **Andy Burnham:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on reform of the Crown Prosecution Service. [217650]

The Solicitor-General: The CPS reform programme aims to put prosecutors at the heart of the Criminal Justice System, providing a prosecuting service that meets the needs of victims and communities. This means prosecutors having a bigger role at each stage of the criminal justice process from charge through to sentence and working in co-operation with others in the criminal justice process while maintaining that independence of decision-making which is the hallmark of British prosecutors.

Child Witnesses

25. **Mr. Jim Cunningham** To ask the Solicitor-General what steps the Crown Prosecution Service takes to prevent trauma suffered by children serving as witnesses at trials. [217652]

The Solicitor-General: Crown Prosecutors work closely with the police and other agencies to ensure that children, receive the help and support they need to cope with the court process and to assist them to give their best evidence through a range of special measures, including the use of screens, giving evidence in private, video recorded evidence in chief, live TV links, and the removal of wigs and gowns.

The introduction of witness care units across the country will further improve the experience for children. These will offer a single point of contact for witnesses, parents and carers, and a detailed needs assessment will be carried out to identify a witness's specific support requirements. A tailored support system can then be provided to them.

In relation, to child witnesses, witness care units can be expected to support children by, for example, arranging pre-trial court visits, providing an explanation as to what will happen in court, arranging a home visit, providing safe and easy access to court on the day of trial and also making contact with the local, school if there are difficulties in that regard.

Information Technology

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the use of information technology to improve efficiency of working between the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts. [217653]

The Solicitor-General: Information technology has a key role to play in delivering a modernised, joined-up criminal justice system. The Crown Prosecution Service is working with the courts and other criminal justice system colleagues to secure more efficient use of information technology.

Examples of current initiatives are the use of secure e-mail between criminal justice practitioners, which will facilitate the effective trials management programme.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Meals

8. **Diana Organ:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to involve parents in assessing the quality and nutritional value of school meals. [217634]

Ruth Kelly: Parents will be the front line of the drive to improve school meals, with an independent school food trust and tougher standards on processed food introduced in the new school year. Many schools already ensure that children eat healthy school meals. However, parents need to work with schools to improve the quality and nutritional value of their child's school meal. Further information on this initiative will be available in due course.

Vocational Education

10. **Syd Rapson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to increase the take-up of vocational training in schools and colleges. [217636]

Ruth Kelly: On 23 February I placed before the House the Command Paper "14 to 19 Education and Skills". This should lead directly to an increase in the numbers undertaking vocational education and training in schools and colleges. Diplomas and better training facilities will make vocational education an attractive choice offering real opportunities. These proposals build on the success of our Apprenticeship and Increasing Flexibility programmes which have already provided a high quality vocational education for over 1 million young people.

Building Schools for the Future

16. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects schools in Northumberland to benefit in the building schools for the future programme. [217642]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Building Schools for the Future aims to transform secondary schools in 15 waves of investment from 2005–06, subject to future public spending decisions. We recently announced over £40 million capital for Northumberland over the next three years. Further, by 2011, we aim to support at least one secondary school of the future in the county. Its northern and central areas should join Building Schools for the Future between 2014 and 2017, followed by its western and south-eastern areas.

18. **Mr. Peter Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to announce the next stage of funding under the Building Schools for the Future Programme. [217644]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We aim to announce the prioritisation of waves four and five of Building Schools for the Future, which will access funding in 2008–09 and 2009–10, in the autumn of 2006 following the settlement of the 2006 Spending Review.

Special Schools (Gloucestershire)

17. **Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the future of special schools in Gloucestershire. [217643]

Margaret Hodge: Under arrangements introduced in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the consideration of proposals for establishing, altering, or discontinuing maintained special schools are a matter for local decision making. It is for the local School Organisation Committee to consider any objections received when they make their decision on proposals. If the School Organisation Committee cannot reach a unanimous decision, it will pass the case to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator for determination.

Education Select Committee Report

19. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the recent report of the Education Select Committee on Public Expenditure on Education and Skills. [217645]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We welcome the report on Public Expenditure from the Education and Skills Select Committee.

We are compiling a reply to the recommendations and will shortly be sending our reply to the Committee.

Music Manifesto

Kevin Brennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on progress in implementing the music manifesto. [217640]

Derek Twigg: We are making good progress. A Manifesto Champion and Steering Group are in place and drawing up plans for future shared activities.

More than 180 organisations and individuals have signed up to the Music Manifesto. Together they have made more than 100 pledges of programmes and resources to support the key aims—including one from Lloyds TSB who pledged £10 million for musical instruments earlier this month. DfES pledges alone amount to more than £220 million.

Broadband Access

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) Leicester, South and (ii) England have broadband internet access. [217983]

Derek Twigg: My Department does not hold information specifically for Leicester South. As at the end of December 2004, 43 per cent. of primary schools and 100 per cent. of secondary schools in Leicester City had broadband connections, and 43 per cent. of primary schools and 98 per cent. of secondary schools in Leicestershire had broadband connections. This compares to 69 per cent. of primary schools, 99 per cent. of secondary schools and 72 per cent. of all schools in England with high speed broadband connections. We are on track to connect all schools by 2006.

EMA

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Leicester, South are receiving education maintenance allowance. [217980]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: On 1 February 2005, the number of students who had received one or more EMA payments for the academic year 2004/05 in the Leicestershire area was 6,232. This is the total figure, comprised of 3,984 students in the Leicester City local education authority area and 2,248 students in the Leicestershire local education authority area. We do not break this data down further into constituency and ward areas.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the programme establishing a single financing and programming instrument for cultural co-operation (Culture 2000) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217246]

Mr. Caborn: I have been asked to reply.

Between 1 July 2003 and 31 December 2004, the Culture 2000 Management Committee met in Brussels on: 7 July 2003, 17 November 2003 (Italian presidency), 29 March 2004 (Irish presidency) and 9 November 2004 (Dutch presidency). DCMS officials attended all the meetings.

Learndirect

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total costs of promotion of the learndirect scheme have been since the scheme's inception. [217482]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since its launch in 2000 learndirect has enrolled over 1.5 million learners and handled over 21 million inquiries through its National Advice Line. On the basis of information provided by Ufi, learndirect has spent £93.74 million to 31 July 2004 promoting these services.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have completed learndirect courses. [217596]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In just five years learndirect has firmly established itself as one of the biggest e-learning networks in the world, and is successfully making learning more accessible to individuals and businesses. On the basis of information provided by Ufi, over 1.5 million learners have enrolled on learndirect courses and over 920,000 of these learners have completed their course.

National Curriculum

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how her Department will tailor the curriculum to stretch academically able pupils. [217440]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Our White Paper published on 23 February includes a range of proposals for ensuring stretch for all pupils across the 11 to 19 phase of secondary education. These include freeing up time at Key Stage 3 to introduce scope for greater breadth, depth and pace for gifted and talented pupils; the opportunity to provide some higher education courses in maintained schools; and building on the strengths of the existing GCSE and A-level qualifications in order to increase stretch and challenge for all pupils.

Plater College, Oxford

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what advice the Learning and Skills Council gave Plater College, Oxford, following the report on the College of 20 October 2004 by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. [217944]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Learning and Skills Council have a claim on any part of the assets of Plater College, Oxford, should its closure go ahead. [217945]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Plater College, Oxford, is a Roman Catholic College operating in the FE sector. The college trustees have taken the decision to close the college in July 2005. It is not known, at this stage, whether the Department or the LSC will have any claim on the college's assets. This will be one of the issues to resolve as the college nears closure and will be dependent upon the terms of its memorandum and articles of association and its contractual arrangements with the LSC, which funds some of its activities.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the future of Plater College, Oxford. [217946]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Plater College, Oxford, is a Roman Catholic college operating in the FE sector. The College Trustees have decided to close the college in July 2005. The LSC is working closely with the college to ensure that the interests of current students and other learners in the area are safeguarded.

Pupil Referral Units

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost is of setting up a new pupil referral unit; and what the average running costs were for pupil referral units in the last year for which figures are available. [216864]

Derek Twigg: We do not hold information on the cost of setting up new pupil referral units (PRUs). The cost will depend on the size of the accommodation required, the number of pupils and the particular needs to be met.

All PRUs are very different, and as a result the average running cost will vary widely depending on the individual characteristics of the PRU. However dividing the total planned expenditure on the provision of education at PRUs in England in 2004–05 (as recorded on local authorities 2004–05 section 52 budget statement) by the total number of PRUs in England as at January 2004 gives an estimated average planned running cost of around £466,000.

School Playground Schemes

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support the Government are giving to school playground schemes. [218004]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Government support for capital investment in schools has risen to £4.9 billion this year, will be £5.5 billion next year, £5.8 billion in 2006–07 and will reach £6.3 billion by 2007–08. All schools and local authorities will benefit from this programme, which includes flexibility for local authorities and schools to prioritise expenditure on the areas they consider most important, including playgrounds.

The Big Lottery Fund (BLF) is providing around £81 million, through the New Opportunities for Physical Education and Sport programme, towards playground improvements in England. This includes playground markings, improvements to drainage and refurbishing existing facilities. We are also working with the BLF to ensure that these facilities will fully complement the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. This programme aims to renew the secondary school estate (including playgrounds) in

15 waves starting from 2005–06. Schools, local authorities and their partners are encouraged to look as widely as possible at all educational needs, both inside and outside the classroom.

Furthermore, the Sporting Playgrounds programme is supporting £10 million of capital investment between April 2003 and March 2005. This will enhance around 600 primary school playgrounds to increase physical/sporting activities and improve behaviour.

For the past three years the Department has also provided £250,000 a year to Learning through Landscape, which has encouraged schools to improve and develop their grounds for curriculum-related use.

Truancy

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children played truant in the last year for which figures are available. [217633]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In the school year 2003/04, 567,503 primary pupils and 696,600 secondary pupils recorded at least one half day's unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence includes absence due to lateness or family holidays taken during term time without the school's permission, as well as truancy. Recent research in to pupil absence suggests that around 2 per cent. of secondary school pupils are persistent truants, responsible for almost half of all unauthorised absence in secondary schools.

Vocational Training

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will next visit a further education college in the south-east to assess the provision of vocational training places. [217664]

Derek Twigg: I currently have no plans to visit further education colleges in the south-east. I would consider any such invitations, depending on diary commitments.

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister whether the decision by the Metropolitan police to interview hon. Members as part of an on-going Official Secrets Act investigation into the disclosure of Iraq-related material was *(a)* authorised by and *(b)* communicated to (i) Ministers and (ii) officials in his Government. [218035]

The Prime Minister: The Metropolitan police have kept officials in the Cabinet Office informed of the progress of their inquiry, which was initiated at the request of the Cabinet Office. Decisions about the handling of the inquiry are a matter for the police.

Official Correspondence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Prime Minister whether he has used a signing machine for official correspondence. [216625]

The Prime Minister: No. My office does, however, use an electronic version of my signature on some letters and messages.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Iraq

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support the UK has given to democracy-building in Iraq; what the cost of that support has been; and what proportion of the budget was allocated to support for women. [217433]

Hilary Benn: Democracy building is a strategic priority of the UK's support to Iraq, as set out in DFID's Iraq Country Assistance Plan (February 2004). DFID works closely with the FCO to support and encourage a stable, united and law abiding state that provides effective and representative government, sustainable economic growth and rising living standards for all Iraqi citizens.

DFID has funded a number of initiatives to support democracy-building activities in Iraq. These have included $10 million in support of the Independent Elections Commission of Iraq (IECI) for the recent elections; and funding for two advisers to the UN team supporting the IECI. DFID's £5 million Political Participation Fund (PPF) supports initiatives which aim to increase opportunities for political representation and participation in the political process. Projects funded so far include voter education and media and monitors' training for the recent elections. There is no specific allocation to support for women, but the project has a particular focus on supporting women's participation in the political process. So far nine projects amounting to over £300,000 have been specifically targeted at women.

Kosovo

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support the UK has given to democracy-building measures in Kosovo, including training of local and national legislators; what the budget was for that support; and what proportion of that budget was allocated to support for women. [217432]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has provided the following funding to democracy-building measures in Kosovo:

Project	*Year*	*Amount (£)*
1. Support for domestic election observers—Local elections	2000	110,000
2. Support for domestic election observers—General Election	2001	163,584
3. Support to Kosovo Criminal Defence and Resource Centre (promoting human rights)	2001–02	93,000
4. International Foundation for Election Systems—Civic and Voter Education Outreach Programme	2001–02	349,749
5. International Foundation for Election Systems—Electoral Assistance and Civic Participation Programme	2002–03	249,899

In addition, the FCO has provided the following assistance under the Western Balkans Global Conflict Prevention Pool, which is a joint strategy between DFID, the FCO, and MoD:

Project	Fund	Amount (£)	Description
2002–03			
1. KOCB (Kosovo Organised Crime Bureau, UNMIK)	GCPP (Organised Crime [OC])	215,000	Law and order
2. Plemetina Community Centre	GCPP (Democracy and Interethnic Relations [DIER])	51,561	Reduction of inter-ethnic tension, confidence building and greater co-operation between ethnic groups in Plemetina community.
2003–04			
3. KOCB	GCPP (OC)	532,000	Law and order
4. IFES-Local Participation and Governance Programme	GCPP (DIER)	133,190	Community development and bringing citizens closer to municipalities
5. Open Eyes-Documentary Training Through Production	GCPP (DIER)	100,961	Building bridges of divided communities, portraying diversity in this region.
6. Forum—Customs Monitoring Kosovo	GCPP	100,000	Creation of an anti-crime and anti-corruption coalition involving structures, Kosovo governing institutions, UNMIK Customs Service, civil society organisations, the main printed and electronic media in Kosovo, to fight trafficking.
2003–04–05			
7. KACI Civil Bridges	GCPP (DIER)	117,684	Monitoring of municipal assemblies, and promotion of active and well-informed citizenship.
8. Podgorce Returns	GCPP (DIER)	296,960	Stabilisation and Integration for Returnees to Podgorce
9. IFES-Human Rights and Good Governance	GCPP (DIER)	345,380	Building NGOs capacities, working with elected officials and civil servants, training on human rights, transparency, anti-corruption, and advocacy.
10. Resolution for Kosovo Politicians	GCPP (DIER)	81,700	Five day conflict resolution course for Kosovo politicians.
11. Stabilisation of minorities and returns through Micro-credit	GCPP (DIER) and GOFRE	360,000	Promotion of sustainable reintegration of minorities and returns to Kosovo by enhancing their participation in the mainstream economy, through skills development and the provision of business mentoring, training and micro-credit.

The bulk of the UK's assistance to the region is contributed through the European Union's Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) programme. The UK contributes approximately 19 per cent. of CARDS funding which provided €291.18 million to Kosovo in the years 2002–04. The European Commission has funded democracy related projects in Kosovo including:

Project	Year	Amount (€ million)
1. Support to the assembly of Kosovo	2003–05	2 million
2. Building institutional capacity of Civil Society organisations to include those representing different ethnic communities	2004–05	1 million

None of these projects had specific allocations for women, although women have benefited from many of the activities.

Malawi

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of the funds from the new six-year health programme for Malawi, announced in December 2004, is earmarked for salaries of health workers in Malawi. [217544]

Hilary Benn: The salary component of the new six-year health programme in Malawi will cost $100 million including a 50 per cent. increase in salary for existing health workers and the salaries of additional health workers. This salary component represents about half of the total cost of the Emergency Human Resources Programme, which also includes training of Malawian health workers and the provision of expatriate volunteer specialists. DFID is contributing £55 million towards that programme or about half the total cost. Other smaller contributions will come from the Global Fund, UN agencies and bilateral donors. In addition, DFID is contributing £45 million towards the separate Essential Health Package component, making a total contribution of £100 million to the Malawi's health programme over the next six years.

Swaziland

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what development aid has been provided by the UK to Swaziland in each year since 1997; and what assessment his Department has made of its effectiveness. [218180]

Hilary Benn: Total UK assistance to Swaziland since 1997 is set out in the following table:

	£000
1997–98	3,448
1998–99	3,981
1999–2000	3,533
2000–01	2,646
2001–02	1,282
2002–03	1,343
2003–04	907

DFID projects are subject to annual reviews of effectiveness. The results of the reviews are recorded on a central project review data-base which provides for reporting of portfolio performance.

TREASURY

Catering Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on *(a)* tea and *(b)* biscuits in the Department in each year since 1997. [215007]

Mr. Timms: Since July 2002, meeting refreshments for the Treasury have been supplied by the PFI contractor, Exchequer Partnerships. Meeting refreshments include tea, coffee, mineral water and biscuits. The costs for 2002–03 (July to 31 March) were £121,000, and the costs for 2003–04 were £188,000. It is not possible to identify separate costs for tea or biscuits, and information in respect of the earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Charities (Scotland)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to accept registration of charities in Scotland by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as providing proof of eligibility for tax relief for the bodies concerned. [217498]

John Healey: Wherever possible the Inland Revenue will accept registration as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator as proof of eligibility for charitable tax reliefs. However, taxation is not a devolved matter. The Revenue is required to apply the Taxes Acts consistently across the UK. In doing so, case law has established that the Revenue should apply its understanding of English law in relation to the definition of a charity where Scottish law differs from English law.

Debt Cancellation (Africa)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which countries in Africa have had their debts cancelled in each year since 1997. [217490]

Mr. Timms: Since 1997, 15 countries have reached completion point in the HIPC initiative. All of these countries are now receiving irrevocable debt relief (October 2004—Madagascar; July 2004—Ghana; April 2004—Niger, Ethiopia, Senegal; January 2004—Nicaragua; December 2003—Guyana; March 2003—Benin, Mali; June 2002—Mauritania; April 2002—Burkina Faso; November 2001—Tanzania; September 2001—Mozambique; June 2001—Bolivia; May 2000—Uganda).

A further 12 countries are at decision point and are receiving interim debt relief (July 2003—Democratic Republic of Congo; March 2002—Sierra Leone; May 2001—Chad; December 2000—Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Malawi, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Zambia; October 2000—Cameroon; June 2000—Honduras).

In addition to those countries currently benefiting from the HIPC Initiative, the following African countries received treatments from the Paris Club involving an element of debt cancellation: 2004—Republic of Congo, Burundi; 2002—Cote d'Ivoire; 1998—Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire.

However, many countries are still having to choose between servicing their debt and investing in health, education, infrastructure and other areas necessary to allow them to attain the Millennium Development Goals. That is why the UK is proposing that we match bilateral debt relief of up to 100 per cent. with multilateral debt relief of up to 100 per cent. The UK will provide its share, approximately 10 per cent., of multilateral debt owed by eligible countries to the International Development Association and African Development Bank, and will continue to call on others to join us in this initiative.

Drug-related Deaths

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many drug-related deaths there were in people aged under *(a)* 21, *(b)* 30 and *(c)* 40 years in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in the last five years for which figures are available. [217548]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Sarah Teather, dated 24 February 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question asking how many drug-related deaths there were in people aged under *(a)* 21, *(b)* 30, *(c)* 40 in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London Borough in the last five years for which figures are available. (217548)

Figures are readily available from death certification on deaths due to drug poisoning, not the total number that were drug-related. The most recent year for which figures are available is 2002. Numbers of deaths certified as due to drug poisoning for each London Borough and the London Government Office Region in the five years 1998 to 2002 are given in the attached table. There were too few deaths at ages under 21 in all London Boroughs to release figures without risk of disclosure.

Figures are not readily available where death was indirectly related to the use of drugs as the direct cause is generally selected as the underlying cause of death (e.g. HIV infection).

Deaths related to drug poisoning[1], at ages under 30 and 40[2] by London borough[3], 1998–2002[4]

	All aged under 30					All aged under 40				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
City of London	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]
Barking and Dagenham	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	6	5	[5]	[5]	[5]
Barnet	[5]	[5]	6	[5]	[5]	9	8	11	8	[5]
Bexley	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	8	[5]	5	[5]
Brent	7	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	15	5	[5]	[5]	[5]
Bromley	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	5	7	5	[5]	6	10
Camden	11	8	6	5	5	28	17	18	12	11
Croydon	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	7	6	7	[5]	7
Ealing	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	7	10	[5]	6	[5]
Enfield	[5]	[5]	[5]	7	[5]	7	[5]	[5]	12	[5]
Greenwich	[5]	5	6	[5]	[5]	7	13	13	8	7
Hackney	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	11	6	7	7	5
Hammersmith and Fulham	[5]	[5]	[5]	5	[5]	8	12	8	10	6
Haringey	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	9	9	8	7	9
Harrow	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	9	5	[5]	[5]	[5]
Havering	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	5
Hillingdon	[5]	[5]	[5]	5	[5]	9	7	[5]	5	[5]
Hounslow	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	7	[5]	[5]	6
Islington	[5]	7	[5]	[5]	[5]	9	17	15	13	7
Kensington and Chelsea	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	10	8	[5]	9	5
Kingston upon Thames	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	7	5	[5]	[5]	[5]
Lambeth	11	11	7	9	7	30	24	17	17	15
Lewisham	6	[5]	[5]	[5]	5	19	8	11	6	11
Merton	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	7	5	7	[5]	6
Newham	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	12	8	6	6	7
Redbridge	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	6	5	[5]	[5]
Richmond upon Thames	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	5	[5]	8	[5]
Southwark	7	7	[5]	[5]	[5]	14	14	12	11	9
Sutton	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	6
Tower Hamlets	5	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	13	7	9	8	9
Waltham Forest	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	8	[5]	[5]	6	[5]
Wandsworth	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	[5]	11	10	6	6	[5]
Westminster City of	5	5	[5]	[5]	[5]	23	13	11	7	6
London	127	113	78	85	76	318	270	219	208	187

[1] Defined using the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision for 2001 and 2002: F11-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, Y10-Y14, X85 and the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision for 1998–2000: 292, 304, 305.2–305.9, E850-E858, E950.0-E950.5, E962.0 and E980.0-E980.5

[2] Data are for persons aged between 0 and 29 and 0 and 39.

[3] Usual residence of the deceased by London Borough.

[4] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[5] The numbers in these cells have been suppressed to protect confidentiality.

Source:
Office for National Statistics.

Earnings (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all workers in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough the (A) weekly median earnings and (B) distribution of earnings for those earning (1) under the point below which 10 per cent. of earners fall and (2) the point above which 10 per cent. of earners exceed. [217546]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Sarah Teather, dated 24 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question to list for *(a)* males, *(b)* females and *(c)* all workers in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough the (A) weekly median earnings and (B) distribution of earnings for those earning (1) under the point below which 10 per cent. of earners fall and (2) the point above which 10 per cent. of earners exceed. (217546).

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and are provided for employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period, by their place of work. This is the standard definition used for Annual Survey of Hours and Earning tables. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

These data are available on the national statistics web site: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/ASHE2004_inc/tab?_la.xls

We recommend that you use data for full time employees.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It has a one per cent. sample of all employees.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive. A number of estimates have been removed from the published tables for these reasons.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Contact Committee on Certain Schemes for Collective Investment in Securities met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217891]

Mr. Timms: The Contact Committee on Certain Schemes for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities met in Brussels on 18 July 2003, 22 October

2003, 19 December 2003 and 14 April 2004. Officials from HM Treasury and the Financial Services Authority attended the meetings.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the European Securities Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217892]

Mr. Timms: Information on the composition of this committee and a summary record of the meetings held is available from the European Union website at http://europa.eu.int/index_en.htm.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Insurance Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217908]

Mr. Timms: Information on the composition of this Committee and a record of the meetings held is available from the European Union website at http://europa.eu.int/index_en.htm.

Publications

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213645]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury's estimated costs for the production of the in-house staff magazine, were as follows:

	£
1996–97	17,000
1997–98	20,000
1998–99	17,000
1999–2000	18,000
2000–01	16,000
2001–02	18,000
2002–03	21,000
2003–04	20,000

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to Rochdale constituency, the effects of his actions and policies on the constituency since 1997. [217301]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Rochdale constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 38 per cent., while long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have both fallen by 76 and 74 per cent. respectively.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at local area level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

SR2004

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a copy of the Ministry of Defence's SR 2004 settlement letter.[217943]

Mr. Boateng: The Ministry of Defence's SR 2004 settlement is set out in Chapter 13 of the 2004 Spending Review document (Cm 6237).

Further detail on forward defence plans are set out in "Delivering Security in a Changing World—Future Capabilities" (Cm 6269).

Tax Credits

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are employed by his Department to investigate tax credit fraud *(a)* in total and *(b)* per 100,000 recipients of tax credits; and what his latest estimate is of the total level of tax credit fraud. [218002]

John Healey: The total number of staff employed by Inland Revenue to look at claimant error in tax credits is around 1,350. The number of families in receipt of tax credits in December 2004 was 5.04 million, which equates to approximately 27 members of staff per 100,000 families in receipt of tax credits.

Inland Revenue are currently reviewing a random sample of finalised 2003–04 awards to monitor the level of claimant error. However the Department will only be in a position to give an indication of the level of error later in 2005–06 once awards are finalised for the whole tax credit population and the exercise is completed.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many reports of computer failure the Inland Revenue has received since the introduction of new tax credits in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [216657]

Dawn Primarolo: None.

There were some well-publicised problems in the early days when the system did not perform as expected. However, the system has worked throughout the entire period since tax credits were introduced and has been performing robustly for some considerable time now.

Windfall Receipts

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his definition of a windfall receipt is. [217942]

John Healey: A windfall receipt is not a term used either in Budget documents or the National Accounts.

TRANSPORT

Disabled Access (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding has been made available to improve disabled access to transport services in the Chorley constituency. [217589]

Charlotte Atkins: Regulations introduced under part 5 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) require that all new public service vehicles used on local and scheduled service with a carrying capacity of more than 22 passengers, and all new rail vehicles, have to be accessible to disabled people. In addition, duties under part 3 of the DDA require service providers to take reasonable steps to provide access to transport infrastructure such as bus station and railway stations.

On funding the Government provide funding to improve access to public transport through the local transport plan (LTP) process. Local transport authorities in England outside London produce five-year LTPs, and report on progress against these plans in annual progress reports (APRs). The first five-year plans were submitted in 2000. The following table details the relevant funding categories allocated to the Lancashire local transport plan area, which includes Chorley.

Decisions on how to target funding towards specific projects and initiatives such as those to improve public transport accessibility are made at local level.

On access to the rail network, the SRA intend to consult on their disability strategy at the end of March. This will include priorities for improving accessibility at stations.

Chorley (Lancashire) local authority

£ million *Nature of funding*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Capital maintenance	6.10	16.63	17.78	13.34	16.18
Integrated block (small schemes)	4.80	11.20	11.92	12.05	13.03
Targeted bus grants	1.41	2.21	1.57	3.78	1.24
Total	12.31	30.04	31.27	29.17	30.45

Blue Badge Scheme

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how application forms for disabled badges are made available to the public; and what the cost to public funds is of each method. [217479]

Charlotte Atkins: Application forms are available, on request, from local authorities. which are responsible for the administration of the Blue Badge Scheme. There is no statutory procedure that they are required to follow for the production or distribution of the forms.

It is for individual local authorities to allocate appropriate resources to administer the Blue Badge Scheme. Under existing regulations they are able to charge up to £2 for each badge they issue, to contribute towards these costs.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many tins of beans have been distributed by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency as part of its recent campaign; at what cost; and if he will make a statement. [217074]

Mr. Jamieson: DVLA distributed 36 tins of baked beans as part of an advertising campaign aimed at road tax evaders in the London area during January 2005. The cost of this was £305, which includes design and printing of labels and purchase of tins of beans.

These tins were distributed to a number of radio stations in London, in order to generate on-air discussion about road tax evasion, and the disposal by crushing of untaxed vehicles.

M5

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the level of congestion on the M5 between junctions 23 and 25. [217408]

Mr. Jamieson: The level of congestion on the M5 between Junctions 23 and 25 was considered as part of the London to South West and Wales Multi Modal Study (SWARMMS) commissioned by the Government office for the south-west. The final report in May 2002 stated that the motorway's operation was generally satisfactory at this location.

The Highways Agency records traffic flows and continually monitors the operation of the motorway. Although there has been an increase in traffic flows since the SWARMMS report this has not had a significant impact on the operation of the motorway.

Northern Trains

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the remit is of the study commissioned by the Strategic Rail Authority into the respecification of the Northern Trains franchise; and if he will place in the Library a copy of the *(a)* full remit and *(b)* final report when completed. [214469]

Mr. McNulty: The contractors are being commissioned to provide advice to the Strategic Rail Authority for the review of the services in the Northern franchise. The review, which has always been part of the franchise specification, is required as the franchise has been derived from a complex merger of others and has a service pattern which has not been substantially reviewed for at least 10 years.

I will place a copy of the specification to contractors for the review of the Northern franchise in the Library of the House once the contracts have been finalised. I will also publish a summary of the findings of the contractor when available.

Railway Stations

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many railway stations have *(a)* opened and *(b)* been re-opened since 1 May 1997. [211851]

Charlotte Atkins *[pursuant to the reply, 1 February 2005, c. 763W]:* The information provided should have been that since 1 May 1997 13 new stations have opened and 18 stations have re-opened.

Travel Costs

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the change in the relative costs of travelling by *(a)* car, *(b)* train and *(c)* bus has been in each year since 1975, taking 1975 as a base figure of 100, and discounting inflation. [216421]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The following table shows the information requested on real changes in the cost of transport as indices based on 1975 = 100.

	All motoring[1]	*Rail fares*	*Bus fares*
1975	100.0	100.0	100.0
1976	97.0	113.8	109.6
1977	95.7	114.5	108.9
1978	95.5	120.8	113.9
1979	99.6	117.9	112.9
1980	99.5	124.2	121.1
1981	99.5	126.9	119.8
1982	96.8	134.1	127.1
1983	98.9	135.1	128.5
1984	96.5	130.0	125.2
1985	95.3	130.4	122.9
1986	90.8	134.6	128.9
1987	92.2	135.9	131.0
1988	91.9	138.5	133.6
1989	89.9	140.2	133.6
1990	87.1	139.3	128.8
1991	88.5	145.4	138.8
1992	91.1	150.4	143.2
1993	93.5	158.4	147.2
1994	94.4	161.5	147.4
1995	93.0	163.1	147.8
1996	93.5	165.1	149.6
1997	95.4	163.8	150.3
1998	95.2	164.9	150.0
1999	96.0	168.3	153.1
2000	96.8	166.3	154.8
2001	94.6	169.7	158.4
2002	92.3	170.7	160.7
2003	90.9	168.8	162.6
2004	89.1	170.2	166.0

[1] "All motoring" includes the cost of purchase, maintenance, fuel tax and insurance.

Note:

The overall cost of motoring has fallen in real terms by 11 per cent. between 1975 and 2004. Over the same period, rail fares and bus fares have risen by 70 per cent. and 66 per cent. respectively.

Source:

Retail Prices Index, Office for National Statistics

Roads (Newcastle)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Highways Agency has been approached by Newcastle city council for *(a)* a 50 mph speed limit and *(b)* additional (i) accesses and (ii) slip roads on the A1 Newcastle Western By Pass between the Ponteland Road and Kingston Park Road interchanges. [216493]

Mr. Jamieson: Newcastle city council has not approached the Highways Agency for a 50 mph speed limit or additional accesses and slip roads on the A1 Newcastle Western Bypass between Ponteland Road and Kingston Park Road interchanges.

Train Operating Companies (Car Parking Charges)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to discourage train operating companies from introducing car parking charges where none currently exist. [217998]

Mr. McNulty: The charging for car parking facilities, is a matter for individual train operating companies.

WALES

Regional Assistance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent representations he has received about mismanagement of EU regional development grants; and if he will make a statement. [217278]

Mr. Touhig: None.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what procedures are in place in his Department to ensure that EU regional development grants are used in accordance with European Commission rules. [217280]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office does not administer the European Structural Funds in Wales. The Managing Authority for European Structural Funds in Wales is the Welsh Assembly. It operates a management and control system that the Commission has agreed fully meets its regulatory requirements. This is underlined by the performance award worth £65.4 million given to the Assembly by the European Commission last year for their management of the programmes.

Welsh Language Board

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the outcome of his latest meeting with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Welsh Language Board. [217516]

Mr. Hain: I last met the Chair, Meri Huws, and the Chief Executive, Meirion Prys Jones, on 24 January.

We discussed a number of matters concerning the promotion of the Welsh language. The Government remain committed to the principle of treating Welsh and English on a basis of equality in the conduct of public business in Wales.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Welfare

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether the United Kingdom will seek to ensure that it remains mandatory for member states to support measures to improve animal welfare standards in negotiations in Council on the European Commission proposal for a Council Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (COM(2004) 490); and if she will make a statement; [217181]

(2) whether her Department is representing the *(a)* Scottish Executive and *(b)* Welsh Assembly in negotiations in Council on the European Commission proposal for a Council Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (COM(2004) 490); [217182]

(3) how many officials from the Animal Welfare Division of her Department have been involved in the discussions with representatives of the European Commission and other member states about the European Commission proposal for a Council Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (COM(2004) 490). [217183]

Alun Michael: The negotiations on the rural development regulation are continuing and throughout discussions the UK has been pushing for the necessary flexibility for member states to implement rural development programmes which reflect each countries priorities and circumstances and deliver the maximum public benefits. In accordance with this the UK has supported the inclusion of a measure to allow support for farmers who voluntarily meet higher animal welfare standards but have asked the Commission for clarification on their reasons for it being compulsory.

Defra officials represent the UK position in EU negotiations on the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and argue in accordance with a negotiating line agreed by Ministers. The Ministers of the devolved Administrations are fully involved in discussions regarding the formulation of the UK policy position and we benefit from the support of their officials. Devolved officials generally deal direct with the Commission on issues relating to devolved rural development programmes. Within Defra officials from across the Department, including animal welfare division, and Ministers have been fully involved in agreeing the UK negotiating line.

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213818]

Alun Michael: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme a total of £3,620 has been paid as at January 2005.

(b) During the same period the total paid in penalty charges is £240.

Dairy Farming

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the future of dairy farming in Lancashire. [216196]

Alun Michael: The UK dairy sector has a sustainable future and, in line with its "Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food", the Government will work with the industry to facilitate and support its development. The UK has a comparative advantage in terms of climate, farm efficiency and size over many of its competitors. If those involved in the dairy supply chain can work together to maximise this potential and address some of the difficulties it faces, then there is no reason why it should not succeed.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213619]

Alun Michael: The Department was created in June 2001. There are 12 sites which have a catering facility to which Defra makes a contribution towards running costs. The total costs are:

	£
2001–02	398,058
2002–03	432,328
2003–04	453,490

Note:
£15,600 additional contribution towards staffing costs in London restaurants

The Department regrets it is unable to split the costs as required. There is a bar and social club at one of the sites, all running costs are met by the Sports and Social Club.

Departmental Policies (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what grants her Department makes available to farmers in Chorley. [216199]

Alun Michael: The England Rural Delivery Programme (ERDP) contributes to the delivery of the Government's Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food by helping farmers and foresters to respond better to consumer requirements and become more competitive, diverse, flexible and environmentally responsible. It also provides help to rural businesses and communities which need to adapt and develop.

The ERDP provides a framework for the operation of 10 separate but integrated schemes which provide new opportunities to protect and improve the countryside, to develop sustainable enterprises and to help rural communities to thrive. A total of £1.6 billion of EU and Government money is being made available under these schemes in England during the seven years (2000–06) of the Programme. Within Lancashire there a re nine ERPD funded schemes available of which the Rural Development Service administers seven. These are, Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Rural Enterprise Scheme, Process and Marketing Scheme, Vocational Training Scheme, Energy Crop Scheme, Organic Farm Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme.

The Rural Payments Agency and Forestry Commission administer the Hill Farm Allowance and Woodland Grant Scheme respectively.

To date, within Lancashire, the ERDP has funded (through RDS administered schemes) £3 million of projects and training as well as annual payments of £2.5 million to CSS agreement holders.

The Forestry Commission as yet does not currently make specific allocations to counties, but it is moving towards regional allocations through the Regional Forestry Framework and it is envisaged that this will in turn lead to county allocations. During 2004 the Woodland Grant Scheme paid out £300,000 towards new planting and woodland management plans. Within the constituency of Chorley, the total ERDP payments for 2004 were £152,000.

Defra will shortly launch a new scheme called Environmental Stewardship (ES). ES will be launched in England early 2005 to replace the existing agri-environment schemes (Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Countryside Stewardship and Organic Farming Schemes). ES has been developed with a high level of public consultation and a significant and much appreciated contribution from stakeholder organisations.

Footpaths

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many footpaths have been temporarily closed for over five years; for what reasons in each case; and when she expects each to be re-opened. [217441]

Alun Michael: Local highway authorities are responsible for the management of footpaths and therefore all information relating to temporary closures is held by them and not central Government. The information could be gathered only at a disproportionate cost.

Free Trade

Mr. Curry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Solihull (Mr. Taylor) of 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1363–364W, on free trade, which items are included in the basket of food on which the Government bases the estimate that the cost of the Common Agricultural Policy to a family of four in the UK is in the range of £4.50 to £5.00. [216878]

Alun Michael: We estimate the consumer cost of the Common Agricultural Policy by assessing the difference between the domestic price of agricultural products and the world price of agricultural products, generally measured at the farm-gate level. This price difference is multiplied by the volume of consumption in the UK. The calculation is made for the following commodities: cereals, oilseeds, rice, sugar, milk, beef, sheep meat, pigment, poultry meat, eggs, fruit and vegetables, wine, olive oil, and tobacco.

The cost for a notional family of four is derived from the total cost for the UK using population data.

Green Box Review

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to support proposals at the World Trade Organisation for a review of the Green Box. [217419]

Alun Michael: As part of the World Trade Organisation negotiations for the current Doha Development Round, a Framework Agreement was reached in August of last year. Under this Framework agreement, all WTO members agreed that Green Box criteria should be

> "reviewed and clarified with a view to ensuring that Green Box measures have no, or at most minimal, trade-distorting effects or effects on production. Such a review and clarification will need to ensure that the basic concepts, principles and effectiveness of the Green Box remain and take due account of non-trade concerns."

The UK Government fully supports a review on this basis.

Horse Passports

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many horse passports have been issued in London. [217528]

Alun Michael: There are no Passport Issuing Organisations based in London. Horse owners residing in London can apply to any Passport Issuing Organisation in the United Kingdom for their passports.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213835]

Alun Michael: The Department was created in June 2001.

(a) A number of buildings across the Departments estate do offer on-site car parking for civil servants and visitors as per the tenancy and rental agreement for each site. No specific records are kept that identify the cost of providing car parking.

(b) The Department does not meet the cost of parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants. Civil servants are personally responsible for meeting the costs of any such fines.

Pay Television

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207654]

Alun Michael: Since Defra came into existence in May 2001, the pay television subscription costs for each financial year are as follows:

Financial year	£
2001–02	42,522
2002–03	26,150
2003–04	9,415
2004–05	[1]—

[1] Figures not available. Most installations are now free view.

Rural Policy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress towards modernising rural delivery within the Department's strategy. [214713]

Alun Michael: Since announcing the Rural Strategy in July 2004 we have made excellent progress. Our reforms are aimed at delivering services more efficiently, through a smaller number of organisations with clearer and more accountable roles. We are devolving delivery to give a better deal for the environment and the taxpayer and the overarching principle is sustainable development.

Work is now under way to identify clear priorities and simple processes in each region of England. In order to explore better ways of supporting rural communities we have identified a local "rural pathfinder" for each region. We are working with these rural pathfinders to test innovative ways of improving local delivery and they are currently developing their plans. From this April, rural socio-economic funding will be mainstreamed through Rural Development Agencies with an increase of £27 million in their single pot allocation to £72 million from Defra. Rural community councils will be funded directly by Defra and some further social and community funds will be channelled through Government Offices.

Everyone will benefit from our radical simplification of funding streams. Rural businesses are being helped by an additional £2 million that Defra has provided to Business Links this financial year.

We are establishing a smaller, more focused body to act as a strong voice for rural people and communities, especially those facing disadvantage.

Dr. Stuart Burgess has been appointed as the Chair of the Countryside Agency and Rural Advocate. By April 2005 the new organisation—the Commission for Rural Communities—will have been established as a distinct body, initially within the existing legal framework. It will use its statutory independent voice to hold to account those who deliver to the countryside and rural communities.

In order to conserve and enhance the resource of nature and realise the economic benefits of so doing, we are establishing an Integrated Agency consisting of English Nature, most of the Rural Development Service and parts of the Countryside Agency. We have already initiated closer working at the regional level between these three organisations, as part of preparing for the establishment of the new Agency. We are moving the Rural Development Service out of the policy core of Defra and providing it with greater autonomy and devolved authority for decision-making and delivery, and, in order to pave the way for the Service to move into being part of the new Integrated Agency, we have appointed Poul Christensen to chair a small non executive board. From April 2005 the bodies that will make up the Integrated Agency will have begun working as a confederation of partners as a precursor to the full establishment of the Integrated Agency by legislation.

On Thursday 10 February, we published (in draft) a Bill to implement those elements of the Rural Strategy that require primary legislation—including full establishment of the Integrated Agency and the Commission for Rural Communities.

By April we will also have begun delivering benefits to taxpayers through beginning the process of delivering around £21 million of efficiency gains per year by 2009–10.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215798]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to which *(a)* countries and *(b)* regions affected by the tsunami removal of failed asylum seekers has been suspended; for how long suspensions will last in each case; and if he will make a statement. [214987]

Mr. Browne: The UK is currently not enforcing the removal of failed asylum applicants to the following countries, or parts of countries:

Sri Lanka—coastal areas of the north, east, south and south west;

Indonesia—the province of Aceh on the island of Sumatra;

The Maldives—affected islands;

India—coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh and the

Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

This approach is in line with the UNHCR's recommendations for south-east Asia of 12 January 2005. Proposals to conduct removals to non-affected areas immediately outside of those identified above, are being reviewed sensitively and on a case by case basis. The Government do not attach a time scale to their policy to temporarily suspend enforced returns on the

basis that this is being monitored and kept under active review in light of the ongoing assessment and development of the country conditions.

Commonwealth Working Holiday Scheme

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* professions allied to medicine from Commonwealth countries are working in the UK on two-year visas under the Commonwealth Working Holiday Scheme; and what assessment he has made of the effects of changing the scheme to one-year visas on recruitment in the national health service. [217500]

Mr. Browne: Working Holidaymakers are required to obtain entry clearance prior to coming to the United Kingdom. This allows them to take relevant employment, including as doctors, nurses and in other healthcare professions. No central record is kept by the Home Office of the numbers of working holidaymakers in each part of the workforce, including medicine and healthcare, because they do not need separate permission to work after arrival.

After 12 months in the United Kingdom working holidaymakers are eligible for work permit employment in any of the occupations on the list of designated shortage occupations maintained by Work Permits (UK). These include doctors, nurses and other healthcare professions. Working holidaymakers were eligible to switch into these occupations after 12 months in the United Kingdom before the changes announced on 7 February. The effect of these changes on recruitment in the national health service is therefore neutral.

Crime Line

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken to answer the Crime Line in London was in the last period for which figures are available. [216468]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Police

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his Department's answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1182W, on police divisions, what progress he has made in ensuring that *(a)* Trafford police division and *(b)* other police divisions have a suitable place of safety as defined by the Mental Health Act 1983. [213537]

Ms Blears: Further to my reply to the hon. Member's question of 15 December 2004, Trafford police division advises that they are meeting with representatives of the local primary health care trust on 22 February to discuss the provision of a designated place of safety in the division. The appropriate provision and location of a place of safety is a matter for local agreement between the police and the local trust.

Home Office are continuing discussions with colleagues in the Department of Health on the potential content of codes of practice proposed under the draft Mental Health Bill. The Bill was published on 8 September 2004 by the Department of Health and is currently under scrutiny by the Joint Committee on the draft Mental Health Bill. As indicated in my previous answer, we are looking to establish the statutory position whereby police stations can be used as places of safety only as a last resort and, if used for that purpose, for a limited time period only before transfer to a more appropriate environment.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what family details are recorded on police charge sheets; and what guidance is issued to police officers on how charge sheets should be completed. [215545]

Ms Blears: Only the detainee's name and address, and the address to which he or she will be bailed (if granted) are recorded on the charge sheet.

The charge sheet (form MG 4) is part of the process used by members of the prosecution team, police officers and Crown Prosecutors concerned with the preparation, processing and submission of prosecution files. A copy of the form and guidance on its completion is contained in the Prosecution Team Manual of Guidance. The Manual of Guidance Editorial Board, which consists of representatives from the Home Office, ACPO, the CPS and the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, is responsible for the contents of the contents of the manual. The 2004–05 edition can be found at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/legalprocess/courts/manualofguidance.html.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Chief Constable of the Essex Constabulary about plans to review police divisional boundaries in Essex; and if he will make a statement. [217154]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Deployment of police resources and the structural configuration to support policing issues is an operational matter and therefore falls firmly within the remit of the Chief Constable. This is not therefore an issue which the Secretary of State would normally involve himself.

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police driving schools there were in England and Wales in each of the past 10 years; and how many police officers took *(a)* a standard driving course and *(b)* an advanced driving course in each year. [213250]

Ms Blears: Each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales has a police driving school. It is for individual chief constables to determine which officers should undertake driving courses according to the nature of their role. Under internal police procedures and policies, officers may not operate warning equipment (e.g. blue lights) or exceed the speed limit in responding to 999 calls unless they have achieved the requisite driving standards. Police drivers may not undertake pursuits unless they have successfully completed the advanced driving course.

Association of Chief Police Officers policy is that driving skills should be re-assessed every three to five years. In addition, line managers should review driving standards as part of the annual appraisal process.

The available information on numbers of police officers who took a standard driving course and an advanced driving course is shown in the following table.

Police forces/date	*Standard 1994–2004*	*Advanced 1994–2004*
Avon and Somerset		
2004	116	33
2003	230	59
2002	102	15
2001	98	35
2000	82	6
1999	117	0
1998	139	0
Bedfordshire		
2004	124	36
2003	100	24
2002	96	18
2001	54	0
Cambridgeshire		
2004	63	27
2003	132	51
2002	14	15
2001	104	15
2000	22	12
1999	50	12
1998	66	9
1997	92	12
1996	50	15
1995	51	12
Cheshire		
2004	117	77
2003	104	53
2002	78	84
2001	52	54
2000	52	42
1999	52	43
1998	78	47
1997	65	77
1996	78	78
1995	156	60
1994	182	47
Cleveland		
2004	82	11
2003	112	11
2002	84	6
2001	68	12
2000	29	3
1999	34	3
1998	54	2
1997	90	2
1996	75	0
1995	83	3
Cumbria		
2004	95	12
2003	95	18
2002	95	8
2001	95	10
2000	95	12
1999	95	12
1998	95	25
1997	95	12
1996	95	12
Derbyshire		
2004	164	60
2003	95	35
2002	120	51
2001	116	6
2000	79	30
1999	75	28
1998	124	44
1997	91	17
1996	66	16
1995	54	33
Devon and Cornwall		
2004	233	28
2003	134	17
2002	134	17
2001	84	16
2000	54	16
Dorset		
2004	54	33
2003	102	27
2002	93	20
2001	90	22
2000	36	27
1999	62	24
1998	27	27
Durham		
1995–2004	820	187
Dyfed-Powys		
2004	108	30
2003	108	30
2002	54	15
2001	54	15
2000	54	15
Essex		
2004	0	43
2003	60	9
2002	223	6
2001	213	0
2000	125	6
1999	67	20
1998	132	22
1997	93	35
1996	122	19
1995	94	25
1994	130	29
Gloucestershire		
1994–2004	800	200
Greater Manchester		
1994–2004	3,642	442
Gwent		
2004	72	35
2003	72	35
2002	72	35
2001	72	30
2000	72	30
Hampshire		
2004	96	48
2003	69	21
2002	84	42
2001	75	69
2000	87	54
1999	72	42
1998	81	24
Hertfordshire		
2004	161	46
2003	184	67
2002	90	36
2001	85	12
2000	90	12
1999	60	n/a
1998	20	n/a
1997	35	25
1996	53	36
1995	34	34
Humberside		
2004	52	35
2003	66	36
2002	105	28
2001	47	15
2000	44	23
1999	54	15
1998	58	35
1997	70	18
1996	53	33
1995	79	26

Police forces/date	Standard 1994–2004	Advanced 1994–2004
Kent[1]		
2004	270	—
2003	185	—
2002	147	—
2001	109	—
2000	89	—
1999	119	—
1998	112	—
1997	108	—
1996	121	—
1995	102	—
Lancashire		
2004	181	53
2003	188	34
2002	176	23
2001	123	43
2000	49	66
1999	95	65
1998	184	84
1997	272	92
1996	198	84
1995	104	148
Leicestershire		
2004	135	39
2003	123	51
2002	120	51
2001	138	45
2000	138	51
1999	156	51
1998	81	54
1997	102	27
1996	114	21
1995	147	27
1994	138	39
Lincolnshire		
2004	75	9
London Metropolitan Police		
1995–2004	13,077	2,776
London City		
2004	42	33
2003	31	22
Merseyside		
2004	177	90
2003	170	101
2002	165	41
2001	141	78
2000	151	60
1999	193	57
1998	157	33
Norfolk		
2004	85	23
2003	109	34
2002	113	33
2001	121	26
2000	66	30
1999	72	44
1998	62	28
1997	60	20
1996	76	27
1995	71	0
Northamptonshire		
2004	40	20
2003	40	20
2002	40	20
Northumbria		
2004	188	52
2003	179	59
2002	240	33
2001	134	64
2000	208	60
1999	132	23
1998	76	32
1997	150	45
1996	147	35
1995	124	16
North Wales		
2004	226	26
2003	170	57
2002	199	48
2001	295	25
2000	111	4
North Yorkshire[2]		
2004	147	15
Nottinghamshire		
2003–04	153	74
2002–03	115	66
South Wales		
2004	190	36
2003	270	11
2002	0	0
2001	218	42
2000	225	57
1999	180	45
1998	0	0
1997	0	0
1996	75	36
1995	90	36
South Yorkshire		
1999–2004	768	234
Staffordshire		
2004	97	30
2003	152	77
2002	127	44
Suffolk		
2004	79	18
2003	104	38
2002	118	33
2001	92	33
2000	58	21
1999	45	13
1998	49	17
1997	50	11
1996	55	3
1995	52	7
Surrey		
2004	180	40
2003	160	40
2002	160	40
2001	200	30
2000	180	30
1999	150	30
Sussex		
2004	150	33
2003	114	21
2002	144	33
2001	82	24
Thames Valley		
2004	400	79
2003	525	63
2002	452	66
2001	342	69
2000	192	68
Warwickshire		
2004	45	16
2003	105	10
2002	70	—
2001	70	—
2000	70	—
West Mercia		
2004	150	78
1995–2003	825	430
West Midlands		
2004	400	67

Police forces/date	Standard 1994–2004	Advanced 1994–2004
2003	400	50
2002	400	43
2001	400	30
2000	n/a	30
1999	n/a	85
1998	n/a	97
1997	n/a	220
1996	n/a	211
1995	n/a	138
West Yorkshire		
1995–2005	320	200
Wiltshire		
2004	60	12
2003	60	12

[1] Total amount for standard and advanced.
[2] Only 2004 figures available.

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which department of the Prison Service advises prisons on producing information booklets for prisoners; whether the distribution of information booklets in prisons is monitored; and what guidelines have been issued concerning what information should be provided for prisoners *(a)* on reception and induction into prison and *(b)* prior to release. [215295]

Paul Goggins: The What Works in Prison Unit at Prison Service headquarters is responsible for the four centrally produced prisoners' information books, published in collaboration with the Prison Reform Trust. Their distribution is not monitored centrally; prisons order the books direct from Prison Service Enterprise and Supply Services, who also arrange printing. The production of local information books is left to the discretion of individual prisons and is not centrally monitored. Establishments can call upon policy leads at Prison Service headquarters for advice on specific topics. The guidance provided in Prison Service Order (PSO) 0550 on reception, PSO 0550 on prisoner induction and PSO 2300 on resettlement, which are published on the Prison Service website. Audit arrangements apply through standards based on the PSOs.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department is taking to increase the amount of purposeful activity available for prisoners. [216802]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service is committed to increasing the provision of quality purposeful activity for prisoners. Through the Custody to Work initiative, an investment of over £14 million per annum is being provided to expand the initiatives that have a positive impact on reducing re-offending and contribute to purposeful activity.

This money is being used to develop the following purposeful activities across the prison estate: more accredited skills training in sectors with realistic job opportunities for released prisoners (such as construction, utilities, catering, industrial cleaning, warehousing and transport); job-search training and support; through-the-gate job placement; education and housing advice and support services.

Prison Industries occupy prisoners in out-of-cell activity and wherever possible help them gain skills, qualifications and work experience to improve their employment prospects on release. Over £4 million has been invested in industrial workshops over the past two years to help develop quality purposeful activities.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many NHS trusts have *(a)* complied with their statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, *(b)* published a race equality scheme and action plan and *(c)* carried out race impact assessments. [216546]

Mr. Hutton: I have been asked to reply.

Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) have performance management responsibility for NHS Trusts. Information on local race equality schemes and action plans, as well as race impact assessments can be obtained from SHAs.

To make sure that race equality is integral to delivering health services, four SHA chief executives in partnership with the Department and the Commission for Racial Equality developed a framework to assist national health service organisations measure for themselves their progress in promoting race equality within the health service. This guide can be accessed at (http://www.cre.gov.uk/pdfs.sha_race__equality_guide.pdf).

To ensure compliance with the legislation, the Department will be offering advice and support to NHS organisations in developing their new schemes. The Chief Executive Bulletin Issue 249, December 2004, included a reminder to all NHS organisations of the requirement to produce race equality schemes by 31 May 2005.

Royal Parks Constabulary

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what mechanisms the Royal Parks Constabulary staff pay and conditions will be protected if they transfer to the Metropolitan Police Service as proposed in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill. [215292]

Mr. Caborn: I have been asked to reply.

The key elements of the proposed transfer arrangements, which have been the subject of consultation with members of the Royal Parks Constabulary (RPC) and their union representatives, are as follows.

RPC pay rates are pegged at 85.5 per cent. of MPS rates; officers transferring to the MPS as constables will therefore immediately benefit from a higher rate of pay, as well as the much improved career prospects which the

MPS is able to offer. Their length of service and rank will be recognised, and they will have the opportunity to remain in the Royal Parks Operational Command Unit for a maximum of 10 years. If an officer is ineligible, or chooses not to transfer as a constable but wishes to transfer as a Community Support Officer or member of police staff, then the MPS have agreed to maintain their rate of pay on a mark time basis for three years. If officers are ineligible to become MPS officers they will also have the option of redundancy, though we hope that few will be in this position.

As civil servants, RPC officers are currently in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), whereas MPS officers are in the Police Pension Scheme (PPS). Officers transferring have the option of freezing their benefits in the PCSPS or transferring them to the PPS. We have worked very closely with the Government Actuary's Department on the arrangements for pensions transfers from the one to the other which are designed with the aim of providing at the time of retirement from the MPS a retirement package which will be at least as good as if they had remained in the PCSPS and retired at the same age.

The current retirement age for RPC officers is 60, subject to continuing satisfactory health, conduct and performance. For MPS officers the retirement age is 55, but the maximum retirement age is also 60, subject to application for, and annual approval of, extension of service. Annual extensions take into account health, conduct and efficiency, and the continuing requirement for the role. So RPC officers transferring will, subject to these requirements, have the opportunity to continue until 60.

The Police Act 1996 allows any person who was a member of a trade union immediately before joining a force to retain membership of that union with the consent of the Chief Officer. I understand that all requests from officers to retain union membership after their transfer to the MPS have been approved, and I see no reason why future requests should not also be approved.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Football

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions Ministers have had with the Football Association on the scheduling of local derby football matches. [218003]

Mr. Caborn: None.

The scheduling of football matches is a matter for the Football Association to decide in consultation with local police.

In the light of the events that took place during the matches at Everton and Burnley last weekend, I understand that the Football Association plans to review the scheduling of matches with the police and broadcasters in advance of the next round of the FA Cup.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that she has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209264]

Tessa Jowell: The information requested is listed as follows.

Secretary of State's ministerial engagements out of London that were cancelled and not rearranged 1 January 2004–17 January 2005

Date	*Engagement*
2 July 2004	Visit—Bath University
13 October 2004	Visit—Wilmslow High School
25 October 2004	Dinner—Warwick Business School
10 November 2004	NW Regional Public Health Culture and Health Think Tank, Liverpool

Secretary of State's ministerial engagements in London that were cancelled and not rearranged 1 January 2004–17 January 2005

Date	*Engagement*
9 January 2004	ExCel Exhibition Centre
28 January 2004	Delegation of theatre practitioners, House of Commons
28 January 2004	NOF Veterans Launch, Cabinet War Rooms
15 February 2004	BAFTA Film Awards, Odeon, Leicester Square
27 February 2004	FIFA Dinner, Wallace Collection
5 March 2004	Irish Rugby Reception, Irish Embassy, Grosvenor Place
31 March 2004	Parent Friendly Awards, Central London
7 April 2004	IPPR Dinner Public Interest Companies and Arts Regeneration, London
26 May 2004	"Reaching Out" Reception, Science Museum
8 June 2004	Visit—National Opera Studio, Wandsworth
1 October 2004	The Arts in America, Europe and Russia Conference, Spencer House
11 October 2004	Women of the Year Lunch and Assembly, The Savoy
20 October 2004	Visit—National Opera Studio, Wandsworth
9 November 2004	Dinner hosted by Adrian Friend—TAS scholarships, London
30 November 2004	Marketing Power 100—Women's Dinner, Wiltons, Jermyn Street

Staff Surveys

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne), 4 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1162–63W, on staff surveys, if she will place in the Library copies of the staff surveys conducted by her Department since 1997. [217471]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has conducted three staff surveys since 1997—in 2000, 2001 and 2003—and I am arranging for copies of each of the survey reports to be been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many targets have been

set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215793]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list organisations registered to provide competent person self-certification schemes for the purposes of compliance with Part P of the Building Regulations. [217542]

Phil Hope: The following organisations are authorised to operate competent person self-certification schemes for the purposes of compliance with Part P of the Building Regulations regarding the installation of fixed low or extra-low voltage electrical installations

BRE Certification Ltd.

British Standards Institution

ELECSA Ltd.

NAPIT Certification Ltd.

NICEIC Certification Services Ltd.

The following organisations are registered to provide competent person self-certification schemes for the installation of fixed low or extra-low voltage electrical installations as a necessary adjunct to or arising out of other work being carried out:

CORGI Services Ltd.

ELECSA Ltd.

NAPIT Certification Ltd.

NICEIC Certification Services Ltd.

Oil Firing Technical Association for the Petroleum Industry Ltd.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Minister of State for Housing and Planning expects to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 11 January. [217684]

Keith Hill: I replied to the hon. Member on 23 February.

Empty Dwellings

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many empty dwellings there have been in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each of the last three years. [217588]

Keith Hill: The requested information is tabled as follows:

Total number of vacant dwellings at 1 April, 2002–04

	2002	*2003*	*2004*
Lancashire	23,022	22,128	19,691
Chorley	1,067	1,280	1,301

Source:
ODPM Housing Strategy Statistical Appendices return and Housing Corporation Regulatory and Statistical Return.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what average length of time *(a)* council and *(b)* housing association properties were empty in the last period for which figures are available. [217595]

Keith Hill: No data are available to calculate the exact average length of time a council or a housing association property is vacant. However, figures for various vacant periods are available and are tabled as follows:

Length of vacant at 1 April 2004	*Local authorities Number of dwellings*	*Registered social landlords Number of dwellings/bedspaces*
Three weeks or less	12,200	9,100
Between three weeks and six weeks	8,900	6,000
Between six weeks and six months	15,700	11,200
Between six months and one year	6,500	5,800
Over one year	14,200	12,600
Total	57,500	44,700

Source:
ODPM Business Plan Statistical Appendices Annual Monitoring return and Housing Corporation Regulatory and Statistical Return

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* interim and *(b)* final empty property management orders have been issued in London since the Housing Act 2004 entered into force, broken down by local authority. [217615]

Keith Hill: No interim or final empty dwelling management orders have been made since the Housing Act 2004 received Royal Assent as the provisions have not yet been commenced.

It is currently the intention of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to commence the provisions on empty dwelling management orders in October 2005 following public consultation and the making of secondary legislation.

Green Flag Award

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of how many parks and green spaces *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful applications were made for the Green Flag Award scheme in each year since 1997; and how many parks and green spaces there are in England. [217796]

Phil Hope: The number of Green Flag Award successful and unsuccessful applicants since the Scheme's inception in 1997 are:

	Number of successful applicants	*Number of unsuccessful applicants*
1997–98	7	9
1998–99	16	7

	Number of: successful applicants	unsuccessful applicants
1999–2000	35	11
2000–01	55	24
2001–02	81	21
2002–03	122	49
2003–04	177	57
2004–05	245	63

An estimate of the total number of parks and green spaces in England was made in the "Public Parks Assessment" (May 2001), which suggested there were 27,000 parks covering 143,000 hectares.

Mobile Phone Base Stations

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make low-height base stations with wall-mounted antennae subject to normal planning and public consultation requirements; and if he will make a statement. [217701]

Yvette Cooper: The permitted development rights for electronic communications code system operators are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No. 2718). These permit some wall mounted antenna and exclude others. Those excluded will require planning permission.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will subject the planning process associated with the erection of mobile phone base stations to independent review as recommended by the National Radiological Protection Board Report, "Mobile Phones and Health 2004". [217703]

Yvette Cooper: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Glenda Jackson) on 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 869W.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what initiatives his Department is taking to reduce the numbers of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216621]

Yvette Cooper: Sickness absence is managed as part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's objective of continually seeking ways to improve the health and welfare of its staff in a sensitive and supportive way. While recognising that staff should return to work only when they are fit and ready to do so, we are committed to managing sickness absence effectively.

To improve the effective management of sickness absence in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, we are improving the mechanism used for collecting, analysing and monitoring sickness absences. Workshops for staff have commenced so that they can better understand the sickness absence procedures. In addition, we will promulgate the recommendations identified by the Ministerial Taskforce in their "Managing Attendance in the Public Sector Delivery Plan". A copy of the report can be found at www.hse-databases.co.uk/gse/sickness.pdf

HEALTH

Bedside Telephones (Charges)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the rates of telephone charges for patients using bedside telephones in NHS hospitals; and if he will make a statement. [216152]

Mr. Hutton: Bedside television and telephone services are now provided at around 75,000 beds in 155 national health service hospitals. Typically, the cost for an outgoing call made by the patient from the bedside is around 10 pence per minute (minimum 20 pence).

Crohn's Disease (Children)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children in England are diagnosed as suffering from Crohn's disease; what treatment provision is available to them; and what the average cost of treatment is per child. [216926]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the numbers of children diagnosed with Crohn's disease and the average cost of treatment is not available. There were 2,491 admissions involving children and young people up to the age of 18 with a primary diagnosis of Crohn's disease to hospitals in England in 2003–04. Most patients will be treated with drugs, including steroids, to reduce inflammation or by means of special liquid feeds to rest the bowel. Surgery may be required to remove narrowed or damaged parts of the intestine. The cost of treatment will vary according to the severity of the condition and any complications. Examples of costs of selected hospital inpatient elective treatments for people with Crohn's disease are shown in the table.

Primary diagnosis of Crohn's disease: examples of costs and numbers

Healthcare resource group	National average cost per elective (£)	Number of in-patient finished admission episodes (all ages)	Number of in-patient finished admission episodes (0–18 years)
P12—Major gastrointestinal or metabolic disorders	1,815	1,540	1,540
F54—Inflammatory bowel disease—endoscopic or intermediate procedures in people under age 70 without complications	1,068	4,888	392
F06—Diagnostic procedures; oesophagus and stomach	605	362	151
F56—Inflammatory bowel disease in people under age 70 without complications	1,079	7,126	99
F32—Large intestine—very major procedures	4,587	789	74

Notes:

1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

3. The main operation is the first recorded operation in the HES data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, e.g., time waited, but the figures for "all operations count of episodes" give a more complete count of episodes with an operation.
4. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
5. Healthcare resource groups (HRGs)—it should be noted that there may be many OPCS/ICD codes that map to a single HRG (a category into which similar treatments are grouped) and these are the national average costs at HRG level—they are not the costs of the individual codes within the HRG, so the actual costs of such OPCS codes, etc. may differ from those detailed.

Sources:

Finished admission episodes: HES, Department of Health.

National average costs: Reference Costs 2003 [relating to the financial year 2002–03] for activity undertaken by national health service trusts in England, for NHS patients.

Deep Vein Thrombosis

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many in-patient admissions there were for deep vein thrombosis in drug addicts in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004, broken down by hospital. [209104]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information showing the total number of finished admissions to national health service trust hospitals in England during 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04, where deep vein thrombosis was the primary diagnosis and where drug addiction was mentioned, has been placed in the Library.

Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much money each primary care trust in the Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority area has received for helping general practitioner surgeries to *(a)* expand, *(b)* build new surgeries and *(c)* renovate outdated buildings in each of the last four years; and what the budgets are for the coming financial year; [214609]

(2) how much money the Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Area *(a)* has received and *(b)* is due to receive under the Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) Scheme, broken down by primary care trust; [216471]

(3) how much of the 2004–05 Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) allocation to Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority has been spent, broken down by primary care trust. [216472]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are presently no national health service local investment finance trust (LIFT) schemes or private finance initiative (PFI) activity related to general practitioner premises improvements in the Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area. Dorset and premises improvements in the Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area. Dorset and Somerset SHA has advised that it received no applications from local primary care trusts for the fourth wave of LIFT schemes.

Free Eye Tests (Leicester, South)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many free eye tests for pensioners there have been in Leicester, South in each year since 1997. [217984]

Dr. Ladyman: Figures for the number of sight tests by constituency or by pensioners are not collected centrally.

The table shows the number of national health service sight tests paid by the Leicestershire health authority (HA) for the years ending 31 March 2000 to 2003, and the six primary care trusts (PCTs) covering the old Leicestershire HA for the year ending 31 March 2004.

General ophthalmic services: number of sight tests paid by Leicestershire HA for patients aged 60 and over for the years ending 31 March 2000–04

	HA/PCT name	*Number of sight tests for aged 60 and over (Thousands)*
1999–2000	Leicestershire HA	53.9
2000–01	Leicestershire HA	69.4
2001–02	Leicestershire HA	75.1
2002–03	Leicestershire HA	76.1
2003–04	Melton, Rutland and Harborough PCT	10.9
	Leicester City West PCT	6.8
	Hinckley and Bosworth PCT	7.0
	Charnwood and North West Leicestershire PCT	22.9
	Eastern Leicester PCT	18.3
	South Leicestershire PCT	15.9
	Total	81.8

Notes:

1. Eligibility for NHS sight tests was extended to patients aged 60 and over from 1 April 1999.
2. PCTs took over responsibilities from HAs in October 2002.

MRSA

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the incidence of MRSA in hospitals in Sussex. [217032]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There have been 262 reports of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemia by trusts in Sussex from April 2003 to March 2004.

It is for primary care trusts in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to meet national and local priorities for improving health, and modernising services, including reducing hospital infections.

I am advised that acute trusts in Sussex are working hard to reduce the incidence of MRSA and have clear policies and strategies in place to help them achieve this.

Nurses' Uniforms

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of NHS trust nurses' uniforms were *(a)* laundered at home and *(b)* cleaned under (i) commercial contract and (ii) in-house arrangements in the most recent period for which figures are available. [217069]

Mr. Hutton: Information relating to the proportion of nurses' uniforms that are laundered at home or under contract arrangements is not collected centrally.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of running primary care trusts was in the most recent year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [213959]

Mr. Hutton: Latest available figures show that, for the 164 primary care trusts established in 2001–02, administration costs totalled £490,075,000.

Shipman Inquiry

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of each stage of the Shipman Inquiry, broken down by main budget headings; and what the cost was of legal fees paid to each party represented. [215623]

Mr. Hutton: It is not possible to provide details of the cost of each stage of the Shipman Inquiry, but expenditure for the Inquiry as a whole up to the end of January 2005 is shown in the tables.

£ thousand

Shipman Inquiry expenditure (to 31 January 2005)	*Amount*
Chairman costs including clerk, expenses	79
Legal costs including inquiry legal team, agents, represented parties, other legal costs, experts, witnesses/search/research costs	10,623
Communications including printing/other media, website, public relations, subscriptions, publications	1,185
Facilities including fixtures and fittings, rental, maintenance, copier rental, hospitality	2,370
Information technology including project management, hardware, installations, technical support, legal document management, telecoms	6,231
Other administrative costs	436
Information technology including project management, hardware, installations, technical support, legal document management, telecoms	6,231
Other administrative costs including postage/courier, security, other admin costs	436
Staff costs	1,867
VAT refunds	(2,013)
Total	20,778

The legal fees of the represented parties funded from the inquiry's budget are shown in the following table.

£ thousand

Legal fees of represented parties funded by Shipman Inquiry (to 31 January 2005)	*Amount*
Tameside Families Support Group	2,159
Detective Inspector David Smith	126.5
Mr. Alan Massey, funeral director	27
Mrs. Primrose Shipman	35
Market Street surgery staff	28.5
Dr. Alan Banks, Medical Adviser, West Pennine health authority	19.5
Tameside Register Office staff	15
Mrs. Christine Whitworth, executor of victim	0.4

£ thousand

Legal fees of represented parties funded by Shipman Inquiry (to 31 January 2005)	*Amount*
Dr. Michael Overton, relative of victim	0.3
Mrs. Janet Schofield, housing manager at sheltered housing complex	1.4
Mrs. Ghislaine Brandt and Mr. Peter Rothman, Market Street pharmacy	3.5
Total	2,416.1

SCOTLAND

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213824]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office has incurred no expenditure on congestion charges or penalty charge notices. Costs incurred by vehicles provided by the Government Car Service (GCS) to the Scotland Office are paid by the GCS. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 89–90W.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213255]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 910W.

Regional Assistance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received about mismanagement of EU regional development grants; and if he will make a statement. [217277]

Mrs. McGuire: Neither the Secretary of State nor I has received any such representations.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what procedures are in place in his Department to ensure that EU regional development grants are used in accordance with European Commission rules. [217281]

Mrs. McGuire: European Structural Funds programmes are required to operate in accordance with European Commission Regulations. The Scotland Office does not have oversight of any such programmes.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing

copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215221]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office will place copies of information released under Freedom of Information, where considered appropriate in terms of the wider public interest, on the departmental website where this is believed to be the most suitable method for publication. In some instances, it may be necessary to direct interested individuals to other locations providing reasonable access to published material.

This corresponds with earlier guidance on publication schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, which recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and NDPBs should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the publication scheme where appropriate.

G8 Summit (Gleneagles)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to be able to estimate the cost to public funds of the G8 summit at Gleneagles in July. [217454]

Mrs. McGuire: Discussions on the detailed arrangements for the summit, including resource matters, are continuing between the relevant authorities. However, as I indicated in my reply of 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1060W, it is not customary to disclose the security costs for such events.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214901]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Details on the cost of mobile phones used by staff are not recorded separately.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215834]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the recent answer given by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W.

CABINET OFFICE

Catering Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215045]

Mr. Miliband: Information breaking down the expenditure by the categories requested cannot be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

For details of the Cabinet Office spend on entertainment in each year since 1997, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 88W.

"Delivering on the Promise"

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the total cost was of the "Delivering on the Promise" technology programme. [217521]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Allan) on 16 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1237W.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the discontinuation of the DotP technology programme and the decision to switch to a commercially available off-the-shelf system. [217525]

Mr. Miliband: The DotP application is a content management software product. Since the original development of DotP the software market has matured and there may now be commercial-off-the-shelf products to which DotP could transition, so that it continues to deliver the strategic benefit and best value for money always envisaged by the DotP Programme. This is being considered and Government are still retaining all of their options.

Equal Pay Review

Mr. Gill: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether the most recent equal pay review conducted by his Department included comparisons of *(a)* ethnic groups, *(b)* disabled and able-bodied employees and *(c)* part-time and full-time employees. [217496]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office (CO), Central Office of Information (COI) and Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) all operate their own delegated pay systems and therefore completed individual equal pay audits in 2003. Copies of the reviews are available in the Library of the House.

The approach and level of detail varied reflecting the size of the organisation and the issues they needed to address. The CO review covered gender, ethnicity, staff with disabilities and working patterns. COI covered gender, ethnicity and working patterns and the GCDA review focused on gender.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what initiatives his Department is taking to reduce the numbers of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216630]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office is committed to managing sick absence effectively, having implemented all recommendations of the 1998 report "Working Well Together". These are supported by robust monitoring procedures and in-house guidance and training for

managers and individuals. In support of the 2004 report "Managing Sick Absence in the Public Sector", the Cabinet Office will ensure that managers proactively monitor sick absence and that they have the tools and training to do so.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Community Interest Companies

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress she is making in defining the structure of proposed community interest companies; and if she will make a statement. [216101]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 798–99W.

Employment Rights

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on changes in employment rights since 1997. [217463]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Since 1997, we have introduced a foundation of decent minimum standards in the workplace. People at work in Britain have benefited from:

- a minimum wage
- a right not to work more than 48 hours a week
- four weeks' paid leave
- a discipline and grievance procedure (and to be accompanied by a Trade Union official)
- a right to no discrimination on grounds of religion, belief or sexual orientation
- a right to membership of a trade union
- a right to trade union recognition for collective bargaining in specified circumstances
- equal treatment for part-time and fixed-term employees compared with their full-time colleagues
- protection for public interest disclosure (whistleblowers)
- paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave and time off for domestic emergencies
- a right to request flexible working with an obligation on employers to treat the request seriously (for parents of children up to six)
- Maternity leave increased from 16 weeks' paid leave at £60 in 1997 to 26 weeks paid at £100 or more.

In addition, from April 2005 employees will gain new rights to request information and consultation.

The improvements we have made to employment rights have not adversely affected the labour market, which is performing well. We have proved that regulation, providing it is well designed and well implemented, is not an obstacle to high employment or running businesses successfully.

The Government are committed to ensuring that employment rights are effectively implemented in all workplaces, so that they benefit all workers, including the most vulnerable.

In the 2004 pre-Budget report, we pledged improvements to the arrangements for parents to take paid leave after the birth of a child and to extend rights to work flexibly. We are committed to consulting with employers and other interested parties early this year.

Nordic Customs Union

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the operation of the Nordic Customs Union in relation to the proposed restrictions on Norwegian imports of salmon into the EU. [216701]

Mr. Alexander: None, the Nordic Customs Union does not exist. The provisions of the European Economic Area apply to the movement of goods between Norway and member states of the European Union.

Parental Leave

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what changes to paternity and maternity leave have been introduced since 1997. [217464]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In 1999 we extended maternity leave for all employed women from 14 weeks to 18 weeks. The qualifying service for additional maternity leave was reduced to one year. Previously qualifying service was two years for women working at least 16 hours per week or five years for women working between eight and sixteen hours per week.

Leave was further simplified and extended in April 2003. All employed women are now entitled to 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave. Women with six months qualifying service are able to take a further 26 weeks' additional maternity leave.

The right to paid paternity leave was introduced in April 2003. Eligible fathers can choose to take one or two weeks' paternity leave in the first eight weeks after their child is born.

Regional Development Agencies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated Government expenditure by regional development agencies is expected to be in 2004–05; and what expenditure is projected for 2005–06. [211137]

Jacqui Smith: I have set out in the following table the planned expenditure by each of England's nine Regional Development Agencies in 2004–05 and their indicative allocations for 2005–06.

£ million

	2004–05	*2005–06*
Advantage West Midlands	235	272
East of England Development Agency	91	129
East Midlands Development Agency	138	156
London Development Agency	327	373
North West Development Agency	226	382
One North East	365	240
South East of England Development Agency	128	157
South West of England Development Agency	111	153
Yorkshire Forward	284	295
Total[1]	1,905	2,157

[1] The RDA budget for 2005–06 following SR2004 was £2.163

billion. That figure excluded £21 million non-cash cost provision. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has since changed the profile of their contribution to RDAs so that the RDAs overall allocations is reduced by £26 million in 2005–06 and increased by £14 million in 2006–07 and £12 million 2007–08.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Appointments

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to his Answer of 9 February to Question reference 215189, if he will break down the figures provided in tables 1A, 1B and 2 by gender. [216945]

Mr. Lammy: The breakdown of the figures provided in the answer on 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1609W (and in my pursuant answer yesterday) are detailed in the following tables.

Tables 1A and 1B show full-time appointments for the calendar years 1975–97. The figures include appointments of Judicial officers to full time Tribunal posts for Tribunals administered by DCA (formerly Lord Chancellor's Department) but exclude those administered by other Government Departments (such as the Employment Tribunal and The Appeal Service and its pre 1999 predecessor The Independent Tribunal Service). These tables also include lay magistrates appointments from 1990 onwards.

Figures for the appointment and the gender split of part time judicial officers between 1975 and 1997, and for lay magistrates prior to 1990 is not given, as DCA does not hold complete figures on the appointment and gender of these judicial officers who were appointed during these periods, and those that exist could only be determined at disproportionate cost.

The gender split for full-time and part-time judicial officer appointments for each year between 1998–2004 is set out in tables 2A-D. These figures are obtained from the Judicial Appointments Annual Reports to Parliament for each of the financial years from 1998–2004.

It is also necessary to mention that while every care has been taken, the figures supplied for the years 1975–98 may not be wholly complete as they are drawn from very old records. For some of the very early appointments, the DCA have only a surname and initials thus it is not absolutely certain what the gender was, and in these cases, on the basis that there were very few women in the judiciary that long ago, it has been assumed that they are men.

Table 1A: 1975–84 full-time appointments

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
1975–97 full-time appointments gender split			
1975	44	1	45
1976	45	1	46
1977	41	2	43
1978	54	3	57
1979	36	3	39
1980	62	3	65
1981	39	2	41
1982	50	3	53
1983	47	1	48
1984	61	1	62

Table 1B: 1985–94 full-time and lay magistrates appointments

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
1985	50	3	53
1986	78	4	82
1987	52	2	54
1988	59	1	60
1989	49	5	54
1990	49	6	55
1991	85	7	92
1992	105	15	120
1993	112	15	127
1994	76	15	91
1995	93	17	110
1996	91	9	100
1997	55	11	66
Lay magistrates			
1985	n/a	n/a	—
1986	n/a	n/a	—
1987	n/a	n/a	—
1988	n/a	n/a	—
1989	n/a	n/a	—
1990	996	1,063	2,059
1991	1,008	1,009	2,017
1992	1,080	990	2,070
1993	1,045	1,017	2,062
1994	810	783	1,593
1995	907	936	1,843
1996	830	852	1,682
1997	764	809	1,573

Tables 2A-D 1998–99 to 2003–04 full-time, part-time (fee paid) and lay magistrates appointments

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Table 2A: full-time appointments gender split						
Male	118	74	155	94	125	95
Female	30	21	43	31	31	31
Total	148	95	198	125	156	126
Table 2B: part-time appointments gender split						
Male	367	264	390	507	358	227
Female	119	105	165	283	183	127
Total	486	369	555	790	541	354
Table 2C: Lord Chancellor lay magistrates appointments (excluding Duchy of Lancaster)						
Male	654	692	703	763	714	777
Female	624	731	663	711	696	701
Total	1,278	1,423	1,366	1,474	1,410	1,478

Tables 2A-D 1998–99 to 2003–04 full-time, part-time (fee paid) and lay magistrates appointments

	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Table 2D: lay magistrates appointments in the Duchy of Lancaster						
Male	n/a	n/a	132	164	124	152
Female	n/a	n/a	120	148	89	128
Total	—	—	252	312	213	280

Parental Contact Orders

Mrs. May: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 568W, on parental contract orders, how many of the 67,184 cases of disputed contact dealt with by the courts in 2003 were related to previous contact orders made in the same year. [217388]

Mr. Lammy: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, I would refer the right hon. Member to the Consultation Paper "Relationship Breakdown: Children's Needs and Parent's Responsibilities" (page14) where it confirms that "in just over half of the 300 cases surveyed as part of my Department Consumer Strategy work, there was at least one repeat application". It should be noted that this figure was, however, based on a limited sample in three courts and was just a snapshot at one point in time (the survey was carried out during February 2004). It is not known how many of the repeat orders related to previous orders in the same year.

It is important to note that not all repeat applications indicate conflict. It is common for orders to be revised to recognise a geographical move, change in working hours, or children getting older and needing different arrangements.

DEFENCE

A400M

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the A400M. [216552]

Mr. Ingram: A contract for the development and production of the A400M aircraft was signed with Airbus Military on 27 May 2003 by the Organisation for Joint Armaments Co-operation on behalf of the participating nations (Germany, France, Turkey, Spain, Belgium, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom). The contract milestones are being achieved, and as previously announced, on 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 839W the aircraft's planned In-Service Date for UK is 2011.

Aircraft

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money has been spent on aircraft research by his Department in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* the North West since 1997. [216232]

Mr. Ingram: We recognise the importance of the aerospace industry in the North West, both to the Ministry of Defence and the wider economy. We have not placed any 'research' contracts with companies in the North West region but as my hon. Friend will be aware, the Ministry of Defence places a considerable volume of work with companies in the region on both new programmes and support for in-service aircraft. Much of the work on new programmes is classified as 'development', however, details on money spent on such programmes is not held centrally, and therefore could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Assault Cases

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of out-of-court settlements for assault cases involving members of the armed forces has been in the last 12 months; and how many cases this represents. [217799]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has paid compensation of £269,218 during the past 12 months in 15 out of court settlements for assault cases involving members of HM forces on the basis of the Department's primary or vicarious liability.

BAE

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the value was of the enabling contract for the Harrier Joint Upgrade and Maintenance Programme awarded to BAE Systems on 15 November 2004. [217385]

Mr. Ingram: £20.7 million.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Harrier GR7s are being upgraded at BAE Warton; and at what cost. [216319]

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the likely costs of *(a)* upgrading and *(b)* servicing fast jets at BAE Warton. [216882]

Mr. Ingram: At present nine Harrier aircraft are being modified at Warton. Three aircraft have already completed their modification. The 12 Harrier aircraft are being upgraded for a total cost of some £33 million (VAT exclusive).

Planned upgrades to bring all Tranche 1 Typhoon aircraft to the same standard are included in the production contract price. The majority of this work is likely to be carried out at BAE Warton. Subsequent upgrades have yet to be defined and costed.

Correspondence

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of letters sent in the current Parliament by defence Ministers to hon. Members following undertakings given in debates on the floor of the House, in Westminster Hall and in Standing Committee. [217995]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence endeavours to routinely place copies of such letters in the Library of the House. Confirmation that this had been done in every instance since June 2001 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Counter-Mobility Capability

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on British counter-mobility capability; what progress has been made on the Mines in the Next Century project; and if he will make a statement. [216702]

Mr. Ingram: The counter-mobility capability for the British Army is currently provided by the Shielder scatterable mine system and the Barmine anti-tank mine. We are currently considering how the capability can be provided in future through the Future Counter Mobility Capability programme which draws together the requirements of the Mines in the Next Century programme, and a number of other counter-mobility programmes. This work is in its concept phase.

Future Surface Combatant

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the reasons were for the cancellation of the Future Surface Combatant project. [216106]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Surface Combatant (FSC) programme has not been cancelled. Some of the assumptions associated with this project, which is still at the concept stage, have changed as a result of the MOD's recent planning rounds. As a result, it was decided to disband the FSC Integrated Project Team and transfer the programme to the DPA Future Business Group.

Landing Ship Logistics

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the original agreed contract price in relation to the contract with Swan Hunter (Tyneside) for the construction of Landing Ship Logistics (LSL) Largs Bay and Lyme Bay was; what the latest anticipated cost is; how much BAE Systems will be able to claim from the Department by reason of the failure of Swan Hunter to deliver design information to BAE Systems in relation to the two LSLs that that company is to build; whether his Department will claim from Swan Hunter in respect of its lateness in delivering design information on the LSLs; and which party under the terms of the original Swan Hunter contract undertook to accept the risk of the engineering requirements being greater than anticipated. [216889]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The original contract price for the design and construction cost of the two Swan Hunter Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) ships, Largs Bay and Lyme Bay, was £148 million and the anticipated cost is now £235 million. The Ministry of Defence has made a provision of £40 million in the 2003–04 Accounts for delay and dislocation costs in respect to the two LSD(A)s that BAE Systems are building and has already paid £16 million as an initial payment. Negotiations continue on the final settlement figure with the company. As further disclosure could prejudice these negotiations I am withholding further information under the commercial interests exemption of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The MOD will not be pursuing a claim from Swan Hunter in respect of providing information to BAE Systems as this would seriously jeopardise company's ability to delivery the Landing Ship Dock Auxiliary capability. The Swan Hunter undertook the engineering risk in delivering against the original contract. However, in September 2003, when the company announced that it could not absorb the risk and complete the contract at the agreed price and timescale, both financial and timescale risks were in effect transferred to the MOD.

This new Landing Ship Dock Auxiliary class will provide a significantly enhanced capability that will enable the faster deployment of troops, vehicles and stores into operational and front line areas, at a safer distance and in worse sea conditions than the Landing Ships they will replace. The construction of Largs Bay and Lyme Bay is virtually complete and the retention of Swan Hunter as the lead yard offers MOD and the taxpayer the best value for money solution for delivering this new capability.

Military Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many military aircraft crashes have occurred in the UK in each year since 1993. [217294]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is given in the following table:

	Number of air accidents
1993	12
1994	10
1995	10
1996	12
1997	9
1998	7
1999	12
2000	8
2001	[1]9
2002	8
2003	2
2004	6
Total	105

[1] This figure includes two USAF F15 aircraft.

The figures show air accidents in the UK and surrounding waters, resulting in category four or five damage. These are defined as: (Category 4)—damage to an aircraft that is not repairable on site because special facilities or equipment is unavailable; or (Category 5) damaged beyond economic repair. The figures exclude aircraft damage due to hostile action or ground accidents.

Mutual Defence Agreement

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Exchange of Information and Visits reports have been generated since 1975 as part of the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement; and if he will place copies of them in the Library. [216678]

Mr. Ingram: Since 1975, Exchanges of Information by Visit and Report have been raised in 34 subjects. Reports are being withheld in order not to prejudice international relations and to safeguard national security.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the occupants of each make towards running costs; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment was in 2003–04. [213563]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1037W. I would also refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 1273W, to the hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Mr. Flight).

Service Accommodation

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will cause additional service married quarters accommodation to be built to house armed forces personnel of the same sex living together in partnerships. [218020]

Mr. Caplin: There should be no requirement to build new houses.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effects upon availability of accommodation in married quarters for service families of making them available to personnel of the armed forces of the same sex living together in partnership. [218022]

Mr. Caplin: It is not possible to identify the number of Service personnel who will elect to enter into a Civil Partnership. However, it is assessed that the numbers will be small and any associated requirement for married quarters would be absorbed within the existing housing management margin.

Service Medals

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 18 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1229W, on service medals, how many personnel who have served in operational theatres since 1997 and have fulfilled the awarding criteria for a medal have yet to receive the medal; how many service personnel who have fulfilled the criteria for long service medals have yet to receive the medal; how many personnel who have served in *(a)* Afghanistan, *(b)* Sierra Leone, *(c)* Iraq and *(d)* the Balkans (i) fulfil the criteria for, (ii) have received and (iii) have yet to receive the relevant campaign medal; and what the longest period is for which a serviceman has had to wait for a medal awarded for service since 1997. [216589]

Mr. Caplin: The information is not held in the format requested. However, all medals irrespective of type are normally engraved and despatched by the Department within two weeks of eligibility being established.

As at 4 February 2005 there were 4,815 personnel whose eligibility had been established, but had yet to receive their medal. Of these, 2,782 medals were waiting to be engraved, including 651 Iraq medals and 358 Canal Zone medals. The balance of 1,773 comprised all other awards including those for Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and long service medals.

In the remaining 2,033 cases, medals had been engraved and were awaiting despatch, but it is not possible to break these down by medal type.

Medals for service in the Balkans are NATO medals, which are normally issued by the NATO authorities in the operational theatre details. Figures relating to these medals are not held by the MOD.

Tornado GR4

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where he plans to house the additional service personnel who will provide depth support for the Tornado GR4 at RAF Marham; and at what estimated cost. [217195]

Mr. Ingram: The issue of accommodation was considered during the affordability analysis of the Investment Appraisal options. Further planning is now taking place to define the accommodation requirements at RAF Marham as progress is made in implementing the End to End programme.

Transport Aircraft

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the lift capability of the *(a)* A400M and *(b)* C-130 Hercules is. [216883]

Mr. Ingram: The A400M is contracted to deliver a load capability of 32 tonnes. The C-130 Hercules Mk 3 has a normal maximum load capability of 18 tonnes.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department has made of the total value in *(a)* monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the country's total gross domestic product of (i) opium and heroin production in and (ii) opium and heroin exports from Afghanistan in each financial year since 2001–02; and if he will make a statement. [216708]

Mr. Rammell: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducts an annual survey into the level of opium poppy cultivation and production in Afghanistan. Full details can be found on their website http://www.unodc.org.

UNODC assesses that opium production and farm gate value of opiates in Afghanistan since 1999 is:

	Production (tonnes)	*Farm gate value (US$)*
1999	4,600	183 million
2000	3,300	91 million
2001	185	56 million
2002	3,400	1.2 billion
2003	3,600	1.02 billion
2004	4,200	0.6 billion

Since 2003 UNODC have also looked to assess the value of opiate exports from Afghanistan:

	Total export value of opiates (US$ billion)	*Percentage of licit GDP*
2003	2.3	50
2004	2.8	60

The UK, as lead nation, is committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy. I refer the hon. Member to the written statement I made on Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 17–18WS.

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his estimate is of the annual cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies, for each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211596]

Mr. Alexander: The cost of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) enhanced early retirement schemes from 1997–98 to 2003–04 is shown in the table. Final figures for 2004–05 are not yet available. However, as a result of a recent trawl for volunteers to help meet the FCO's efficiency targets, we estimate the cost of the early retirement programme between 2004–05 and 2007–08 to be around £30 million.

	£
1997–98	2,824,767
1998–99	3,314,768
1999–2000	3,801,817
2000–01	1,871,688
2001–02	2,825,390
2002–03	2,983,651
2003–04	3,814,280

Correspondence

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter of 20 October 2004, from the hon. Member for West Chelmsford, transferred from the Home Office on 1 November 2004, Ref. M15507/4, concerning Mr. Christian Magnussen. [217808]

Mr. Mullin: UKVisas, the Department responsible for entry clearance matters arising overseas, replied to the hon. Member on 16 December 2004.

Counter-terrorism Intelligence

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the countries with which the UK officially shares intelligence of a counter-terrorism nature; through what channels this intelligence sharing is undertaken; and if he will make a statement. [216381]

Mr. Straw: The security and intelligence agencies engage in liaison with the intelligence and law enforcement agencies in a large number of countries where we have common interests and concerns. Such arrangements depend on confidentiality and it is not the Government's policy to comment further on them.

Departmental Publications for the Visually Impaired

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many and what proportion of publications issued by his Department are available in *(a)* Braille, *(b)* autoprint, *(c)* large print and *(d)* easy read format. [210467]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Of the 70 publications produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Services Publishing at the behest of FCO budget holders during 2003–04, other than the Departmental Report which was produced in 11 point type, none were requested to be made available in Braille, autoprint, large print or easy to read formats.

However, FCO Services continue to encourage budget holders to provide material in other formats where appropriate. Many are available on-line at www.fco.gov.uk and the FCO Departmental Report was produced with the co-operation of the Plain English Campaign and typeset in a larger size. The FCO web platform meets UK Government guidelines on accessibility for the visually impaired allowing text and images on websites to be displayed via screen readers and Braille displays.

Diplomatic Posts

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons he is closing the British Embassy in Madagascar. [217678]

Mr. Mullin: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear in his written statement on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS, we are making changes to our overseas network to reflect changing demands and challenges and to ensure the UK has a cost-effective and flexible network of overseas representation. This involves the closure of several diplomatic posts including the British Embassy in Antananarivo.

This is in no way a reflection on the current Government of Madagascar or on the quality of our bilateral relations. We will work with the Government of Madagascar to establish alternative forms of British representation, probably through an

Honorary Consul in Antananarivo, supported by non-resident accreditation from one of our diplomatic posts in the region.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether closures of British missions other than those already publicly announced are planned for financial years 2005–06 and 2006–07. [217756]

Mr. Straw: No further decisions have been made to close missions, but as circumstance change we continuously review the shape of the network to align our resources more effectively to our priorities.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effects on British interests of the closure of the British embassies in *(a)* El Salvador, *(b)* Honduras and *(c)* Nicaragua. [217809]

Mr. Rammell: The decision to close our embassies in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua was taken based on the need to align our resources with our priorities, to maximise efficiency and ensure that the UK has a cost-effective and flexible network of overseas representation.

However, we continue to have good relations, and work closely, with these countries. We have appointed non-resident Ambassadors to El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua to maintain British interests in the region through working visits, and we continue to provide consular services through Honorary Consuls in each country.

EC-Canada Joint Committee

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the EC-Canada Joint Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214310]

Mr. MacShane: I have been asked to reply.

The EU-Canada Joint Co-operation Committee met once under the Italian and once under the Dutch presidencies, on 24 November 2003 in Ottawa and 30 November 2004 in Brussels respectively. It did not meet under the Irish presidency. This is a Commission led group, which the Presidency of the day attends as an observer only. As such there were no British officials present at these meetings. Further information may be found at www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

EU Commissioners

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is on EU Commissioners' involvement in the domestic politics of member states. [216135]

Mr. MacShane: The current Treaty articles on the Commission make clear the complete independence enjoyed by the members of the Commission, who are required to discharge their duties in the general interest of the Community.

The UK Government fully supports the Code of Conduct for Commissioners, which states that "Commissioners may be active members of political parties or trade unions, provided that this does not compromise their availability for service in the Commission."

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) EEC-Russia Co-operation Committee, (ii) EC-Georgia Co-operation Committee and (iii) EC-San Marino Co-operation Committee met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if he will make a statement. [216226]

Mr. MacShane: During this period, there was one meeting of the EU-Georgia Co-operation Committee—on 16 July 2004 in Brussels. There were two meetings of the EU-Russia Co-operation Committee—on 20 October 2003 in Moscow and on 21 October 2004 in Brussels. There was one meeting of the EU-San Marino Co-operation Committee—on 12 July 2004 in Brussels. As Co-operation Committees are chaired by the Commission, with support from the presidency, there were no UK representatives at these meetings. However, the UK participated fully in formulating the EU's position for the meetings.

Intelligence

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are being taken within the Counter Terrorism Policy Department to optimise systems for the processing of intelligence information; and if he will make a statement. [216904]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Counter Terrorism Policy Department (CTPD) receives electronically an average of around 270 intelligence reports a week. As Sir Michael Jay, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the FCO, foreshadowed to the Foreign Affairs Committee in February 2003, the number of officers dealing with these reports has been increased—from two to five. These officers immediately alert all other FCO colleagues who need to be aware of particular reports, and ensure that any necessary action is set in hand—for example, prompt revision of FCO Travel Advice. CTPD is supported by a team of three FCO officers located within the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC)—a multi-agency body which brings together those involved across government in assessing and reporting of terrorist threat intelligence. This arrangement ensures that CTPD has advance notice of JTAC threat reports.

Iran

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many persons under 18 years he estimates are held under death penalty sentence in Iran; what information he has received in relation to each person's *(a)* personal details and

(b) crime; what representations the Government has made, and on what date, in respect of each individual case; and if he will make a statement. [215695]

Mr. Rammell: We take the sentencing to death of juveniles very seriously. Ministers have made clear our concerns on many occasions. Most recently I did so when I met the Iranian Ambassador on 7 February.

Amnesty International report that there are currently at least 30 juveniles awaiting execution. With our strong support the EU has, in the last six months, urged the Iranian authorities to review the sentences imposed on 15 juvenile cases. Individual cases also form an important part of the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue; the last session took place in June 2004.

The UK, along with all other EU member states, co-sponsored a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 21 December, which called on Iran, "to comply with its obligations under article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights not to impose the sentence of death for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age".

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information his Department has received on the number of sentences of *(a)* execution and *(b)* amputation in Iran in each of the last five years; how many were carried out on persons under 18 years of age; and if he will make a statement. [215696]

Mr. Rammell: We have serious concerns about the use of the death penalty in Iran. We have made our concern clear to the Iranian authorities on many occasions. The latest figures from Amnesty International indicate that 108 people were executed in Iran in 2003. And that since 1990 11 juvenile offenders have been executed.

The Iranian authorities declared a "moratorium" on amputations in March 2003. We are concerned by reports that people continue to receive sentences of amputation but it is unclear whether any amputations have been carried out.

Iraq

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Governments of *(a)* Syria, *(b)* Iran and *(c)* Jordan on insurgency in Iraq. [217187]

Mr. Rammell: Ministers and officials frequently discuss the situation in Iraq with the Syrian, Jordanian, and Iranian authorities. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised this issue with Syrian Foreign Minister Shara'a in October 2004 and our ambassador in Damascus raises it on a regular basis. My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean discussed the situation in Iraq with King Abdullah of Jordan in October 2004 and February 2005 respectively. The Foreign Secretary met with Hassan Rouhani, Secretary General of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council on 13 December 2004 and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Director-General John Sawers met with Foreign Minister Kharrazi and other senior figures in Iran's Government on 2 February 2005.

Israel

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the likelihood of the Israeli Government's budget being approved by the Knesset before 31 March; and if he will make a statement. [216704]

Mr. Rammell: This is a matter for the Israeli Government.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart Silvan Shalom regarding Shalom's announced plan to campaign for a national referendum on the proposed pull out of Israeli forces from the occupied territories; what assessment his Department has made of the impact of this plan on the *(a)* viability of the proposal and *(b)* perception such proposals foster of the Israeli Government among (i) Palestinian officials, (ii) the Palestinian public and (iii) the Israeli public; and if he will make a statement. [216705]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary last discussed the disengagement plan with Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom during his visit to Israel on 24 November 2004. The Government of Israel do not plan to hold a referendum on the disengagement plan. The debate on whether a referendum should be held is an internal Israeli political matter.

We welcome Prime Minister Sharon's plan to withdraw all settlements from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. We would like to see any withdrawal take place as soon as possible and be as complete as possible. We see the withdrawal of Israeli troops and dismantling of settlements as a step towards implementing the Roadmap.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of Israel's opening of the Erez crossing between Israel and Gaza; what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* social and *(b)* economic impact this will have on (i) the Palestinian workers, (ii) the local community and (iii) the community in the Gaza strip as a whole; and if he will make a statement. [216706]

Mr. Rammell: We welcome the announcement by Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz on 10 February that 1,000 Palestinian workers will be permitted to go through the Erez crossing from Gaza into the Erez industrial zone and Israel.

We have not made a detailed assessment of the impact of Israel's opening of the Erez crossing. We are, however, concerned about the humanitarian and economic consequences of closures and curfews, which restrict the free movement of people and essential supplies between the Occupied Territories and Israel and other countries, as well as within the Occupied Territories themselves. We would like to see the easing of these restrictions continue, notwithstanding further terrorist or suicide attacks at or near the crossing.

Middle East

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the factors that might result in a breakdown of the ceasefire announced by Israel and the Palestinian Authority on 8 February in Sharm al-Sheikh; and if he will make a statement. [216323]

Mr. Rammell: We welcome the announcement of a ceasefire made by Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas at the Sharm-el-Sheikh summit on 8 February. A mutual agreement to end four years of violence is a great step forward. It is critical that both sides stick to their commitments as this will be the best way of achieving long-term stability and enabling a return to the Roadmap. We call upon militant groups not to undermine the efforts made by the Israeli and Palestinian leadership.

We have not made any specific assessment of the dangers that might result in a breakdown of the ceasefire.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian talks in Sharm el Sheikh on 8 February 2005; and if he will make a statement. [216382]

Mr. Rammell: We welcome the declarations made at the Sharm al-Sheikh summit hosted by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on 8 February 2005. The agreement by Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas to end four years of violence is excellent news. We welcome both sides' affirmation of their commitment to the Roadmap and to the vision of a two state solution. We are committed to helping both sides in their efforts to escape the cycle of violence that has marked recent years and get back to the Roadmap.

North Korea

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the nuclear weapons capability of North Korea; and if he will make a statement. [216905]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* The Government have, for some time, had serious concerns about the nuclear programme and nuclear weapons ambitions of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). We take every opportunity to raise these concerns in our dealings with the DPRK Government.

The Government assesses that the DPRK extracted sufficient plutonium in the early 1990s for up to two nuclear warheads and that it has the technical capability to weaponise this material. Since then, the DPRK claims to have extracted enough plutonium from its stock of fuel rods to manufacture several additional nuclear warheads. We also believe the DPRK is pursuing efforts towards production of highly enriched uranium.

We urge the government of the DPRK to resume its engagement in the six-party talks, which aim to address and resolve the concerns of the international community about DPRK's nuclear programmes.

Parliamentary Questions

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will provide a substantive answer to the Question from the hon. Member for North Tayside tabled on 6 December 2004, ref. 203691. [217967]

Mr. MacShane: I replied on 21 February 2005.

Presidency of the European Communities

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on planned *(a)* commemorative (i) coins and (ii) stamps and *(b)* other commemorative items in the context of the UK presidency of the European Communities. [216047]

Mr. MacShane: Her Majesty's Government are not planning to produce coins, stamps or other commemorative items in the context of the UK presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2005.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211662]

Mr. Alexander: Our records show that the total expenditure on advertising in 2003–04 was £632,777.

The total projected spend for 2004–05 is £671,264.

Total expenditure on publicity in 2003–04 was £559,000 and projected publicity expenditure in 2004–05 is £1.273 million.

Budgets for 2005–06 have not yet been agreed, but we expect our expenditure on advertising to be at a similar level to the present financial year. It is too early to project spending levels beyond the next financial year.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) overseas posts and its non- departmental public bodies also incur advertising/publicity costs. Information about these costs could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The FCO's records of expenditure on advertising/publicity for the financial years 1996–97 and 1997–98 are not held centrally. Figures for these years could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Spain

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the UK has made to the Government of Spain regarding its decision to legalise over a million illegal immigrants. [216136]

Mr. MacShane: We do not believe that governments should tell other governments what their sovereign policy on work and residence permits should be, so we have not sought to tell Spain what their policy should be.

Stem Cell Research

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his oral evidence to the European Scrutiny Committee on 8th February, whether it is his Department's assessment that any UK legislation to restrict stem cell research would be contrary to article 13 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. [216137]

Mr. MacShane: Any UK legislation on stem cell research would be drafted so as to be consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights and in particular with the right to freedom of thought and expression enshrined in that Convention, from which Article 13 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights is derived.

Stolen Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206362]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) maintains an inventory system that comprises a fixed asset register and a non-financial asset inventory worth £1,237,864,000 (2003–04 figures). This covers FCO property held in FCO buildings in the UK and at all overseas missions. The fixed asset register is subject to verification by the FCO Home Estates Department (for the UK) and by overseas missions, usually twice a year. There is a £3,000 threshold for recording centrally FCO fixed assets, which meets FCO fixed assets policy and follows government guidelines. Details of property worth less than £3,000 are only kept by the relevant custodians.

All FCO entrances are guarded on a 24/7 basis. Most FCO non Information and Communications Technology (ICT) property worth more than £3,000 have electronic security tags. Very heavy and bulky items worth more than £3,000 are not electronically tagged but, given the 24/7 guarding arrangements, the chances of the theft of these items is very limited. Since 1997, there have been no reports of lost or stolen FCO non ICT items worth more than £3,000.

FCO ICT items are recorded using a bar code system. £4,100 worth of FCO ICT equipment was reported lost in 2004 when we started formally to record these figures. The four items lost were worth less than £3,000 each.

Thailand

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which consultants were used to evaluate the cost of embassies and assess the value of embassy land proposed to be sold in Thailand; and what costs were incurred. [217199]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 22 February 2005]:* Since 2002, when the present project commenced, we have used Brooke Real Estate to provide market updates at six monthly intervals on the diplomatic estate in Bangkok, at a total cost of £16,846.

Full details of earlier consultancies and costs could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Brooke Real Estate were also paid £20,327 in 1999.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will urge the Government of Uzbekistan to undertake an impartial review of all cases of imprisoned journalists in Uzbekistan; [208141]

(2) what representations he has made to the Government of Uzbekistan about *(a)* the relaxation of the system of state control over the media through reform of the Agency on Press and Information, *(b)* easing registration requirements for media outlets and *(c)* instructing officials to end informal and formal interference in media operations; [208142]

(3) what representations he has made to the Government of Uzbekistan about strengthening media freedom by *(a)* ending harassment and censorship of journalists and media outlets and *(b)* permitting the re-opening of newspapers closed since March 2002. [208143]

Mr. Rammell: We regularly highlight the importance of free media and free speech in our relations with Uzbekistan, both bilaterally and with our EU partners.

In April 2004, the UK supported the decision of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to cut around $31 million in economic aid projects to Uzbekistan. Among the reasons given for this action was the lack of press freedom in Uzbekistan.

In May 2004 our former ambassador to Tashkent marked World Press Freedom Day by delivering a public statement that was critical of media conditions in Uzbekistan. I have publicly backed the statements our former ambassador made regarding human rights abuses in Uzbekistan.

On 11 November 2004 the EU underlined to Foreign Minister Safayev the importance of balanced and accurate coverage of the December 2004 parliamentary elections in the media.

We frequently lobby the Uzbek authorities on cases of apparent injustice and harassment of the media that are brought to our attention. For example, with the EU, we raised with Foreign Minister Safayev the issue of Ruslan Sharipov, the journalist and human rights activist arrested in May 2003.

We will continue to urge the Uzbek authorities to work towards greater freedom of the media and freedom of speech, both bilaterally and with multilateral organisations. We shall also continue to raise with the Uzbek Government individual cases that are brought to our attention. I intend to raise the issue of an impartial review of imprisoned journalists with the Uzbek authorities during my forthcoming visit to Tashkent.

Western Sahara

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he has taken to discourage oil companies from operating within the disputed territory of the Western Sahara. [217224]

Mr. Rammell: The Government regard the sovereignty of Western Sahara as undetermined pending United Nations efforts to find a solution to the dispute over the territory. The UN legal counsel gave an opinion on the signing of contracts for exploration of mineral resources in Western Sahara in 2002 (S/2002/161 of 12 February 2002). We fully support this advice.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent report by the UN Secretary General about progress towards the referendum on self-determination in the Western Sahara, including the future of MINURSO. [217225]

Mr. Rammell: The United Kingdom fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and his special representative Alvaro de Soto to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Sahara dispute which provides the people of the Western Sahara with an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination.

We believe UN efforts to find a solution to the dispute should be maintained and
continue to urge all parties to the dispute to engage constructively with the UN.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the UK has taken to encourage a settlement of the disputed fishing lands off Dakhla, Western Sahara. [217226]

Mr. Rammell: The UK Government have had no recent discussions regarding fishing lands off Western Sahara.

However the EU has, on several occasions held discussions with Morocco on fishing since the expiry of the EU Morocco fisheries agreement on 30 November 1999.

The Government regard the sovereignty of Western Sahara as undetermined pending United Nations efforts to find a solution to the dispute over the territory. We fully support the efforts of the UN Secretary-General to find a fair and lasting solution.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Morocco on the continuing detention of Saharawi dissidents in El Ayoun prisons. [217227]

Mr. Rammell: The UK Government have had no recent discussions with the Government of Morocco regarding the alleged detention of Saharawis in El Ayoun prisons.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what educational, scholarship or hardship funds are made available by his Department to Zimbabwean students wishing to study in the United Kingdom; and what Government assistance is available to Zimbabwean students who, for political or human rights reasons, do not wish to return to Zimbabwe. [217761]

Mr. Straw: My Department provides support to Zimbabweans wishing to study in the UK through our Chevening Scholarship Programme. This year we are supporting 15 students. A similar number were sponsored last year.

We have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Zimbabwe. Should any student believe that he has a well founded fear of persecution, he is able to apply for asylum in the UK and have it considered in the normal way under the terms of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and British legislation.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Office Closures

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the benefit offices earmarked for closure in Scotland. [217078]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. John Thurso, dated 24 February 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the benefit offices earmarked for closure in Scotland. This is something, which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I have attached, at Annex A, a list of sites in Scotland that have either been closed, merged or are planned for closure as part of the Jobcentre Plus rollout programme and activity to centralise benefit processing. This list includes Social Security Offices, Jobcentres, Jobcentre Plus and Caller Offices in Scotland. Some of the site closures are dependent on the construction of new buildings or the acquisition of new premises.

It may be helpful if I explain that we are shaping the future Jobcentre Plus network in response to changing business needs. The need for face-to-face facilities for jobsearch and other aspects of our business has been superseded in many instances by new business processes and the use of information technology. For example, nationally, over the last 12 months we have seen an increase of over 40 per cent. in the number of hits on our jobsearch website. Encouraging our customers to use these new channels enables us to focus on those customers who need greatest help. We are also working with local partners to establish a Flexible Service Delivery, which will provide our customers with access to our services on third party premises.

I can assure you that we are committed to providing a high standard of customer service in Scotland and we will retain a significant network of offices through which customers can access our services.

I hope you find this helpful.

Annex A: Jobcentre Plus site closures (from April 2002 onwards)

Site	Region Scotland Status
Airdrie, Graham Street	—[1]
Alexandria, Mitchell Way	—[1]
Alloa, Bank Street	—[1]
Alness, High Street	Closed[2]
Anniesland, 31 Herschell Street	Closed[2]
Ardrossan, Princes Street	—[1]
Auldhouse, Cogan Road	—[1]
Ayr, Carrick Street	—[1]
Banff, Bridge Street	Closed[2]

Annex A: Jobcentre Plus site closures (from April 2002 onwards)

Site	Region Scotland Status
Bathgate, South Bridge Street	Closed[2]
Bellshill Jobcentre	Merger[3]
Benbecula, Druim na Hairde	—[1]
Blairgowrie, Lesley Street	Closed[2]
Blantyre, Boswell Drive	—[1]
Blantyre, Industrial Estate	—[1]
Boness, East Pier Street	Closed[2]
Boness, North Street	—[1]
Bridgeton, Main Street	Closed[2]
Cambuslang, Somervell Street	—[1]
Carluke, Hamilton Street	—[1]
Castle Douglas, Carlingwark Street	—[1]
Castlemilk, Arcade	—[1]
Clydebank Jobcentre	Merger[3]
Coatbridge, Interlink Estate	—[1]
Coatbridge, South Circular	Merger[3]
Cowdenbeath, Factory Road	—[1]
Craigton, Paisley Road West	Closed[2]
Cranstonhill, Minerva Street	Closed[2]
Cumbernauld, Tryst Road	—[1]
Cumnock, Glaisnock Street	—[1]
Cumnock, Townhead Street	—[1]
Dalkeith, Buccleuch Street	Merged[4]
Denny, Church Walk	—[1]
Drumchapel, Kinfauns Drive	—[1]
Dumbarton, Meadowbank Street	—[1]
Dumfries, 124 Irish Street	—[1]
Dunfermline, High Street	—[1]
East Kilbride, Murray House	—[1]
Edinburgh, 38 Castle Terrace	—[1]
Edinburgh, Haymarket	—[1]
Edinburgh, Torphichen Street	—[1]
Elgin, South Street	Closed[2]
Falkirk, Grahame House	—[1]
Falkirk, High Street	—[1]
Forfar, Station Road	Closed[2]
Fort William, Tweedale High Street	—[1]
Galashiels Jobcentre, Market Street	Merged[4]
Girvan, Montgomery Street	—[1]
Glasgow Central, Jamaica Street	—[1]
Glasgow City, Bath Street	—[1]
Glasgow City, Pitt Street	Closed[2]
Glasgow, Provan	—[1]
Glenrothes, North Street	—[1]
Haddington Jobcentre	—[1]
Hamilton, 19 Douglas Street	—[1]
Hawick, Duke Street	Closed[2]
Helensburgh, West Clyde Street	Closed[2]
Inverkeithing, Hope Street	—[1]
Inverness, Met House	—[1]
Irvine, Bank Street	—[1]
Johnstone SSO	Closed[2]
Kelso, The Square	Closed[2]
Kilmarnock Jobcentre	Merger[3]
Kilmarnock Action Team, Nelson Street	Closed[2]
Kilsyth Jobcentre, Station Road	—[1]
Kilsyth SSO, Station Road	Closed[2]
Kilwinning, Main Street	—[1]
Kirkcaldy, Victoria Road	—[1]
Kirkintilloch, Townhead	—[1]
Lanark Jobcentre	Merger[3]
Largs, Lade Street	—[1]
Largs, Seamore Street	—[1]
Larkhall, Claude Street	—[1]
Larkhall, Union Street	—[1]
Laurieston, Devon Place	—[1]
Leith, Leith Walk	—[1]
Leven, Walton House	—[1]
Linwood, Burnbrae Avenue	Closed[2]
Livingston, Ochil House	Closed[2]
Loanhead, Polton Road	Closed[2]
Lockerbie, High Street	—[1]
Macduff, Duff Street	Closed[2]
Maryhill, 1460 Maryhill Road	—[1]

Annex A: Jobcentre Plus site closures (from April 2002 onwards)

Site	Region Scotland Status
Montrose CSP, Murray Street	—[1]
Motherwell, Mason Street	—[1]
Nairn, High Street	—[1]
Newton Stewart, Queen Street	—[1]
Oban, Albany Street	Closed[2]
Paisley, 35 Moss Street	Closed[2]
Partick Jobcentre	Merged[4]
Peebles, Northgate	Closed[2]
Perth, Mill Street	—[1]
Pollok, Nitshill Road	—[1]
Portobello, High Street	—[1]
Portobello, Windsor Place	—[1]
Portree Jobcentre	Merger[3]
Rutherglen, Mitchell Arcade	—[1]
Sanquhar, Queensbury Square	—[1]
Shettleston, 1682 Shettleston Road	Closed[2]
Shotts Jobcentre, Dyfrig Street	—[1]
Shotts SSO, Dyfrig Street	—[1]
Springburn	Merged[4]
Stirling, Wallace House	—[1]
Stranraer, Ashwood Drive	—[1]
Thurso, Rotterdam Street	—[1]
Thurso, Traill House	—[1]
Troon, Temple Hill	—[1]
Uddingston, Belshill Road	—[1]
Wester Hailes Jobcentre	Merger[3]
Wick, Government Buildings (partial)	—[1]
Wishaw, Kirk Road	—[1]
Wishaw, Main Street	—[1]

[1] Planned for closure.
[2] Office has closed to public. Some sites may be retained for non-customer-facing activity.
[3] Office is co-located with another; one will 'close' as the site is redeveloped to support delivery of the new service.
[4] Has merged with co-located office.

New Deal for Young People

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many participants on the New Deal for Young People in Leicester, South constituency have been placed on training courses for *(a)* up to one year and *(b)* over one year in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [215731]

Jane Kennedy: In the Leicestershire South constituency, 20[1] people started the Full Time Education and Training option between October 2003 and September 2004[2] and an additional 1,201 people started on the mandatory two week Gateway to Work course, which can include elements of training. Information on people undertaking other training through New Deal for Young People is not available.

It is the policy of New Deal for Young People (NDYP) that an individuals training is not funded for longer than 12 months.

Notes:

1. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Latest available data.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much council tax benefit was paid in Scotland in 2003–04 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by (i) local authority area and (ii) parliamentary constituency. [217972]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available for parliamentary constituencies. The available information is in the following table.

Council tax benefit expenditure in Scotland 2003–04 by local authority

Local authority	*Council tax benefit expenditure (£ million)*
Scotland	335.4
Aberdeen	10.4
Aberdeenshire	7.1
Angus	4.9
Argyll-Bute	5.3
Clackmannanshire	3.2
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	1.6
Dumfries and Galloway	7.5
Dundee	12.9
East Ayrshire	8.6
East Dunbartonshire	3.9
East Lothian	4.8
East Renfrewshire	3.2
Edinburgh	25.3
Falkirk	7.4
Fife	18.6
Glasgow	78.5
Highland	10.7
Inverclyde	7.4
Midlothian	4.4
Moray	3.1
North Ayrshire	10.1
North Lanarkshire	22.7
Orkney	0.7
Perth and Kinross	5.5
Renfrewshire	12.5
Scottish Borders	4.6
Shetland	0.6
South Ayrshire	7.0
South Lanarkshire	20.5
Stirling	4.1
West Dunbartonshire	9.8
West Lothian	8.6

Source:
2003–04 Final Audited Subsidy Data

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many households are in receipt of council tax benefit in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* England and *(c)* Scotland in each local authority area, broken down by income decile. [217973]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available for local authorities. The available information is in the table.

Council tax benefit caseloads by average weekly income, Great Britain, England and Scotland: May 2003

	Great Britain	*England*	*Thousand Scotland*
All cases (Number)	4,628	3,851	519
Average weekly income (£ pw)			
up to £49.99	6	5	[1]
£50 to £59.99	3	3	[2]
£60 to £69.99	19	15	3
£70 to £79.99	19	15	3
£80 to £89.99	33	26	5
£90 to £99.99	72	58	11
£100 to £109.99	117	83	28
£110 to £119.99	279	235	29
£120 to £129.99	208	167	32
£130 to £139.99	187	152	23
£140 to £149.99	223	173	37
£150 to £159.99	344	262	62
£160 to £169.99	332	281	33
£170 to £179.99	290	260	17
£180 to £189.99	221	193	19
£190 to £199.99	234	196	26
£200 to £209.99	198	162	23
£210 to £219.99	225	185	23
£220 to £229.99	192	160	23
£230 to £239.99	204	169	23
£240 to £249.99	184	155	17
£250 to £259.99	181	151	20
£260 to £269.99	137	116	12
£270 to £279.99	127	109	11
£280 to £289.99	101	85	10
£290 to £299.99	84	73	6
£300 to £309.99	65	59	4
£310 to £319.99	54	47	4
£320 to £329.99	44	38	3
£330 to £339.99	35	31	[2]
£340 to £349.99	35	31	[2]
£350 and over	172	155	8

[1] Figures are subject to a high degree of sampling variation and should be used only as a guide to the situation.
[2] Data is nil or negligible.

Notes:
1. The figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand.
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. Council Tax Benefit totals exclude any Second Adult Rebate cases.
4. The figures are comprised of incomes declared for the assessment of income related benefits (including disregarded income) from Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (Income based), other benefits/allowances/tax credits and net earnings from employment/self-employment.

Source:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 2003.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what average amount of council tax benefit was paid to each recipient in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* England, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* each local authority area in 2003–04. [217974]

Mr. Pond: Information is not available for the UK. The available national information is in the table. The information for local authorities has been placed in the Library.

Council tax benefit average weekly amounts, Great Britain, England and Scotland: May 2003 to February 2004

	Average weekly CTB (£ pw)
Great Britain	12.27
England	12.52
Scotland	11.55

Notes:
1. The data refer to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. The figures have been rounded to the nearest penny.
3. Figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
4. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.

Source:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. case load stock-count taken in May 2003 to February 2004.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in receipt of council tax benefit are in receipt of another state benefit in each

(a) nation and (b) region of the UK, broken down by benefit. [217975]

Mr. Pond: Information is not available for the UK. The available information is in the tables.

Council tax benefit claimants in receipt of other benefits by country: May 2003

Thousand

Benefit	*Great Britain*	*England*	*Wales*	*Scotland*
Housing Benefit	3,450	2,880	180	390
Income Support (including MIG)	2,941	2,455	176	310
JSA (income based)	250	206	12	32
JSA (contribution based)	54	44	[2]	8
Child Benefit	1,206	1,039	65	102
Retirement Pension	2,099	1,735	113	250
Incapacity Benefit	498	390	38	71
Severe Disablement Allowance	97	76	9	11
Industrial Injuries Benefit	46	39	[2]	5
Attendance Allowance	569	459	40	70
Carers Allowance	178	148	13	17
War Disability Pension	37	29	3	6
War Widows Pension	12	11	[1]	[1]
Widows Benefit/Bereavement Benefit	13	11	[1]	[1]
DLA Care	677	547	52	77
DLA Mobility	734	589	57	88

Council tax benefit claimants in receipt of other benefits by region in England: May 2003

Thousand

Benefit	*North East*	*North West*	*Yorks & Number*	*East Midland*	*West Midland*	*East*	*London*	*South East*	*South West*
Housing Benefit	220	460	330	210	320	250	520	320	230
Income Support (including MIG)	178	427	279	186	290	209	420	263	202
JSA (income based)	18	31	27	14	31	16	45	14	11
JSA (contribution based)	[3]	7	5	[2]	6	3	9	4	4
Child Benefit	69	169	112	71	120	88	220	112	79
Retirement Pension	132	276	201	143	218	173	218	214	161
Incapacity Benefit	38	84	48	33	49	28	42	32	35
Severe Disablement Allowance	7	15	9	6	7	7	9	9	8
Industrial Injuries Benefit	6	8	3	3	4	3	4	3	3
Attendance Allowance	34	79	54	41	65	46	53	45	43
Carers Allowance	14	28	18	14	18	12	18	16	10
War Disability Pension	4	6	[2]	[2]	3	3	[2]	5	3
War Widows Pension	[2] —	[2]	[1]	[1]	[2]	[1]	[2]	[1]	[1]
Widows Benefit/ Bereavement Benefit	[1]	[2]	[1]	[1]	[2]	[1]	[2]	[2]	[1]
DLA Care	44	112	68	48	65	46	73	51	41
DLA Mobility	50	128	74	50	71	46	74	54	42

[1] Figures are subject to a high degree of sampling variation and should be used only as a guide to the situation.
[2] Nil or negligible.

Notes:
1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit have been rounded to the nearest 10 thousand.
3. Figures for all other benefits have been rounded to the nearest thousand.
4. The totals may not sum due to rounding.
5. Council Tax Benefit totals exclude any Second Adult Rebate cases.
6. There will overlap in the figures where a claimant is in receipt of more than one of the benefits listed.

Source:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 2003.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of (a) the impact on council tax benefit payments in Scotland and (b) the financial effects on his Department of the Scottish Parliament replacing council tax with a local income tax. [217976]

Mr. Pond: No such assessment has been made.

CSA

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects all Child Support Agency clients registered prior to 3 March 2003 to be transferred to the child support scheme introduced on 3 March 2003. [217381]

Mr. Pond: I refer my hon. Friend to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Green) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 568W.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of full-time equivalent Child Support Agency staff are employed as frontline staff. [216766]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 24 February 2005:

In reply to your recent parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what percentage of full-time equivalent Child Support Agency staff are employed as frontline staff.

I am not able to respond precisely to the question as asked. However, I can say that at 31 March 2005 the Agency is planning to employ around 10,300 staff. We have recently baselined the size of our head office function as 286 staff.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency staff have been employed in teams handling complaints in each year since 1997. [216805]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 24 February 2005:

In reply to your recent parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply fro the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Support Agency staff have been employed in teams handling complaints in each year since 1997.

I regret that we do not have the information for the period requested as we have only recently started recording this information separately.

We are currently employing 930 staff within the agency either directly in teams handling complaints and/or teams handling correspondence from Members of Parliament, stakeholder groups or clients who may have earlier made a complaint.

Five-year Strategy

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what impact he expects the proposals in his Department's five-year strategy to have on *(a)* the number of people who start claiming incapacity benefits each year and *(b)* the proportion of these who are still claiming incapacity benefits 12 months after the commencement of their claims; [215552]

(2) how much of the one million fall in the numbers of people on incapacity benefit targeted in his Department's five-year strategy he expects will be attributable to *(a)* an increase in the rate at which existing claimants leave incapacity benefits and *(b)* a reduction in the number of new claimants; [215556]

(3) what impact he expects the proposals in his Department's five-year strategy to have on *(a)* the number of people who start claiming incapacity benefits in each year and *(b)* the proportion of these who are still claiming incapacity benefits 12 months after the commencement of their claims; [215558]

(4) what his timetable is for progress against his objective of reducing the number of people on incapacity benefits by one million; [215554]

(5) by what date he expects the number of people on incapacity benefits to have fallen by one million if the plans outlined in his Department's five-year strategy are implemented. [215555]

Jane Kennedy: Reducing the numbers of people on incapacity benefits by one million is a long term aspiration.

This long-term aspiration is challenging. It will require continued macroeconomic stability and further radical welfare reform to build on the success that has already been achieved. New claims are already down by 30 per cent. since 1997. The caseload has peaked after decades when the numbers increased—particularly in the 1990s when the caseload trebled. And in the latest two quarters there have been the first signs of a fall.

It is not possible to put a firm timetable on this. Not only does it require legislative changes we also need to review the evidence from the successful Pathways to Work pilots and successfully roll-out the programme.

We are already making progress. The significant improvement in off-flow rates registered in the pathways to work pilots, with 5,500 job entries up to last August, also shows for the first time how significant additional numbers of people on incapacity benefits can be helped back to work.

Realisation of our aspiration will depend on further evidence from pathways (for example on the impact of work-focused interviews for existing claimants, starting this month) and other initiatives. It will also depend on when we can start to understand the additional impact of the new arrangements set out in the five year strategy. Outside of DWP it will also depend on the scale of progress on, for example, fitness for work issues and progress on employers' sickness absence management policies.

Progress towards our aspiration should come, in part, from improving support so people do not need to come onto IB, that is, reducing inflows and improving off-flows by helping more people to leave the benefit for work.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the treatment of lump sum payments for those who have deferred drawing their retirement pension under the terms of the Pensions Act 2005 in *(a)* measurement of capital when assessing entitlement to means-tested benefits and *(b)* liability for income tax in the year in which the lump sum is drawn. [217968]

Malcolm Wicks: For the first time ever we are giving people the chance to defer their State Pension and build up a lump sum. Where a person chooses to take a lump sum, the intention is for the full amount to be disregarded in the calculation of their capital in pension credit, housing benefit and council tax benefit during their lifetime.

Taxation is a matter for the Chancellor, but it is proposed to tax the lump sum at the marginal rate (currently 10 per cent., 22 per cent., 40 per cent. or if not liable to tax—no deduction) applicable to the person's other income, either in the tax year in which the person starts drawing his State Pension or, if the person so chooses, the tax year following. Payment of a lump sum will not count as income for the age-related personal allowance.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Andersonstown News Group

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has sought European Commission state aids approval for all or part of the Government's and Invest Northern Ireland's financial support to the Andersonstown News Group; and if he will make a statement. [208673]

Mr. Gardiner: During the five-year period for which figures are readily available (1 April 1999–31 December 2004) funding from Northern Ireland central Government sources has been made available to the Andersonstown News Group (ANG) from a number of Northern Ireland Departments. The state aids approval position in respect of this funding is detailed as follows.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI)

DETI offered £92,248 under the EU Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation's (Peace I) Interest Relief Subsidy Scheme (a scheme offered through local banks, subject to scrutiny by DETI and the European Investment Bank). This was notified to the European Commission and clearance received.

DETI offered £270,000 under the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (Peace II) for workspace units (not related to the ANG's printing and publishing of newspapers.) This was assessed against state aid rules and was deemed not to be state aid as the support was not considered to have the potential to distort competition.

The Local Enterprise Development Unit (a predecessor body of Invest NI) provided funding for marketing, employment and management salary grants. This funding was issued under a notified scheme approved by the European Union Commission.

Support of £37,056 for training and development was provided under the Company Development Programme (CDP)(now managed by Invest NI). In 1993 the Commission formally acknowledged CDP as a regional aid scheme. In 1998 the Commission required all training support to be compliant with a new framework on training aid. At that stage action to re-notify was started but not followed through. To address this the block exemption report on CDP issued to the Commissioners on 27 July 2004 and the Commission acknowledgement was dated 30 July 2004.

DETI are providing funding of £4,000 via InterTradeIreland[1] through the Acumen programme. This programme is designed to stimulate cross-border trade by assisting individual SME's with tailored consultancy and sales salary support mechanisms. The programme is a partnership funded by Invest NI, Enterprise Ireland (in the Republic of Ireland) and InterTradeIreland. The programme was treated as exempt under the SME Block Exemption. This has been registered with the European Commission

Office of First Minister Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)

Funding of £33,500 provided by OFMDFM was for the Irish language newspaper *Lá*. As it was the only Irish language newspaper in existence OFMDFM took the view that there was no distortion or potential distortion of competition and consequently the state aid rules would not be applicable.

Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)

Peace I funding of £5,095 was provided by DFP under the District Partnerships Sub Programme for which Department of the Environment had oversight. This funding was for accommodation and administration costs. The amount involved did not exceed €100,000 and accordingly was within the Commission's established relevant de-minimis arrangements for small amounts of aid.

DFP in Northern Ireland and the Department of Finance in the Republic of Ireland, have approved funding of £199,150 in respect of a joint application from Preas an Phobail and Comharchumann Forbartha. Funding is for the expansion of *Lá* in selected border areas. The funding complies with state aid regulations on the basis that it is the only existing Irish language newspaper and does not have the potential to distort competition between EU member states.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)

The Arts Council for Northern Ireland (a non-departmental public body of DCAL) provided £54,400 funding towards the production of La. The amount involved did not exceed €100,000 and accordingly was within the Commission's established relevant de-minimis arrangements for small amounts of aid.

DCAL, through Foras na Gaeilge[2] the Irish Language Agency, has provided funding of £148,439 for the publication of La. DCAL has been advised by Foras that the aid is compatible with European Union law on state aid.

Department of Social Development (PSD)

DSD provided £277,375 under the Department's Urban Development Grant (UDG) scheme (23 November 1999) to assist the construction of new purpose built printworks and offices. The UDG scheme has been notified to the European Commission who consider it to be compatible with the EC Treaty. Consequently, UDG funding to the *Andersonstown News* is compatible with state aid rules.

DSD also provided £70,000 via Making Belfast Work (MBW) (March 2000). MBW is designed to augment mainstream spend by Departments in the most deprived areas of Belfast across a range of community interventions. At the time of funding, the *Andersonstown News* was a local community newspaper which did not trade across boundaries, and the content of which meant that it was not considered to have the potential to be tested across national boundaries. Following an internal economic appraisal the grant was not considered to support a tradable activity because the paper was unique and covered only local community issues. This funding was therefore not considered to be a notifiable state aid.

[1] InterTradeIreland (the Trade and Business Development Body) is funded jointly by DETI in Northern Ireland and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) in the Republic of Ireland. DETI contributes 33.3 per cent. and DETE 66.6 per cent. of the funding.

[2] Foras na Gaeilge (the Irish Language Agency of the North/South Language Implementation Body) is funded jointly by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) in Northern Ireland and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCGRA) in the Republic of Ireland. DCAL contributes 25 per cent. and DCGRA contributes 75 per cent. of the funding.

Cleaning

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213780]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Office (excluding its agencies and NDPBs) has spent the following on cleaning in each year since 1997:

	£
1997–98	79,023
1998–99	108,235
1999–2000	118,178
2000–01	118,369
2001–02	125,025
2002–03	263,062
2003–04	195,192

Criminal Justice

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether offences proscribed in Part II of the draft Criminal Justice (Evidence) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 will include offences committed in respect of children aged 17 years. [217607]

Mr. Spellar: The Criminal Justice Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 provides the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with a power to prescribe categories of offences which are 'of the same type' for use as an indicator that a defendant has a propensity to commit offences of a certain type. The draft proposed Criminal Justice (Evidence) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 (Categories of Offences) Order 2005 proposes two such categories of offences: Part I deals with offences of theft; Part II deals with sexual offences against persons aged under the age of 17.

While Part II of the draft Order focuses on children aged under 17, any relevant previous conviction—including those committed against persons aged 17 or over—may be admissible at trial even when no relevant category of offences has been introduced. Both Part I and Part II categories are intended as a guide to the judiciary. Nor does the absence of categories for other types of offences prevent previous convictions from being admitted if they demonstrate a propensity to commit a certain type of offence. Further categories may be introduced at a later date.

Decommissioning Commission

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of the Independent International Decommissioning Commission has been in each year since it was established. [216513]

Mr. Pearson: The Commission's running costs are shared equally between the British and Irish Governments. The British Government's share of the costs for each financial year, since the establishment of the Commission is as follows:

	Cost (£)
1997–98	428,256
1998–99	534,835
1999–2000	603,600
2000–01	701,814
2001–02	677,973
2002–03	309,600
2003–04	276,729
2004–05 (Up to and including December 2004)	263,778
Total	3,796,585

Electoral Register

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many electors in each constituency will have their names restored to the electoral register in Northern Ireland before the local government elections on 5 May 2005. [214506]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland estimates that approximately 83,000 former electors on the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland's database will be carried forward, distributed across the 18 constituencies. Precise numbers per constituency that are carried forward will not be known until 1 April 2005 register (the register that will be in use for the local government elections in May) is actually published.

In-house Magazines

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213633]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The amount spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Northern Ireland Office is as follows:

	£
2004–05 Financial year	15,012
2003–04 Financial year	14,893
2002–03 Financial year	15,577
2001–02 Financial year	3,830
2000–01	0
1999–2000	0
1998–99	0
1997–98	0

Invest NI/LVM

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much financial assistance has been offered by Invest NI to LVM to locate new premises in *(a)* West Belfast and *(b)* East Belfast; and if he will make a statement on the status of this project. [213548]

Mr. Gardiner: Disclosure of this information is likely to prejudice the interests of the Northern Ireland economy. In accordance with section 29a of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it would therefore not be in the public interest to release the information requested by the hon. Lady.

Organised Crime

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Government's response to the assessment made by Professor Goldstock, in his report on organised crime in Northern Ireland, of the possible impact of new laws modelled on the United States Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisations Act. [215781]

Mr. Pearson: The Government accepted the majority of Professor Goldstock's recommendations, but concluded that a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisations (RICO) type Act was not required at this stage. Law enforcement agencies in Northern Ireland continue to work closely to ensure that the best use is made of existing conspiracy legislation. In addition the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 provides a robust framework for dealing with criminal assets.

Parades Commission

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures he has taken to ensure that, where reports of monitors acting on behalf of the Parades Commission contain evidence of breaches of determinations, those reports are routinely handed to the police service of Northern Ireland for investigation and the results of that investigation are fed back to the Commission. [213303]

Mr. Pearson: Rule 3.3 of the Parades Commission's Procedural rules outlines the confidential treatment of all evidence and information received by the Commission, including monitors' reports.

In light of Rule 3.3 there is no routine handing of reports to the PSNI in the circumstances outlined. However, the Commission is mindful of the need to work with the police to promote disciplined and responsible parading where parading is notified to take place. The Commission will take a judgment on when it is appropriate to refer a specific incident to the police.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assistance is available from the Police Service of Northern Ireland to assist the Parades Commission in establishing a Compliance and Post-mortem Unit. [214237]

Mr. Pearson: PSNI have advised in their evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Select Committee that they could assist with the supply of information to the Commission on how to manage the process of establishing a Compliance and Post-mortem Unit and would be willing to work with them in the setting up of protocols/administrative arrangements should the Commission seek such assistance.

Police

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police personnel were on duty in each police station in the Coleraine District Council area over each weekend during the first two weeks of January. [213973]

Mr. Pearson: The number of officers on duty per shift in the first two weekends of January 2005, in stations within the Coleraine District Command Unit, was as follows:

	Coleraine DCU Personnel		*Tactical Support Group*	
	Early	*Night*	*Early*	*Night*
1 January 2005	23	37	24	0
2 January 2005	20	21	21	0
8 January 2005	20	29	0	0
9 January 2005	20	19	25	0

The figures relate to both the early shift 0700–1900 hours and night shift 1900–0700 hours. The numbers reflect officers on duty for duty shifts only. They do not include Sector Police, CID, and support officers such as Crime Prevention, Operational Planning, National Intelligence and Community Safety. Officers attached to the Tactical Support Group are available to provide support anywhere within the District Command Unit.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average response time from a call to the emergency number to attendance by a Police Service of Northern Ireland officer at an incident in Newtownards was in the most recent period for which figures are available. [214918]

Mr. Pearson: The Police Service of Northern Ireland does not currently record the response time to emergency calls.

The response time to emergency calls (999) will be part of the forthcoming policing plan, and will thus be recorded in the financial year to come.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements are in place for full-time reserve officers to transfer from the Police Service Northern Ireland to other police services in Great Britain. [216670]

Mr. Paul Murphy: While legislation exists to permit the direct transfer of regular officers in the PSNI to police forces in GB, and vice versa, the unique status of the Full-time Reserve means that there is no such provision, nor has there ever been, for FTR officers seeking to transfer on a similar basis.

Such officers may of course apply to join GB forces through the recruitment procedures which apply to that force. With that in mind, officials in the NIO have been working with colleagues in the PSNI, Policing Board and Police Federation to co-ordinate the staging of a careers fair to assist FTR officers who wish to pursue police careers elsewhere.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police service of Northern Ireland officers work within the Ards district of Northern Ireland, broken down by principal duty conducted by each officer. [214919]

Mr. Pearson: The details for police officers attached to Ards District Command Unit on 8 February 2005 are as follows:

Duty type	*Number* *Regular and FTR*	*Part-time reserve*
Security Duty	5	—
Call Management	8	—
Station Duty Officer	5	—
Response Policing Teams	113	60
Community Policing Team	15	5
Support to Response and Community Policing[1]	19	—
Senior Command (Chief Insp. and above)	2	—
DCU Criminal Investigation	12	—
Total	179	65

[1] Including Custody officers, National Intelligence Model officers, Operational Planning, Community Safety officers, Domestic Violence Officers, Youth Diversion Officers, Crime Prevention Officers etc.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police stations were in operation in Ards in each of the last six years. [214921]

Mr. Pearson: The following stations currently open in Ards District Command Unit are:

Newtownards —24 hour opening

Comber—Limited Opening

Donaghadee—Limited Opening

Portaferry—Limited Opening

Greyabbey Station was last used for limited opening 18 months ago, and would be occasionally used by the local community policing team.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers stationed in Ards were on out-of-station duties on an average shift in the last period for which figures are available. [214922]

Mr. Pearson: On 20 January 2005, the following resources were deployed on out of station duties:

	12 hour early shift	*8 hour early shift*	*8 hour late shift*	*12 hour night shift*
Response Team	10	1	2	9
Community Policing	0	10	9	0
CID	—	4	3	—

Averages are not recorded. To calculate such an average for a defined period would involve a manual trawl of records, and would incur disproportionate cost.

Water and Sewerage

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is his policy that the commissioning of the new waste water treatment works at Killinchy should be delayed if there is evidence of seawater regress into the sewerage infrastructure. [217466]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Katharine Bryan to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated February 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about the possible delay in the commissioning of the new Wastewater Treatment Works at Killinchy if there is evidence of seawater regress into the sewerage Infrastructure (217466). I have been asked to reply as the issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

The new Works at Killinchy is currently on schedule for completion and commissioning by September 2005 at an estimated cost of £2.5 million. Under the wastewater project, which involves pumping the flow from Whiterock, Water Service will be undertaking a survey and examination of the sewerage infrastructure in the Whiterock area. The outcome of that investigation will not delay commissioning of the new wastewater treatment works at Killinchy.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he expects the work under way to upgrade the waste water treatment works at Killinchy/Whiterock to be completed and commissioned by September. [217467]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Katharine Bryan to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated February 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question as to whether, works currently underway to upgrade the Wastewater Treatment Works at Killinchy/Whiterock will be completed and commission by September. (217467). I have been asked to reply as the issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Preliminary construction/site clearance for the new Works commenced at Killinchy in September 2004 with full construction getting underway in November 2004. The project is currently on programme for completion and commissioning by September 2005 at a projected cost of £2.5 million.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Water Service has for replacing the Whiterock Bay sewer; and whether the Water Service plans to provide *(a)* a storm overflow with a fully operational flap on the outfall, *(b)* a storm retention tank and *(c)* pumps upgrade. [217468]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 24 February 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what plans the Water Service has for replacing the Whiterock Bay Sewer; and whether the Water Service plans to provide a storm overflow with a fully operational flap on the outfall; a storm retention tank and pumps upgrade (217468). I have been asked to reply as the issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Water Service is confident that the main sewer at Whiterock Bay is operating satisfactorily, and there are no plans to replace it. Water Service intends however to carry out a survey and examination of the sewerage infrastructure under the Killinchy wastewater treatment works project. I will keep you informed of any conclusion reached as a result of that investigation.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether recent sewerage spillages occurring in Whiterock Bay have been found to be directly attributable to the unscreened storm overflow located there. [217469]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 24 February 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question as to whether recent sewerage spillages occurring at Whiterock Bay have been found to be directly attributable to the unscreened storm overflow located there. (217469). I have been asked to reply as the issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

The unscreened combined sewer overflow to which you refer is situated on the main sewer in Whiterock to the northwest of the boat park. Its purpose is to prevent out of sewer flooding during periods of heavy rain, when the flow in the main sewer can exceed its capacity, by discharging the excess flow into Whiterock Bay. Combined sewer overflows are a common feature on many sewerage systems in the UK.

Water Service has no record of complaints about this particular combined sewer overflow or about sewage spillages in the Bay. However, if you can provide me with specific details of sewage spillages, I will have the matter investigated as a matter or urgency.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether there has been evidence of seawater ingress in the sewerage infrastructures at Whiterock. [217481]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 24 February 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question as to whether there has been evidence of seawater ingress in the sewerage infrastructures at Whiterock (217481). I have been asked to reply as the issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

I can confirm that Water Service will be undertaking a survey and examination of the sewerage infrastructure in the Whiterock area as part of the wastewater scheme for the Killinchy wastewater treatment works. I will write to you again when the outcome is known.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 25 February 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HIV/AIDS (Children)

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development by what date the review of country assistance plans in countries with large numbers of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS will be completed. [217558]

Hilary Benn: Country assistance plans (CAPs) are reviewed annually by DFID country offices. The purpose of CAPs is to report progress against public service agreement (PSA) targets that includes tackling HIV and AIDS. This year, reviews will have a strong focus on assessing what progress each country has made on AIDS, and what contribution the international community has made, and where further action will be required.

TRANSPORT

A38 (Ivybridge)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will provide a second entrance/exit for Ivybridge on the A38; and if he will make a statement. [218054]

Mr. Jamieson: I have no plans to provide another junction on the A38 to serve Ivybridge.

Congestion does occur on local roads within Ivybridge during peak periods. However, relief of congestion on the local road network is a matter for the local highway authority.

Facilitating further use of the trunk road to solve these problems would be contrary to Government policy.

Catering Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215041]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department does not maintain separate records of the expenditure on entertainment lunches and/or working lunches and is unable to provide figures in the breakdown requested without incurring disproportionate cost.

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 599W, for expenditure on entertainment for 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Highways

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice he gives to highways authorities regarding the use of keep clear zones on *(a)* highways and *(b)* other roads. [218243]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport's advice on the use of keep clear markings is set out in section 22 of Chapter 5 of the Traffic Signs Manual. A new edition was published in 2003. The guidance is applicable to all roads to which the public has access.

Noise Pollution (Heathrow Airport)

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies his Department has conducted on the effect at different times of day and night of noise pollution in Battersea from Heathrow airport. [218516]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department and its predecessors have commissioned a range of studies over the years about the effects of aircraft noise on annoyance and sleep disturbance at various times of day and night. These include the large-scale "Aircraft Noise Index Study" (CAA DR Report 8402) in the early 1980s, and the DoT "Report of a Field Study of Aircraft Noise and Sleep Disturbance" in the early 1990s. Neither study included fieldwork in Battersea, but the results of both can be generalized to that area.

On behalf of the Department, a consortium led by the MVA Consultancy is currently engaged in a major study of "Attitudes to Noise from Aircraft Sources in England" (ANASE). If this project proceeds to its second (major fieldwork and analysis) phase, sites will be sampled from a wide range of possible areas around Heathrow and other airports.

Railways (Trespass)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action is being taken *(a)* by his Department and *(b)* by Network Rail to warn young people of the dangers of trespassing on railway property. [218142]

Mr. McNulty: The cross-industry National Route Crime Group (NRCG), whose membership includes the Department and Network Rail, works with schools to educate young people about the dangers of trespassing on the railway. The NRCG has helped to create a number of interactive educational materials, for example the 'Trakkies' website for younger children and the 'Track Off' website which provides educational materials for teachers and which is accredited under the National Grid for Learning scheme. Network Rail, the British Transport Police and a number of train operating companies also have staff who visit schools on a regular basis to reinforce safety messages. The NRCG's Annual Plan 2005, copies of which will be placed in the Libraries of the House and are available at www.trackoff.org , describes the approach to be taken to increase awareness of railway crime issues during this year. Network Rail will also be launching a campaign before the school Easter break aimed at reminding older children and young teenagers about the dangers of the railway.

Trunk Roads (Bristol)

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list all major trunk roads west of Bristol. [218304]

Mr. Jamieson: The major trunk roads currently due west of Bristol's north/south line are:

M4
M5
M48
M49
A303
A30
A38
A35.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Kempton Park/Betting Offices

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what representations she has received from the Racecourse Holdings Trust regarding its plans to build an all-weather horseracing track at Kempton Park; and if she will make a statement; [218106]

(2) if she will review the restrictions on the opening hours of licensed betting offices with a view to increasing opening hours in the summer; and if she will make a statement. [218107]

Mr. Caborn: We have been informed of the company's plans to build such a track, and of its belief that it would benefit from increased betting turnover flowing from an extension later into the evening, during the winter months, of the hours during which licensed betting offices are allowed to open. We have already announced our intention to allow such an extension when the Gambling Bill, if enacted, is brought into force.

TREASURY

Business Prosecutions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many prosecutions of *(a)* small and medium enterprises and *(b)* large businesses were brought in 2003–04 for breaches of regulations sponsored by his Department; how much in total was imposed in fines in each case; and how many visits were made in 2003–04 by officials from his Department or agencies for which his Department is responsible to verify regulatory compliance in each case. [217179]

Mr. Timms: In 2003–04 the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise undertook prosecutions only for breaches of criminal law, and not for breaches of regulations. Details of the criminal prosecution activity undertaken in 2003–04 are set out in the Annual Reports produced by each of those departments, copies of which are available in the House of Commons Library. Those figures do not, however, give details of the number of prosecutions involving small and medium enterprises and large businesses; the amount of fines imposed by the Courts in those cases; nor the number of visits made by officials to verify compliance in those cases.

That additional information is not readily accessible and could be ascertained only at disproportionate cost. In the case of regulations made by the Treasury for financial services regulation, 31 prosecutions were brought in 2003–04 by the Financial Services Authority under powers conferred as a result of the transfer of functions to it by the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Mutual Societies) Order 2001 (SI 2001/2617). Of these prosecutions, 16 were for failure to file returns required by s.39 Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965, as amended by the 2001 Order and 15 were for breach of s.43 Friendly Societies Act 1974, also as amended by that Order. The prosecutions were brought for offences contrary to s.61 of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 and section 98 of the Friendly Societies Act 1974. All resulted in convictions. In four cases, 12-month conditional discharges were ordered and in the other 27 cases fines totalling £16,675 were imposed.

It has not been possible in the time available to ascertain the number of visits made in the context of each case in order to verify regulatory compliance, as visits which may be characterised in this way are made on a regular basis by staff of the Financial Services Authority. Nor has it been possible in the time available to obtain a breakdown of prosecutions by size of firm.

Carers (Leicester, South)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of carers in Leicester, South. [217985]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Gill, dated 25 February 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what estimate he has made of the number of carers in Leicestershire South. (217985)

Figures from the Census 2001 Report for Parliamentary Constituencies indicate that on Census day (29 April 2001) there were 9,099 people providing unpaid care in Leicestershire South Parliamentary Constituency.

The information below has been extracted from the CD supplement to the Census 2001 Report for Parliamentary Constituencies, which is available in the House of Commons Library. The table shows the distribution of these carers according to the number of hours of care provided per week.

Number of people providing unpaid care in Leicestershire, South: 2001

Provides care	*All People*
1 to 19 hours	5,798
20 to 49 hours	1,286
50 or more hours	2,015
Total	9,099

Source:
Table KS08 Census 2001 Report for Parliamentary Constituencies

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies, to each year from 1997–98 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211597]

Mr. Timms: Early retirement costs for past years, and estimates of the costs for 2004–05 and future years, where available, are set out in the following table.

£000

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
HM Treasury[1]	1,601	1,457	1,299	2,866	1,276	1,221	3,444	2,296	[2]—	—	—
Office of Government Commerce	[3]n/a	n/a	n/a	1,234	1,526	3,134	1,402	547	—	—	—
OGCbuying solutions	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	70	55	62	1,000	500	100	100
Royal Mint	556	36	308	96	407	6,275	101	19	350	0	0
Inland Revenue[4]	8,072	6,006	2,229	8,240	9,326	3,846	7,433	3,429	—	—	—
HM Customs and Excise[5]	4,527	5,119	8,008	10,973	4,899	1,433	4,657	1,900	—	—	—
Government Actuary's Department	18	26	24	22	19	8	8	9	9	6	—
Office for National Statistics	2,693	559	170	727	5,208	(92)	34	0	—	—	—
National Savings and Investments	2,070	2,745	970	1,332	988	839	747	0	—	—	—

[1] Including the Debt Management Office
[2] A dash denotes that an estimate for a future year is not available
[3] n/a denotes that the body was not formed in the year in question
[4] Including the Valuation Office Agency
[5] HM Customs and Excise figures reflect an accounting change in 2001–02

Earnings Distribution (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average weekly earnings for full-time employees were in *(a)* London, *(b)* the borough of Brent and *(c)* the constituency of Brent East in each year since 1990. [217586]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Sarah Teather, dated 25 February 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the average weekly earnings for full-time employees were in *(a)* London, *(b)* the Borough of Brent and *(c)* the constituency of Brent East in each year since. (217586)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) and are provided for employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period, by their place of work. This is the standard definition used for Annual Survey of Hours and Earning tables. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach a table showing the average earnings for full-time employees in London, Brent and East Brent.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It has a one per cent sample of all employees.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive. A number of estimates have been removed from the published tables for these reasons.

Gross weekly pay (£) including overtime, for full-time employee jobs[1]

Description/year	London	Brent	Brent East
New Earnings Survey[2]			
1990	336.5	296.5	[3]—
1991	361.0	316.4	[3]—
1992	385.4	336.5	[3]—
1993	408.8	362.6	[3]—
1994	420.6	356.1	[3]—
1995	441.5	376.1	[3]—
1996	455.0	394.5	369.3
1997	480.1	381.8	[4]374.5
1998	504.5	395.3	[4]397.3

Gross weekly pay (£) including overtime, for full-time employee jobs[1]

Description/year	London	Brent	Brent East
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings[5]			
1998	515.7	406.3	[4]406.1
1999	536.5	418.3	[4]413.7
2000	571.5	451.0	[4]461.09
2001	606.6	451.9	[4]441.89
2002	641.3	468.5	[4]459.09
2003	659.0	459.7	[4]549.49
2004[6]	682.9	481.1	[4]508.09
2004[7]	680.1	475.1	[4]503.09

[1] Full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay for the pay period was unaffected by absence.
[2] Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings data for 1998 to 2003 applies ASHE methodology including imputation and weighting, to existing NES data.
[3] Data for Parliamentary Constituencies not available until 1996.
[4] Coefficient of variation is > 5 per cent.
[5] Data for 1998 to 2003 are taken from the NES but has ASHE methodology applied, weighting and imputation.
[6] 2004 excluding supplementary surveys for comparison with 2003.
[7] 2004 including supplementary surveys to improve coverage. Further information is available on National Statistics website at: www.statistics.gov.uk
Source:
ONS

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Banking Advisory Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217906]

Mr. Timms: The Banking Advisory Committee met in Brussels on 9 December 2003, 27 April 2004, 28 June 2004 and 24 November 2004. Officials from HM Treasury and the Financial Services Authority attended the meetings.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Contact Committee on Combating Money Laundering

met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217907]

Mr. Timms: The Money Laundering Contact Committee met once during the Italian Presidency on 22 September 2003 in the European Commission's Charlemagne Building, 170 Rue de la Loi, Brussels. UK Government officials from the Treasury and the Home Office attended this meeting.

The Money Laundering Contact Committee met twice under the Irish Presidency. The first meeting took place on 14 January 2004 in the European Commission's Charlemagne Building, 170 Rue de la Loi, Brussels. UK Government officials from the Treasury and the Home Office attended this meeting. The Second Meeting took place on 31 March 2004 in the European Commission's Borschette Building, 36 Rue Froissart, Brussels. UK Government officials from the Treasury and the Home Office attended this meeting.

The Money Laundering Contact Committee met once under the Dutch Presidency on 14 October 2004 in the European Commission's Borschette Building, 36 Rue Froissart, Brussels. UK Government officials from the Treasury, Customs and the Home Office attended this meeting.

The Money Laundering Contact Committee is a Committee established under the aegis of the European Commission to facilitate consultation between member state government experts and European Commission representatives on EU and international policies and standards on combating money laundering.

EU Financial Services Action Plan

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which of the remaining measures of the EU Financial Services Action Plan not yet implemented into UK law are considered to be minimum harmonisation directives for which the Government may choose to impose additional requirements. [217905]

Mr. Timms: The Government's record and approach to implementing the EU Financial Services Action Plan was set out in detail in "The EU Financial Services Action Plan: Delivering the FSAP in the UK", published jointly by the Treasury, FSA and Bank of England in May 2004.

Taxation

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1598W, on taxation, if he will re-state Table 4.2, page 88, of the December 2004 pre-Budget report, Cmnd 6408, to include figures for the marginal deduction rates of over 40 per cent. [217499]

Mr. Timms: The table shows estimates of the numbers facing marginal deduction rates (MDRs) in excess of 40 per cent.

Marginal deduction rate (percentage)	*Before budget 1998*	*2005–06 system of tax and benefits*
Over 100	5,000	0
Over 90	130,000	45,000
Over 80	300,000	195,000
Over 70	740,000	275,000
Over 60	760,000	1,715,000
Over 50	760,000	1,865,000
Over 40	800,000	2,035,000

Figures are cumulative. This table shows marginal deduction rates for working households in receipt of income related benefits or tax credits, where at least one person works 16 hours or more a week and where higher earnings would lead to reduced benefits or tax credits. They include the marginal effects of income tax and national insurance contributions, and the withdrawal of housing benefit and council tax benefit.

This analysis does not take into account the way in which the new tax credits will respond to rises in income. The new tax credits only respond to rises in income in the current year of more than £2,500, disregarding the first £2,500 of any rise. This means that recipients will not see their tax credits reduced as soon as their income rises, so reducing the effective marginal deduction in any one year.

As a result of the Government's reforms, almost half a million fewer low-income households now face marginal deduction rates in excess of 70 per cent. than did so in April 1998. The increase in the number of households facing marginal deduction rates of between 40 and 70 per cent. is primarily due to the introduction of tax credits, and more recently the extension of support to workers aged 25 or over without children.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Burglary

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the detection rates for domestic burglary in Northamptonshire were in *(a)* October 2003, *(b)* March 2004 and *(c)* November 2004. [203833]

Ms Blears: The available figures show that the detection rate for domestic burglary in Northamptonshire in 2003–04 was 15 per cent. Detection rate figures for individual months are not provided as they are potentially misleading. This is because many crimes are not detected in the same month that they are recorded. Detection rates are therefore estimated on the basis of those detected in that month. This tends to provide reliable estimates only for longer periods than one month, and the Home Office therefore prefers to provide figures for twelve month periods at least.

Graffiti

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the timescale for the introduction of graffiti removal notices under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. [217720]

Ms Blears: The graffiti removal notice powers have been available on a pilot basis to 12 local authorities since April 2004. A consultation on the pilot exercise finished on 31 December 2004. The responses are still being analysed and a regulatory impact assessment of the powers is being produced. A decision on the introduction of the powers nationally will consider the consultation, the regulatory impact assessment, and an announcement will be made shortly.

International Labour Organisation Report

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what plans he has to commission an investigation into the findings of the International Labour Organisation report, Forced Labour and Migration to the UK; [216378]

(2) whether *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department were involved in the preparation of the International Labour Organisation report, Forced Labour and Migration to the UK; [216379]

(3) whether *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department have read the International Labour Organisation report, Forced Labour and Migration to the UK. [216380]

Mr. Browne: The Government currently are responding to the International Labour Organisation on the content and recommendations of the draft report they commissioned on forced labour and migration. We will consider any further necessary action once these discussions are complete and the report is finalised. Officials in my Department and I have seen the draft report, but we were not involved in its preparation.

Police Custody (Mental Health Care)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve the training given to police officers in dealing with mentally ill people in custody. [216166]

Ms Blears: The National Learning Requirement for the police service sets out the priorities for training and development for the police service and is agreed by the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA). ACPO is undertaking a review of the National Learning Requirement for mental health awareness training in the light of a report on "Mental Health and Social Exclusion" published by the Social Exclusion Unit in June 2004.

A cross-agency group—Justice and Offenders Service, Health, Education and Development (JOSHED) was established in December 2003 to develop cross-agency national occupational standards and accredited training on health awareness issues, including mental health awareness. A scoping study was commissioned by the group in January 2004 to identify common training needs across the criminal justice and correctional services agencies, including the police. The study considered mental health training provision. It identified and made recommendations for the improvement of training which are under consideration by ACPO.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Support

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reason the average weekly assessments for child support maintenance are different to the average weekly payments made under *(a)* the old scheme and *(b)* the new scheme. [200469]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Mike Isaac to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 25 February 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As he is currently on leave I am replying on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason the average weekly assessments for child support maintenance are different to the average weekly payments made under *(a)* the old scheme and *(b)* the new scheme.

The Department is undertaking further analysis to permit us to understand the discrepancy better

The average weekly amount assessed is derived from the total value of all assessments. It is calculated by dividing that sum by the number of cases with a non-zero assessment. This includes those cases, for which maintenance is being received on behalf of the Secretary of State, and others which are low in value, plus those that are currently inactive. This definition applies to both new and old scheme figures.

The average weekly payment is derived from the total value of payments received in the period. It is calculated by dividing that sum by the number of cases that have made a payment in the period.

Clearly the information is not directly comparable because of discrepancies in the way it is collected and collated for the two different schemes.

Disability Benefits

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria were used when disability benefits were last uprated. [217712]

Maria Eagle: As required by sections 150 to 154 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, the level of disability benefits is reviewed annually and is increased in April each year in line with the annual change in the retail prices index (RPI).

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether people who claim disability living allowance before reaching pensionable age can continue to claim it after reaching pensionable age; and if he will make a statement. [218051]

Maria Eagle: Yes.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Disability Living Allowance applications were made for children in each of the

last three years; and how many were *(a)* rejected, *(b)* renewed, *(c)* successful reviews and *(d)* unsuccessful reviews in each year broken down by (i) county and (ii) region. [216936]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information that is available is set out in the following tables.

DLA first awards broken down by successful claim for children under 16, at August each year

Thousand

August	Initial claim	Reviews
2002	178.6	11.1
2003	193.5	11.6
2004	204.9	12.1

DLA first awards broken down by successful claim and Government office region for children under 16, at August each year

Thousand

	2002		2003		2004	
	Initial claim	Reviews	Initial claim	Reviews	Initial claim	Reviews
North East	10.3	0.8	11.0	0.8	10.7	0.8
North west	22.9	1.9	24.9	1.8	26.2	1.9
Yorkshire and Humber	15.0	1.0	16.6	0.9	17.6	0.9
East Midlands	12.8	1.0	13.8	1.1	15.1	1.0
West Midlands	18.2	1.0	19.6	1.3	20.7	1.2
East	17.4	0.8	19.1	0.9	19.7	1.0
London	20.7	0.9	22.6	1.1	24.2	1.3
South East	22.4	1.1	24.7	1.3	26.6	1.4
South West	13.3	0.8	13.6	0.7	14.8	0.8
Wales	10.6	0.8	11.7	0.7	12.5	0.7
Scotland	14.9	0.9	15.9	0.9	16.9	1.1

Notes:
1. Figures taken from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August of each year. Figures are in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures marked * are less than 500 and subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
3. '-' denotes nil or negligible.

Source:
InfD Centre.

From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner. This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.

County information is not available as the data is not fully populated and therefore would provide unreliable results.

1: Initial claims rejected—all DLA claims (information by age or region not available) new disability living allowance claims by calendar year

Thousand

	Number of decisions on new claims	Number of claims refused	Claim refusal rate (percentage)
2002	420,840	194,605	46
2003	436,510	215,135	49
2004	444,275	234,180	53

2: DLA renewed disability living allowance renewals by calendar year—all DLA claims (information by age or region not available)

Thousand

	Number of renewals registered	Renewals decided	Successful renewals
2002	235,320	236,410	206,110
2003	246,510	245,180	215,670
2004	265,720	264,280	232,435

3: DLA reviews—all DLA claims (information by age or region not available) disability living allowance reviews, successful by calendar year

Thousand

	Number of reviews registered	Reviews decided	Successful reviews
2002	266,695	267,655	122,450
2003	258,930	258,030	117,375
2004	[1]237,155	251,845	[1]107,165

[1] No Figures for December 2004 for the number of reviews registered and successful reviews. Therefore the total will be slightly lower than the actual year.

Notes:
1. Figures are taken from 100 per cent. Management Information System data.
2. Figures are rounded to five.
3. Information from the MIS system works on a 'hit' basis and therefore a case within a year for registration may not also be within the same year for decided or successful, therefore figures are not comparable.
4. Data for unsuccessful reviews are not available, and on the basis of point 3, the number of these claims cannot be calculated from decided and successful reviews.

Source:
InfD

EDS

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what date he has set for his summit meeting with EDS. [216765]

Mr. Pond: My right hon. Friend held a meeting with Michael Jordan (Chief Executive Officer) and Steve Schuckenbrock (Executive Vice President of Global Sales and Client Solutions) of EDS on 1 February 2005. At this meeting he took stock of the present position in

relation to EDS' contract to provide computer and telephony services to the Child Support Agency. He concluded that acceptable progress is being made in improving that service and proposes to hold a further meeting later in the year.

Incapacity Benefit

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed incapacity benefit for mental health reasons *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* in the parliamentary constituencies of (i) Lichfield, (ii) Tamworth and (iii) Burton in (A) 1997 and (B) 2004; and if he will make a statement. [217520]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in certain parliamentary constituencies by diagnosis, at the quarter shown

	Great Britain	*Burton*	*Lichfield*	*Tamworth*
August 1997				
All	2,739,900	3,900	2,600	3,700
Mental and behavioural disorders	725,300	900	600	700
August 2004				
All	2,704,200	3,700	3,000	3,800
Mental and behavioural disorders	1,035,000	1,000	1,100	1,200

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance and credits-only cases.

Source:

Information Directorate; 5 per cent. sample.

New Deal

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people who have obtained jobs through the new deal were still in employment 12 months later in each year for which figures are available. [214846]

Jane Kennedy: information is not available on the length of time individuals have spent in jobs gained through the new deal.

The available information on the number of individuals gaining jobs through new deal, and the proportion of those not returning to claim a working age benefit within 12 months is in the following tables.

New deal for young people

	Number of people gaining a job	*Proportion of those gaining a job who have not claimed a subsequent working age benefit within 12 months (percentage)*
January 1998 to June 1999	102,170	—
July 1999 to March 2000	80,970	46
April 2000 to March 2001	92,120	47
April 2001 to March 2002	73,680	47
April 2002 to March 2003	71,200	47
April 2003 to March 2004	75,010	—
April 2004 to September 2004	40,260	—

Notes:

1. Information from the DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study is available from July 1999 to March 2004. To enable information to be provided on those not returning to claim a working age benefit within 12 months, these data are provided up to March 2003.
2. Information on the proportion not claiming a subsequent benefit excludes people who continued an existing benefit claim after starting employment.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10 and percentages are calculated on unrounded figures.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

New deal 25 plus

	Number of people gaining a job	*Proportion of those gaining a job who have not claimed a subsequent working age benefit within 12 months (percentage)*
July 1998 to June 1999	18,640	—
July 1999 to March 2000	20,770	58
April 2000 to March 2001	25,630	59
April 2001 to March 2002	35,210	55
April 2002 to March 2003	42,060	53
April 2003 to March 2004	41,230	—
April 2004 to September 2004	20,940	—

Notes:

1. Information from the DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study is available from July 1999 to March 2004. To enable information to be provided on those not returning to claim a working age benefit within 12 months, these data are provided up to March 2003.
2. Information on the proportion not claiming a subsequent benefit excludes people who continued an existing benefit claim after starting employment.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10 and percentages are calculated on unrounded figures.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

New deal for lone parents

	Number of people gaining a job	*Proportion of those gaining a job who have not claimed a subsequent working age benefit within 12 months (percentage)*
October 1998 to June 1999	16,670	—
July 1999 to March 2000	32,310	72
April 2000 to March 2001	47,450	73
April 2001 to March 2002	49,320	75
April 2002 to March 2003	59,180	75
April 2003 to March 2004	59,020	—
April 2004 to September 2004	32,470	—

Notes:

1. Information from the DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study is available from July 1999 to March 2004. To enable information to be provided on those not returning to claim a working age benefit within 12 months, these data are provided up to March 2003.
2. Information on the proportion not claiming a subsequent benefit excludes people who continued an existing benefit claim after starting employment.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10 and percentages are calculated on unrounded figures.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

New deal for disabled people

	Number of people gaining a job	*Proportion of those gaining a job who have not claimed a subsequent working age benefit within 12 months (percentage)*
July 2001 to March 2002	2,390	69
April 2002 to March 2003	10,000	74
April 2003 to March 2004	18,000	—
April 2004 to September 2004	15,680	—

Notes:

1. Information from the DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study is available from July 1999 to March 2004. To enable information to be provided on those not returning to claim a working age benefit within 12 months, these data are provided up to March 2003.
2. Information on the proportion not claiming a subsequent benefit excludes people who continued an existing benefit claim after starting employment.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10 and percentages are calculated on unrounded figures.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

New deal 50 plus

	Number of people gaining a job with help of new deal 50 plus employment credit	*Number of new deal 50 plus job entries*
April 2000 to March 2001	33,020	—
April 2001 to March 2002	33,960	—
April 2002 to March 2003	31,080	—
April 2003 to March 2004	—	23,700
April 2004 to December 2004	—	17,220

Notes:

1. Information is not available on the period of time elapsing before people return to claim a working age benefit.
2. Information up to March 2003 is for those gaining a job and receiving the new deal 50 plus employment credit. information from April 2003 to December 2004 is for Jobcentre Plus recorded job entries.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate

New deal for partners

	Number of people gaining a job
May 1999 to March 2000	310
April 2000 to March 2001	490
April 2001 to March 2002	640
April 2002 to March 2003	240
April 2003 to September 2004	190

Notes:

1. Information is not available on the period of time elapsing before people return to claim a working age benefit.
2. Information is for people getting a job through the programme.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215835]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W, by the Financial Secretary.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Policies (Blackpool, South)

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of the Duchy's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215685]

Mr. Milburn: The Duchy of Lancaster is not a Government Department and, therefore, is not involved in the setting or execution of national policies.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the activities of Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra in *(a)* the EU and *(b)* North Africa since January 2002; and if he will make a statement. [216733]

Mr. MacShane: We are aware that the Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra movement is active across parts of North Africa and Europe. Her Majesty's Government regularly assess all groups which they identify as posing a potential terrorist threat to UK interests.

Belarus

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures he plans in conjunction with other EU member states for co-operation on essential border controls between the EU and Belarus; and if he will make a statement. [217453]

Mr. MacShane: The UK actively participates in joint EU operations at weak points on the EU's external border. There are plans for such operations at the border with Belarus in the future.

The UK Immigration Service also has regular operational contact with the authorities in Belarus on migration issues, including on border control matters. Home Office officials met recently with representatives from the Belarusian Ministry of the Interior to discuss co-operation on migration issues.

Cambodia

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of corruption in Cambodia; what assistance is being given to Cambodia to eliminate corruption; and if he will make a statement. [216125]

Mr. Alexander: Cambodia faces a challenging governance agenda of which combating corruption is of central importance, as the president of the World Bank made clear recently.

Strengthening governance remains a key part of UK bilateral assistance for Cambodia. The UK is helping the Government undertake critical reforms that will help tackle corruption. For example, we are helping the Government undertake reforms of management of public funds and we have supported work to tackle illegal logging.

At the annual consultative group meeting between Government and donors in Cambodia in December last year, the Government committed to specific actions to tackle reported corruption, enact anti-corruption legislation and increase Government openness and transparency.

However, these promises need to be backed by faster progress towards reform. I raised this issue with the Cambodian Minister of Justice, Mr. Ang Vong Vathana, on 27 January 2005. Our ambassador in Phnom Penh also raised it with the Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on 1 February 2005.

We welcome the Cambodian Government's intention to adopt soon an anti-corruption law. We hope that the political will needed to implement the legislation will be forthcoming.

We will continue to encourage the Government of Cambodia to take concrete action against corruption and are providing practical support to help them do so.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department will reply to the letters on behalf of Ms Amani Hamadalla *(a)* to Mr. Goldsmith of the Libya Desk dated 1 September and 19 October 2004 and *(b)* to Baroness Symons dated 19 November 2004. [217587]

Mr. Rammell: We regret the delay in replying to the hon. Member's correspondence, but note that officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have been in direct contact with Ms Hamadalla several times during this period, including in relation to the issues raised in the hon. Member's letters of 1 September, 19 October and 19 November.

Officials at the British Embassy in Tripoli continue to raise Ms Hamadalla's case with the Libyan authorities. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will write to the hon. Member with a full update shortly.

EU Contributions

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* gross and *(b)* net contributions of each EU member state since 1986. [217656]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

Details of member states gross contributions, after taking account of the UK abatement, receipts, and indicative net contributions for the period 1986 to 2003, the latest year for which information is currently available, are set out in the following tables.

Gross contributions by member state 1986–2003

€ *million*

	Belgium	*Denmark*	*Germany*	*Greece*	*Spain*	*France*	*Ireland*
1986	1,448	791	8,730	632	2,321	6,885	344
1987	1,703	845	9,385	340	1,709	7,330	338
1988	1,834	956	11,535	430	2,678	9,096	328
1989	1,807	871	11,110	566	3,575	8,623	371
1990	1,764	775	10,358	564	3,671	8,090	368
1991	2,217	1,034	15,394	762	4,580	10,602	452
1992	2,239	1,035	16,998	729	4,828	10,493	462
1993	2,395	1,207	19,076	1,011	5,193	11,546	567
1994	2,822	1,296	21,366	992	4,718	12,551	639
1995	2,680	1,295	21,324	985	3,645	11,877	665
1996	2,751	1,369	20,743	1,106	4,547	12,423	682
1997	2,972	1,506	21,217	1,178	5,368	13,186	687
1998	3,131	1,695	20,633	1,319	5,752	13,584	985
1999	3,196	1,656	21,069	1,349	6,231	13,994	1,060
2000	3,389	1,685	21,775	1,334	6,445	14,511	1,074
2001	3,532	1,778	19,727	1,350	6,592	14,471	1,211
2002	3,018	1,688	17,582	1,338	6,551	14,152	1,019
2003	3,486	1,778	19,203	1,534	7,429	15,154	1,128

	Italy	*Luxembourg*	*Netherlands*	*Austria*	*Portugal*	*Finland*	*Sweden*	*UK*
1986	4,718	66	2,232	n/a	279	n/a	n/a	4,825
1987	5,192	74	2,366	n/a	342	n/a	n/a	5,728
1988	5,427	82	2,796	n/a	400	n/a	n/a	5,324
1989	7,606	73	2,701	n/a	458	n/a	n/a	6,568
1990	6,098	75	2,615	n/a	502	n/a	n/a	6,534
1991	8,700	109	3,538	n/a	712	n/a	n/a	4,736
1992	8,280	124	3,534	n/a	838	n/a	n/a	6,702
1993	10,265	167	4,031	n/a	909	n/a	n/a	7,627
1994	7,760	165	4,246	n/a	1,216	n/a	n/a	6,417
1995	6,414	168	4,350	1,763	865	887	1,658	9,252
1996	9,005	161	4,436	1,874	852	964	1,969	8,219

	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Austria	Portugal	Finland	Sweden	UK
1997	8,667	171	4,838	2,110	1,078	1,062	2,326	8,928
1998	10,582	217	5,105	2,086	1,105	1,146	2,383	12,537
1999	10,766	194	5,092	2,054	1,228	1,211	2,349	11,084
2000	11,000	186	5,497	2,094	1,255	1,226	2,633	13,867
2001	11,613	257	5,517	2,091	1,266	1,233	2,338	7,744
2002	11,279	184	4,468	1,809	1,187	1,185	2,086	10,153
2003	11,759	205	4,920	1,936	1,293	1,338	2,501	9,971

Note:

Figures for gross contributions are after account is taken of the UK's abatement and the bringing to account of surpluses and deficits in respect of member states contributions in earlier years. Since 1988, member states' contributions exclude 10 per cent. collection costs (25 per cent. from March 2001) in respect of sugar and agricultural levies and customs duties payments—which are deducted before contributions are made to the Community. Prior to 1988 member states made their sugar and agricultural levies and customs duties contributions available in full. The 10 per cent. collection costs were paid from the expenditure side of the Budget to member states and thus scored as receipts.

Sources:

1. 1986 to 1991 Court of Auditors Reports.
2. 1992 and 1993 European Commission Report on own resources system.
3. 1994 to 2003 European Commission Reports on the Allocation of EU Operating Expenditure.

Receipts paid to member states 1986–2003

€ *million*

	Belgium	Denmark	Germany	Greece	Spain	France	Ireland
1986	1,164	1,212	4,988	1,905	2,416	6,324	1,574
1987	985	1,144	4,542	1,877	1,985	6,744	1,438
1988	839	1,286	5,428	1,922	4,012	7,315	1,488
1989	683	1,045	4,580	2,565	3,544	5,677	1,712
1990	990	1,198	4,807	3,034	5,383	6,285	2,261
1991	2,634	1,380	6,597	3,689	6,875	8,153	2,810
1992	3,463	1,330	7,436	4,317	7,536	9,174	2,582
1993	3,728	1,563	7,417	5,106	8,215	10,519	2,970
1994	3,962	1,533	7,901	4,866	7,890	10,086	2,407
1995	4,398	1,640	8,126	4,513	10,898	10,337	2,578
1996	4,167	1,617	10,214	5,187	10,662	12,286	2,998
1997	4,051	1,574	10,274	5,550	11,304	12,405	3,364
1998	3,933	1,514	10,408	5,958	12,450	12,052	3,227
1999	4,180	1,554	9,995	5,027	12,965	13,116	2,910
2000	4,358	1,655	10,375	5,590	10,928	12,454	2,625
2001	4,049	1,348	10,347	5,741	13,648	11,752	2,319
2002	4,493	1,472	11,685	4,694	15,217	12,224	2,600
2003	4,231	1,494	10,637	4,856	15,884	13,429	2,691

	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Austria	Portugal	Finland	Sweden	UK
1986	4,523	7	2,450	n/a	498	n/a	n/a	3,387
1987	5,256	12	2,890	n/a	731	n/a	n/a	3,122
1988	5,551	14	3,946	n/a	915	n/a	n/a	3,254
1989	6,177	8	3,830	n/a	946	n/a	n/a	3,214
1990	5,681	15	2,984	n/a	1,103	n/a	n/a	3,147
1991	7,311	269	3,000	n/a	2,228	n/a	n/a	4,070
1992	8,048	750	2,715	n/a	2,964	n/a	n/a	4,446
1993	9,122	904	2,767	n/a	3,367	n/a	n/a	4,667
1994	5,394	773	2,483	n/a	3,061	n/a	n/a	5,343
1995	5,741	862	2,428	902	3,306	753	761	4,612
1996	7,852	948	2,104	1,661	3,701	1,052	1,313	6,112
1997	8,606	896	2,561	1,387	3,800	1,118	1,197	7,129
1998	8,490	909	2,099	1,330	4,007	975	1,344	6,981
1999	9,081	833	1,788	1,242	3,940	936	1,165	5,919
2000	10,880	908	2,277	1,398	3,257	1,396	1,215	7,896
2001	8,693	900	1,688	1,403	2,947	1,020	1,093	5,938
2002	8,241	975	1,591	1,554	3,873	1,203	1,245	6,168
2003	10,666	1,062	1,996	1,577	4,769	1,347	1,454	6,216

Notes:

1. With effect from 1988, payments to member states no longer include collection costs in respect of sugar and agricultural levies and customs duties. Since 1988 member states have retained 10 per cent. (25 per cent. from March 2001) of their levies and duties before making these contributions available to the Community.
2. Information for 1986 to 1991, which has been taken from ECA reports, may not include full data on the benefit to member states from spending on administration or "other institutions". Figures for 1986 to 1991 are not therefore fully comparable with those for later years.

Sources:

1. 1986 to 1991 Court of Auditors Reports.
2. 1992 and 1993 European Commission Report on own resources system.
3. 1994 to 2003 European Commission Reports on the Allocation of EU Operating Expenditure.

Net contributions by member state 1986–2003

€ million

	Belgium	Denmark	Germany	Greece	Spain	France	Ireland
1986	284	-421	3,742	-1,273	-95	562	-1,230
1987	717	-300	4,843	-1,537	-276	586	-1,101
1988	995	-331	6,107	-1,492	-1,334	1,781	-1,159
1989	1,124	-174	6,531	-1,998	31	2,946	-1,341
1990	774	-423	5,550	-2,470	-1,711	1,805	-1,893
1991	-417	-346	8,797	-2,926	-2,295	2,450	-2,357
1992	-1,224	-296	9,562	-3,588	-2,708	1,319	-2,120
1993	-1,333	-357	11,660	-4,095	-3,022	1,027	-2,403
1994	-1,140	-237	13,466	-3,874	-3,172	2,465	-1,768
1995	-1,718	-345	13,198	-3,528	-7,253	1,540	-1,914
1996	-1,416	-248	10,528	-4,081	-6,114	138	-2,316
1997	-1,079	-69	10,944	-4,372	-5,936	781	-2,677
1998	-802	181	10,225	-4,647	-6,697	1,532	-2,242
1999	-984	103	11,074	-3,678	-6,734	878	-1,850
2000	-969	30	11,399	-4,256	-4,482	2,057	-1,551
2001	-518	429	9,380	-4,391	-7,057	2,720	-1,108
2002	-1,475	216	5,897	-3,357	-8,666	1,929	-1,581
2003	-745	283	8,566	-3,322	-8,455	1,725	-1,563

	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Austria	Portugal	Finland	Sweden	UK
1986	195	59	-218	n/a	-219	n/a	n/a	1,438
1987	-65	62	-524	n/a	-390	n/a	n/a	2,606
1988	-124	67	-1,150	n/a	-515	n/a	n/a	2,070
1989	1,429	65	-1,129	n/a	-487	n/a	n/a	3,354
1990	417	60	-368	n/a	-601	n/a	n/a	3,387
1991	1,389	160	538	n/a	-1,516	n/a	n/a	667
1992	232	626	819	n/a	-2,126	n/a	n/a	2,256
1993	1,143	737	1,264	n/a	-2,458	n/a	n/a	2,959
1994	2,366	608	1,763	n/a	-1,845	n/a	n/a	1,074
1995	673	694	1,921	861	-2,441	134	898	4,639
1996	1,153	788	2,332	214	-2,850	-88	657	2,106
1997	61	725	2,276	724	-2,722	-56	1,129	1,799
1998	2,091	693	3,006	756	-2,903	171	1,039	5,556
1999	1,685	639	3,304	812	-2,713	274	1,184	5,165
2000	120	722	3,220	695	-2,002	-171	1,418	5,971
2001	2,920	644	3,829	688	-1,681	213	1,245	1,806
2002	3,039	791	2,876	255	-2,686	-18	841	3,985
2003	1,093	857	2,923	359	-3,476	-9	1,047	3,755

Notes:
1. Negative sign indicates net beneficiary.
2. Information for 1986 to 1991, which has been taken from ECA reports, may not include full data on the benefit to member states from spending on administration or "other institutions". Figures for 1986 to 1991 are not therefore fully comparable with those for later years.
3. Figures in this table should only be regarded as indicative net contributions for the member states.

Source:
Gross contributions minus receipts.

Europe Directorate

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total budget of the Europe directorate within his Department is in 2004–05; and how many staff work in the Europe directorate. [217953]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Europe directorate covers the UK's engagement with the EU's institutions, and our relations with all 24 other EU member states, the four European free trade area countries, those in the Balkans as well as Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus—a total of 41 countries—plus the overseas territory of Gibraltar.

The total budget for the Europe directorate in 2004–05 is £127,473,000. This covers the running costs of operations at home and overseas (including locally engaged staff salaries), capital, and programme expenditure. There are 677 diplomatic service staff who work for the directorate—488 overseas, and 189 in London.

European Constitution

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1455W, on the European Constitution, under what circumstances the charter of fundamental rights might impact upon member states when implementing Union law. [218017]

Mr. MacShane: The Provisions of the charter of fundamental rights are addressed to the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity and to the member states only when they are implementing Union law. Member states implement EU law in various ways, including by adopting legislation, by administrative

practice or by enforcing penalties or other appropriate sanctions. The member states will need to take the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the charter, subject to its general provisions and with due regard to the official explanations, into account in carrying out such activities.

European Court of Justice

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those items of legislation introduced since 1997 in response to a ruling against the Government at the European Court of Justice. [216451]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not hold all the information requested. We have asked other Government Departments to provide us with the relevant information and I will write to the hon. Member once they have done so.

Indonesia

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what occasions over the last year UK embassy staff have visited Aceh in Indonesia to assess the risk of UK-sourced equipment being used for internal repression; and during which of those visits staff had unrestricted, unimpeded and unaccompanied access to local citizens. [217455]

Mr. Alexander: In the last 12 months, there have been several visits by embassy staff to Aceh. Two members of the British embassy visited Aceh in February 2004. They held meetings with members of the Indonesian army, and with local NGOs. The Defence Attaché visited Aceh as part of an EU delegation in May. On both occasions, there were restrictions on movement, due to the security situation in the province. Since the tsunami disaster on 26 December and the lifting of restrictions, there have been many visits to Aceh where movement was only restricted by the physical devastation following the earthquake and tsunami.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of Joel Boutroue's press briefing on 8 February 2005; what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the UN's view of the role of the provincial authorities, the district authorities and the Acehnese people on the Government of Indonesia and its policy towards Aceh; and if he will make a statement. [216404]

Mr. Alexander: We welcomed Mr Boutroue's comments on 8 February 2005 about the importance of involving the Acehnese in reconstructing their devastated province after the disaster on 26 December 2004. The Government of Indonesia have made clear that their main priority is to rebuild Aceh so that the lives of the people there who have suffered such tragic losses can be returned to normal as soon as possible, and that a political settlement to the long-running conflict is reached. With this objective in mind, the international community including the UN are in discussion with the people of Indonesia, particularly the people of Aceh, as to what help they can provide to assist in the recovery of the province.

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of UK *(a)* companies and *(b)* individuals receiving mismanaged Iraqi reconstruction funds. [216457]

Mr. Rammell: We have not received any reports of UK companies or individuals receiving mismanaged Iraqi reconstruction funds.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he *(a)* requested and *(b)* received figures for Iraqi casualties from the Interim Iraqi Government prior to those contained in the statement by the Interim Iraqi Health Minister of 29 October 2004. [217168]

Mr. Rammell: We have had regular discussions on this issue with the Iraqi authorities. We have not received figures for periods earlier than that covered in the Iraqi Minister of Health's statement of 29 October 2004. These covered the period 5 April to 5 October 2004. The Iraqi Ministry of Health only began collating statistics for casualties in April 2004.

Mr. Marshall-Andrews: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his oral statement of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 584, what the serious methodological difficulties are in relation to the figures of Iraqi casualties provided by the Iraqi Ministry of Health; whether these figures contain any attribution of the number of Iraqi deaths and injuries that have resulted from the actions of *(a)* multinational forces, *(b)* Iraqi security forces and *(c)* terrorists and insurgents; and whether the figures specify the number of Iraqi non-combatants who have been killed or injured by the actions of these three groups. [217442]

Mr. Rammell: The Iraqi Ministry of Health (MOH) released a statement on 28 January 2005, which explained that in its figures, collated from some 180 hospitals:

> "Casualties of car bombs and other clearly identifiable terrorist attacks are recorded as being caused by terrorist incidents. All other casualties are recorded as military action. The casualties may include insurgents, civilians as well as Iraqi police who are treated in MOH hospitals. The casualties may have been killed or injured by terrorist or coalition forces. Coalition forces include Iraqi police, Iraqi security forces, and the Multi-National forces".

Kyrgyzstan

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK will be sending election observers to Kyrgyzstan for the election on 27 February. [218305]

Mr. Rammell: Yes. We have provided two long-term observers and 16 short-term observers to the OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission.

Saudi Arabia

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the merits of Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia's call for the UK to join Saudi Arabia in the establishment of an international centre for combating terrorism. [216815]

Mr. MacShane: We welcome HRH Crown Prince Abdullah's encouragement of greater international co-operation on counter-terrorism. The recent conference in Riyadh was of considerable political significance. The Saudi Government have promised a fuller explanation of their proposal for an international counter-terrorism centre. We will look at it seriously.

Sudan

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether there has been conflict between NATO and EU contingency plans for military intervention in the Sudan. [217795]

Mr. Mullin: The UN Security Council is currently planning for the establishment of a UN Peace Support Operation for Sudan to begin deployment in the next few weeks. There are no plans for any military intervention by either the EU or NATO but the EU are giving financial, logistical and technical assistance to the African Union Mission in Darfur.

Uganda

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of corruption in Uganda; what assistance is being given to Uganda to eliminate corruption; and if he will make a statement. [216126]

Mr. Mullin: Corruption continues to be a problem in Uganda. In September, the UK, along with other donor partners, raised the issue directly with President Museveni. We called on the Ugandan Government to tackle corruption more effectively, particularly with regard to its failure to act on high-profile corruption cases and the resulting detrimental impact corruption had on development and investment.

Fighting corruption is a priority for the UK development assistance programme in Uganda. Our work aims to enhance the institutional capacity of key anti-corruption agencies, and to develop a more efficient and co-ordinated approach to fighting corruption in Uganda.

West Papua

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1626W, on West Papua, what format he expects a review of the Act of Free Choice for Papua to take; whether there is a timetable for the review; and if he will make a statement. [216368]

Mr. Alexander: The report of the special representative who oversaw the implementation of the UN backed 1969 Act of Free Choice resulting in West Papua becoming a province of Indonesia was accepted by a majority vote of the UN in November 1969. Any review of it is a matter between the UN and the Indonesian Government.

The British Government, together with other members of the international community, have continued to stress to the Indonesian Government at the highest level the need to fully implement the 2001 special autonomy law for Papua. This law allows for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee to look at the incorporation of Papua into Indonesia in the 1960s.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the committee on the service in the member states of judicial and extrajudicial documents and co-operation between the courts of the member states in the taking of evidence in civil or commercial matters met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217814]

Mr. Lammy: There are two separate committees, one relating to the regulation on the service in the member states of judicial and extrajudicial documents and the other relating to the regulation on co-operation between the courts of the member states in the taking of evidence in civil and commercial matters. There have been no meetings of either committee during the Italian, Irish or Dutch presidencies. However there were two ad hoc meetings convened by the European Commission in Brussels on 17 July 2003 and 14 April 2004 to discuss the regulation on service at which the UK was represented by officials from the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Scottish Executive.

European Constitution

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many questions were drafted and considered before the final text of the question for the referendum on approval of the EU Constitution was agreed; and if he will publish the shortlist of questions. [217184]

Mr. Lammy: The wording of the question was decided following collective agreement at ministerial level with relevant Departments.

We currently have no plans to publish material relating to the formulation and internal development of the Government's policy on the terms of the question.

High Court Judges

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average age of current High Court judges is. [218038]

Mr. Lammy: As at 21 February 2005 there are currently 107 High Court judges in post, whose average age is 58 years and 8 months.

Training Budget

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total education and training budget of the Department is for 2005–06. [218036]

Mr. Lammy: The Departmental allocation for provision of staff education and training for 2005–6 is not yet available. I shall write to my hon. Friend the Member for Bassetlaw once the details of my Department's budget for staff training and education are available.

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the training budget for *(a)* lay magistrates and *(b)* High Court judges is in 2005. [218037]

Mr. Lammy: Judicial training is the responsibility of the Judicial Studies Board (JSB), an independent body chaired by Lord Justice Keene. Training for magistrates is paid for and delivered at local level in 42 administrative areas. The budget for magistrates training is not ring-fenced and currently cannot be isolated from the overall grant allocation made by the Department for Constitutional Affairs to the Magistrates Courts Service. The JSB provides a core continuing professional education curriculum, the aim of which is to strengthen and deepen the skills and knowledge of existing judicial office-holders. High Court judges are invited to relevant continuation seminars. In addition, the JSB provides a programme of regular after-court seminars for the senior judiciary. There is no ring-fenced budget for High Court judges' training and the resources devoted to it can only be identified at disproportionate cost.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the costs of cleaning the Department and its predecessors were in each year since 1997. [213833]

Derek Twigg: The total cost of cleaning the Department for Education and Skills Headquarter buildings both internally and externally are as follows:

Financial year	*Total cost (£)*
1997–98	543,580
1998–99	505,290
1999–2000	648,960
2000–01	624,290
2001–02	729,730
2002–03	793,370
2003–04	830,740

Disabled Access

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether all buildings in her Department within the Greater London area are fully accessible to disabled people; and if she will make a statement. [218201]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: I can confirm that both of the Department's buildings within the Greater London area are fully accessible to people with disabilities. Facilities for people with disabilities are considered to be an integral part of the Department's day-to-day operations and are a key consideration in all accommodation change programme/projects.

Doctorates

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many doctorates were awarded in each subject in each of the last three years, broken down by gender. [217111]

Dr. Howells: The latest available information is given in the table. A new method of coding subject was introduced on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) record in 2002–03, hence figures for 2002–03 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years.

Doctorates obtained at UK HEIs, 2001–02

Subject	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Medicine and dentistry	710	675	1,385
Subjects allied to medicine	335	440	775
Biological sciences	975	1,295	2,270
Veterinary sciences	40	40	80
Agriculture and related subjects	150	100	255
Physical sciences	1,415	650	2,065
Mathematical sciences	300	90	390
Computer science	300	70	370
Engineering and technology	1,525	335	1,860
Architecture, building and planning	105	40	150
Social, economic and political studies	645	555	1,200
Law	95	75	170
Business and administrative studies	340	165	510
Librarianship and information science	35	30	60
Languages	340	460	800
Humanities	510	350	855
Creative arts and design	105	95	205
Education	270	325	595
Combined	95	110	210
Total	8,300	5,910	14,210

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Doctorates obtained at UK HEIs, 2002–03 and 2003–04

	2002–03			*2003–04*		
Subject	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Medicine and dentistry	690	675	1,360	750	780	1,530
Subjects allied to medicine	390	490	885	365	515	880
Biological sciences	1,030	1,350	2,375	1,020	1,390	2,415
Veterinary sciences	25	45	70	30	30	60
Agriculture and related subjects	140	90	230	140	120	260
Physical sciences	1,470	710	2,180	1,505	775	2,280
Mathematical sciences	280	90	370	315	100	415
Computer science	290	85	375	370	100	470
Engineering and technology	1,655	365	2,020	1,630	410	2,040
Architecture, building and planning	125	50	175	120	65	190
Social studies	685	560	1,245	670	585	1,255
Law	135	125	255	110	80	195
Business and administrative studies	355	200	555	335	215	545
Mass communication and documentation	30	35	65	40	40	80
Languages	400	495	900	365	470	840
Historical and philosophical studies	530	325	855	500	385	885
Creative arts and design	185	120	310	130	115	245
Education	290	330	620	240	365	605
Combined	15	10	25	45	30	75
Total	8,720	6,155	14,875	8,680	6,575	15,255

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Education and Youth Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the outcome was of the Education and Youth Council held on 21 February 2005; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [218159]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I attended the Education and Youth Council on behalf of the United Kingdom. During the education part of the Council, we discussed the education and training aspects of the Lisbon mid-term review and adopted conclusions on the importance of education and training to Lisbon. The conclusions will be transmitted to the European Council and ask it to emphasise education and training in the Lisbon mid-term review, for example by calling on member states to have lifelong learning strategies in place by 2006 and by improving the exchange of good practice on education and training at European level. As part of the discussion, Commissioner Figel presented the Commission's communication on Lisbon and explained that it identified six key areas of work for Education Ministers; effective investment; national lifelong learning strategies; higher education; vocational training; European qualifications framework and the Youth Pact.

I tabled a paper setting out the UK position and also spoke to emphasise that growth and employment should be the focus of the Lisbon strategy and that achieving the Lisbon goals depended on investing effectively in education and skills, which was strongly supported. I also highlighted the importance of a flexible labour market and suggested that while it was important for the state to pay for basic skills, employers and individuals should invest in higher level skills. I also suggested that member states should work together on reforming higher education funding, discuss the use of ICT in delivering lifelong learning and collect evidence on the links between skills and productivity.

On the basis of presentations from experts, we held an exchange of views on how discussion did not lead to any conclusions but the presidency has asked the Commission to continue to look at these issues. I also tabled a paper under this item and explained that the UK was beginning to give schools more autonomy, but that school leadership was also a key element to success. I also noted, along with Italy, that we are developing an approach based on the principle of personalising the learning experience to the needs of the individual. On the issue of equal opportunities for all, I explained that financial incentives were being offered in the UK for pupils from lower income backgrounds to stay on in school after compulsory education.

During the youth part of the Council, we discussed and adopted conclusions on the youth aspects of the Lisbon mid-term review. The conclusions endorse the initiative proposed by France and supported by Germany, Sweden and Spain to establish an EU Youth Pact. I tabled a UK position paper and said that I saw the Youth Pact as an opportunity to demonstrate to young people that the EU is not simply a remote bureaucracy with no impact on their lives. The Pact should work towards eliminating youth unemployment, developing young people's skills and confidence to prepare them both professionally and personally and encouraging a positive approach to learning amongst young people. Commissioner Figel explained that the Commission would adopt a communication in May, which would outline their ideas for the content of the Pact.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on the second general system for the recognition of professional education and training met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214309]

Dr. Howells: No meetings of the Committee on the second general system were held during the Italian and Dutch presidencies. A meeting was held during the Irish presidency on 23 April 2004, in Brussels, and the UK National Co-ordinator responsible for the general system was present.

Financial Education

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken to include financial education as a compulsory element of the national curriculum. [217722]

Derek Twigg: In the 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper, the Department has set out our commitment to supporting financial capability education. In line with the emphasis on improving function skills set out in the White Paper and as part of the wider review of GCSE maths, we have asked the QCA to consider including financial capability more explicitly in the maths curriculum.

Personal finance education is covered in the curriculum through the non-statutory framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and through subjects such as Citizenship, Mathematics and Business Studies. The Department recognises the importance of financial education in enabling young people to develop the financial capability they need to make informed decisions.

Formal Consultations

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many formal consultation processes the Department has initiated since 1997. [217767]

Derek Twigg: My Department was established after the general election in 2001 and has initiated a total of 148 formal written consultations since then. Prior to 8 June 2001, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) conducted a total of 407 formal written consultations. A list of the initiatives my Department has consulted on since June 2001 can be found at: www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by

placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) only a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215195]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 10 February 2005]*: "Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and NDPBs should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate"

The DfES has a publication scheme in place and the Department does intend to provide information of wider public interest released under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act as an extension to the current scheme. Technical work is currently being undertaken to provide a disclosure log. The Department does not routinely place information in the Library and there are no proposals to amend this policy in the light of FOI.

Growth Areas (Funding)

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding her Department has earmarked for growth areas to ensure that they have the resources required to meet the demands of a growing population. [218328]

Derek Twigg: All local authorities are required to provide annual information as part of the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC). This provides the Department with up-to-date information on pupil numbers, including forecast increases. PLASC data are used to calculate the allocation of funding to local authorities and schools which takes into account new pupil places in growth areas.

Higher Education (EU Nationals)

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether students from EU accession states will be eligible for *(a)* university bursaries and *(b)* higher education grant from 2006 onwards; and what estimate she has made of (i) the number of students from EU accession states likely to apply to UK universities and (ii) the proportion of such students eligible for the higher education grant. [217860]

Dr. Howells: It is for universities to decide who should be eligible for bursary schemes that they administer. EU students who are not migrant workers, or are not the spouse, civil partner or child of migrant workers, will not be eligible for the new £2,700 grant to be introduced from 2006/07 onwards. The Department does not produce projections of EU students from accession countries independently of the EU as a whole.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students from EU accession countries have obtained places at English universities in each year since 1997. [217957]

Dr. Howells: The available information on undergraduate entrants is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record and figures are given in the table.

EU accession country[1] domiciled undergraduate entrants at English HE institutions[2], 1997/98 to 2003/04

Academic year	*Entrants*
1997/98	1,260
1998/99	1,400
1999/2000	1,585
2000/01	1,525
2001/02	1,555
2002/03	1,560
2003/04	1,885

[1] Includes Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia.

[2] Figures exclude the OU.

Note:

Snapshot as at 1 December and figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) have published figures for entry in 2004 which show that there were 2,422, applicants from EU accession countries accepted to full-time undergraduate courses at UK institutions.

Early figures for 2005 entry suggest that the number of applicants from the EU accession countries who have applied by the 15 January advisory early closing date has increased by 78.8 per cent. to 3,427 compared to 1,917 at the same point last year.

Maintenance Grants

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of the maintenance grant payable to poorer students was in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [216741]

Dr. Howells: The expenditure, including planned expenditure, on the Higher Education Grant in academic year 2004/05 to date is £91 million[1].

The HE Grant was introduced for new entrants into higher education in England and Wales in academic year 2004/05 to help cover the costs of participating in HE. The grant is fully means-tested and is non-repayable. The maximum grant in 2004/05 is £1,000 and is available to students with a family income of up to £15,200. Students with a family income between £15,201 and £21,185 will receive part of the grant.

[1] Provisional data as at 16 February 2005. Final data will be published in a Statistical First Release by the Student Loans Company in November 2005.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will estimate the cost of educational maintenance allowance bonus payments in each year from 2003/04 to 2009/10; and if she will make a statement. [216743]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on expenditure for the 2003/04 academic year relates to the last year of the pilots which ran three different models for bonus payments, all of which differed from the way bonuses work in the national scheme. Only a third of England

was covered and the scheme was administered by local education authorities. Within the overall expenditure on EMA pilots in 2003/04 it is estimated that some £21.5 million was spent on bonuses.

In the national scheme young people studying a two-year course may receive up to £500 in bonuses as long as they make good progress in their studies and they return to study after Christmas and summer holidays.

Estimated costs for each academic year of the national scheme are available up to 2007/08 and assume that the current model and assumptions continue unchanged, for example it is assumed that 75 per cent. of young people on EMA will receive bonuses. These estimated costs, which take account of the phased implementation are as follows.

	£
2004/05	43,521,000
2005/06	78,425,000
2006/07	86,598,000
2007/08	85,550,000

Overseas Students

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many overseas students there were at each university in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; and what percentage of the student body this represented in each case. [216488]

Dr. Howells: The available information is shown in the following table.

Enrolments by overseas[1] students to UK HEIs by Institution

	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Anglia Polytechnic University	2,480	11	2,075	9	2,250	10
Arts Institute at Bournemouth	85	8	130	11	145	11
Aston University	830	12	905	14	1,200	17
Bath College of HE	215	5	200	4	240	5
Bell College	20	1	20	1	25	1
Birkbeck College	425	3	385	3	395	3
Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies	—	—	570	19	670	23
Bishop Grosseteste College	0	0	5	0	5	0
Bolton Institute of HE	410	7	495	8	475	8
Bournemouth University	1,250	10	1,370	10	1,615	11
Brunel University	1,405	11	1,705	12	2,165	16
Buckinghamshire College of HE	800	9	890	10	870	10
Canterbury Christ Church College	380	3	425	3	435	4
Central School of Speech and Drama	75	13	95	14	115	15
Chester College of HE	150	2	275	3	195	2
Chichester Institute of Higher Education	45	1	120	3	155	3
City University	2,850	21	3,535	20	3,780	22
College of St. Mark and St. John	225	7	85	2	175	4
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama	95	28	90	27	140	22
Courtauld Institute of Art	—	—	120	32	125	32
Coventry University	2,465	15	2,625	15	2,730	16
Cranfield University	1,115	31	1,255	33	1,295	33
Cumbria Institute of the Arts	65	7	100	11	110	11
Darlington College of Arts	60	12	45	9	80	15
De Montfort University	1,800	8	1,565	8	1,575	7
Edge Hill College of HE	155	2	235	3	200	2
Edinburgh College of Art	305	18	360	22	390	24
Falmouth College of Arts	90	6	110	7	135	7
Glasgow Caledonian University	650	4	735	5	1,165	7
Glasgow School of Art	270	18	295	20	325	21
Goldsmiths College	1,270	18	1,270	18	1,460	21
Harper Adams Agricultural College	160	9	150	10	110	7
Heriot-Watt University	1,555	21	1,740	23	2,065	25
Homerton College	45	3	40	2	45	2
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine	3,300	29	3,385	29	3,830	32
Institute of Advanced Nursing Education	25	3	20	4	15	3
Institute of Cancer Research	60	13	25	28	30	31
Institute of Education, University of London	645	16	715	16	800	15
Kent Institute of Art and Design	455	23	440	22	475	23
King Alfred's College, Winchester	115	2	110	2	100	2
King's College London	3,065	17	3,390	17	3,615	18
Kingston University	2,075	13	2,225	12	2,405	13
Leeds Metropolitan University	1,780	8	1,960	8	2,670	11
Liverpool Hope	345	5	525	8	660	9
Liverpool John Moores University	1,800	9	1,515	8	1,945	9
London Business School	970	67	1,140	70	1,100	70
London Guildhall University[2]	1,765	14	—	—	—	—
London Institute	3,340	31	3,615	33	4,035	34
London Metropolitan University[2]	—	—	4,920	17	5,715	20
London School of Economics and Political Science	4,720	62	5,190	63	5,340	63
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	435	53	425	53	470	55
Loughborough University	1,600	12	2,025	14	2,410	16
Manchester Metropolitan University	2,035	7	1,975	7	2,340	7
Middlesex University	4,800	23	4,390	22	4,800	24
Napier University	1,220	10	1,590	13	2,120	16

Enrolments by overseas[1] students to UK HEIs by Institution

	2001-02		2002-03		2003-04	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Nene College	510	5	575	6	685	7
Newman College	90	6	100	5	105	5
North-East Wales Institute of Higher Education	435	9	505	10	530	10
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	40	27	40	26	..	..
Norwich School of Art and Design	25	3	25	4	50	7
Nottingham Trent University	1,625	7	1,655	7	1,815	7
Open University	..	0	310	0	665	0
Oxford Brookes University	2,665	18	2,980	18	3,065	19
Queen Margaret College	640	16	665	16	585	14
Queen Mary and Westfield College	1,830	20	2,260	22	2,545	24
Queen's University of Belfast	1,980	9	2,065	10	1,985	9
Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication	120	16	145	16	150	15
Robert Gordon University	1,090	11	1,525	14	1,585	14
Roehampton Institute of HE	690	9	795	10	870	11
Rose Bruford College	130	16	130	16	110	15
Royal Academy of Music	265	43	275	44	300	43
Royal Agricultural College	85	15	105	16	85	13
Royal College of Art	260	31	240	28	270	31
Royal College of Music	170	31	200	34	230	38
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	1,420	25	1,530	25	1,885	26
Royal Northern College of Music	125	21	120	21	120	21
Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama	65	10	75	11	85	13
Royal Veterinary College	170	19	165	17	170	15
Royal Welsh College of Music and drama	50	9	45	8	40	7
School of Oriental and African Studies	1,490	43	1,505	43	1,695	44
School of Pharmacy, University of London	160	20	185	22	220	23
Scottish Agricultural College	25	4	40	6	45	6
Sheffield Hallam University	1,440	6	1,655	7	1,920	8
South Bank University	2,230	13	2,285	13	2,655	14
Southampton Institute	1,015	10	1,175	11	1,260	11
St. George's Hospital Medical School	185	6	165	5	185	6
St. Martin's College	330	4	355	4	415	4
St. Mary's College	255	9	240	8	200	6
St. Mary's University College	80	8	75	7	75	7
Staffordshire University	1,140	8	1,430	10	1,560	11
Stranmillis University College	45	3	50	4	55	4
Surrey Institute of Art and Design	345	12	355	12	335	12
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	185	4	200	4	265	5
Thames Valley University	975	7	1,295	10	1,545	11
Trinity and AH Saints College	80	3	80	3	75	3
Trinity College of Music	120	25	120	24	260	34
Trinity College, Carmarthen	120	5	95	4	55	3
UHI Millennium Institute	40	1	120	3	100	2
University College London	4,710	25	5,275	27	5,575	28
University of Aberdeen	1,875	15	2,120	17	2,130	16
University of Abertay Dundee	580	13	570	13	550	14
University of Bath	1,995	19	2,065	18	2,405	20
University of Birmingham	3,980	15	4,625	17	4,530	16
University of Bradford	1,685	17	2,020	20	2,345	23
University of Brighton	2,245	14	2,305	13	2,325	13
University of Bristol	2,350	13	2,690	14	2,935	15
University of Cambridge	4,430	21	4,595	22	4,550	20
University of Central England in Birmingham	1,510	8	1,590	8	1,700	8
University of Central Lancashire	2,435	9	3,480	13	2,390	9
University of Derby	645	6	695	6	840	7
University of Dundee	1,590	12	1,850	13	2,135	14
University of Durham	1,390	11	1,610	11	1,795	12
University of East Anglia	1,615	13	1,740	13	2,090	14
University of East London	2,240	17	2,400	17	2,845	18
University of Edinburgh	3,475	15	3,825	18	4,330	19
University of Essex	2,655	32	3,000	33	2,965	32
University of Exeter	1,450	12	1,620	13	1,790	14
University of Glamorgan	1,580	9	1,835	9	1,915	10
University of Glasgow	2,140	9	2,510	10	2,645	11
University of Gloucestershire	335	4	380	4	515	6
University of Greenwich	2,705	15	3,275	17	3,400	18
University of Hertfordshire	2,160	12	2,925	15	3,730	18
University of Huddersfield	975	6	1,060	6	1,205	7
University of Hull	2,240	13	2,730	16	2,980	17
University of Keele	965	9	925	8	1,075	10
University of Kent at Canterbury	2,210	18	2,335	18	2,490	18
University of Lancaster	2,125	19	2,310	19	2,470	19
University of Leeds	3,810	13	4,640	14	4,725	15
University of Leicester	2,430	15	2,710	18	2,635	18
University of Lincoln	1,570	14	2,685	21	970	8
University of Liverpool	2,255	12	2,375	12	2,560	13

Enrolments by overseas[1] students to UK HEIs by Institution

	2001–02		2002–03		2003–04	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
University of London (Central Institutes and activities)	265	34	145	37	125	31
University of Luton	2,695	27	2,735	27	2,640	27
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology	2,050	30	2,185	31	2,315	32
University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	2,375	13	3,035	17	3,350	19
University of North London[2]	2,735	18	—	—	—	—
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	2,320	11	2,860	12	3,395	14
University of Nottingham	3,905	16	4,655	17	5,165	18
University of Oxford	4,640	22	4,980	23	5,350	24
University of Paisley	545	6	520	5	830	8
University of Plymouth	1,690	7	1,725	7	1,840	7
University of Portsmouth	3,055	18	3,480	19	3,760	19
University of Reading	2,470	18	2,535	17	2,510	18
University of Salford	2,330	12	2,300	13	1,990	11
University of Sheffield	3,345	14	3,765	15	4,105	16
University of Southampton	2,110	11	2,330	12	2,950	14
University of St Andrews	1,660	23	1,820	26	2,105	29
University of Stirling	855	10	955	11	900	11
University of Strathclyde	2,145	10	2,455	12	2,315	10
University of Sunderland	1,540	13	2,235	16	2,655	17
University of Surrey	2,380	20	2,690	21	3,290	24
University of Sussex	2,265	20	2,185	20	2,220	20
University of Teesside	680	5	890	5	1,025	6
University of the West of England, Bristol	1,565	7	1,665	7	1,830	7
University of Ulster	2,600	12	2,845	12	3,065	13
University of Wales College of Medicine	270	8	335	10	500	12
University of Wales College, Newport	430	5	420	5	425	5
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	505	6	585	7	575	7
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	965	10	1,000	10	1,135	12
University of Wales, Bangor	675	8	730	8	875	10
University of Wales, Cardiff	3,110	16	3,595	17	3,280	15
University of Wales, Lampeter	360	8	505	9	670	11
University of Wales, Swansea	1,300	12	1,405	12	1,580	12
University of Warwick	4,295	21	5,025	23	5,525	24
University of Westminster	3,655	16	3,900	17	4,360	18
University of Wolverhampton	2,135	10	3,540	16	3,430	15
University of York	1,400	14	1,770	17	2,040	18
Victoria University of Manchester	3,910	15	4,370	16	4,505	15
Wimbledon School of Art	85	14	85	14	75	12
Worcester College of HE	195	3	205	3	225	4
Writtle College	130	10	120	10	150	13
York St. John College	210	4	285	5	305	6
Total	227,275	12	255,235	13	275,480	13

[1] 'Overseas' denotes both EU and non-EU overseas domiciled students.
[2] The University of North London and London Guildhall University merged to for London Metropolitan University in 2002/03.

Note:
Figures are on a snapshot basis as at 1 December and are rounded to the nearest 5.0, 1 and 2 are denoted as '—'.

Source:
HESA

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of certain universities' plans to increase the number of overseas students; what plans she has to ensure that these plans do not affect the Government's plans for getting more pupils from mainstream state schools into those universities; and if she will make a statement. [216662]

Dr. Howells: The Government recognise the importance of overseas students to the UK. They provide significant benefits to the economy and to individual institutions and we want that to continue. However, as self-governing bodies, universities and higher education colleges are responsible for their own admission decisions. It is up to each institution to decide on the proportion of overseas students it plans to recruit. This does not affect the overall position of home students. Throughout the UK overseas students are recruited in addition to home students and the Government remain committed to widening participation in higher education. We continue to believe that all those who have the potential to benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to do so.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* local education authorities and *(b)* universities have (i) complied with their statutory duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, (ii) published a race equality scheme and action plan and (iii) carried out race impact assessments. [216548]

Dr. Howells: The Department is not responsible for ensuring or monitoring the compliance of local education authorities or higher education institutions (HEIs) with requirements arising from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and so does not hold such information.

Under the Act, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) monitors compliance and enforces specific duties. A CRE news release on the findings of its survey of the progress of Britain's public bodies towards putting the legislation into practice is available at http://www.cre.gov.uk/media/nr_arch/2003/nr030703.html.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has a responsibility to ensure that the HEIs it funds comply with the Act. HEFCE undertook a sector-wide review of race equality policies in October 2002, followed up by two further reviews (in May 2003 and May 2004) in which it revisited those policies which had not originally met CRE's standards. A HEFCE report on the outcomes of this review process is available at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/rdreports/2004/rd09_04/.

Specialist Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the specialist schools closed since 1997, broken down by *(a)* local education authority and *(b)* constituency. [217766]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Since 1997 three specialist schools have closed for the following reasons:

Westlands High (Cheshire LEA, Congleton Constituency, Technology College)

Westlands School closed with two other schools (Dane Valley and Heathfield) as part of a local reorganisation in 2000 and two new schools opened in their place, Congleton High (Engineering College from 2004) and Eaton Bank School (Maths and Computing College from 2004).

Merlyn Rees (Leeds LEA, Leeds Central Constituency, Arts College)

Closed with Matthew Murray High in 2003 to form a new school, South Leeds College (not currently a Specialist School).

Coney Green (Bury LEA, Bury South Constituency, Technology College)

Coney Green closed with Radcliffe High in 2004 to form a new school, Radcliffe Riverside School (Technology College from 2004).

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215090]

Derek Twigg: The cost of producing a staff identity pass in the Department for Education and Skills is £1.87. This is made up of material costs at 0.50 pence and staff costs at £1.37. The number of staff identity passes that have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997 are:

	Number of passes
1997	[1]19
1998	[1]34
1999	[1]25
2000	[1]73
2001	163
2002	200
2003	434
2004	99
2005	10

[1] Partial numbers only due to records not retained.

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the Department and its predecessors spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213852]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has national contracts for the provision of stationery and office supplies, with purchasing delegated to management level. Our accounting system does not make a distinction between stationery and office supplies. Information regarding expenditure is shown in the following table:

Financial year	*Total expenditure on stationery and office supplies (£)*
1997–98	930,031
1998–99	956,745
1999–2000	1,107,350
2000–01	1,184,931
2001–02	1,232,297
2002–03	1,015,163
2003–04	951,448

Student Debt

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has undertaken on whether student loans are a disincentive to *(a)* mature students and *(b)* students from ethnic minority backgrounds to entering further and higher education. [217551]

Dr. Howells: The Department has published the following studies that have investigated the factors, including cost and attitudes to debt, that influence whether mature people and people from minority ethnic groups decide to enter higher education:

"Why The Difference? A Closer Look at Higher Education Minority Ethnic Students and Graduates" 2004 DfES Research Report 552.

"For Me or Not For Me? That is the Question: A Study of Mature Students' Decision- Making and Higher Education" 2002 DfES Research Report 297

"Potential mature student recruitment to HE" 2002 DfES Research Report 385

These reports can be downloaded from the Department's research internet site at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/. They show that debt and cost are one of several factors people consider when deciding whether or not to participate in higher education.

All minority ethnic groups and mature people are well-represented in higher education. For example, all minority ethnic groups are estimated to have a higher higher education initial participation rate (HEIPR) than whites while mature students now comprise over three fifths of the student population.

The Department has not commissioned research on whether student loans deter mature people and people from minority ethnic groups from entering FE. FE students are not eligible for student loans.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department allocated to the Student Loans Company in 2004–05. [217560]

Dr. Howells: The Student Loans Company's total resource budget provided by the DfES was £46 million for financial year 2004–05. Outturn against budget is reported each year in the Department's Annual Report which can be accessed on http://www.dfes.gov.uk/deptreport2004/, and in the company's own annual report at http://www.slc.co.uk/frames/corpinfo/fset.html.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many deferral applications the Student Loans Company has received in each year of its operation; and what percentage this represents of all students due to repay in each year. [217562]

Dr. Howells: Deferral of payment only occurs for the mortgage-style loans. The table shows the numbers of UK borrowers with publicly owned mortgage-style loans due to be repaid, numbers deferring, and deferrals as a percentage of those in repayment status, at the end of each financial year.

Borrowers (thousands)

Financial year[1]	*In repayment status*	*Deferring*	*Percentage deferring*
1992–93	54	23	43
1993–94	138	61	44
1994–95	263	122	46
1995–96	429	207	48
1996–97	623	312	50
1997–98	758	361	48
1998–99[2]	627	287	46
1999–2000[2]	514	232	45
2000–01	623	293	47
2001–02	759	373	49
2002–03	793	374	47
2003–04[3]	750	336	45

[1] The number of those in deferment before 1992–93 was negligible.
[2] Two tranches of student loans were sold to the private sector, in March 1998 and March 1999, this accounts for the reduction in the number of borrowers shown in the table in the following years.
[3] Provisional.

Source:
Student Loans Company

Income-contingent loans were introduced from the start of the academic year 1998/99. There is no concept of deferment for those with income-contingent loans who repay through the tax system—repayments are not collected from those below the earnings threshold.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many default notices the Student Loans Company has issued in each year of its operation; and what percentage this represents of all students due to make repayments in each year. [217563]

Dr. Howells: The Student Loans Company only issues Notices of Default (NODs) after a few months of arrears when initial attempts at contact have failed. Therefore not all borrowers behind with payments are issued with NODs. In addition some borrowers may be issued with more than one NOD. Therefore it is not possible to calculate the number of borrowers in receipt of NODs as a percentage of the total number of borrowers in repayment status. Data are readily available only for the past three years.

	NODs issued
2002/03 April–March	226,299
2003/04 April–March	188,897
2004/05 April–February	99,474

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will commission research to determine what percentage of student debt is a consequence of the introduction of the student loans system. [217565]

Dr. Howells: Increases in average personal student debt, including estimates of student loan debt, have been recorded in periodic student income and expenditure surveys (SIES) in the period since student loans were first introduced; and a further survey is being conducted at the present time, with publication of the report in late 2005. According to the latest published SIES, for 2002/03, outstanding average student loan debt for final year students totalled £8,052 which was 85 per cent. of their total average borrowings of £9,512. However, final year students on average had savings of £846 reducing their average indebtedness to £8,666. Figures for average student loan debt are also available from the Student Loans Company.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many student loans debts have been written off in each of the last five years; and what the total cash value of the deleted debt was. [217566]

Dr. Howells: The table shows the numbers of UK borrowers with publicly-owned student loans written-off in financial years 1999–2000 to 2003–04 and the amounts written-off. This includes borrowers with mortgage-style loans and those with income-contingent loans.

	Financial year				
	[1]*1999–2000*	[2]*2000–01*	[2]*2001–02*	[2]*2002–03*	[2]*2003–04*
Borrowers[3]	900	600	900	1,100	1,200
Amount written-off (£ million)	1.2	1.1	1.4	2.6	3.2

[1] Figures for 1999–2000 include some transactions which relate to the previous financial year.
[2] Provisional
[3] Borrowers who had at least one loan account written-off during the financial year.

Source:
Student Loans Company

The introduction of income-contingent student loans in 1998–99 has meant the amount of student loan paid out has increased, and consequently the amounts written-off are larger. The first cohort with income-contingent loans on three year courses entered repayment status in April 2002.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has undertaken to assess the impact of Student Loans on students from less affluent backgrounds entering further and higher education. [217567]

Dr. Howells: In March 2001 the Department published a research entitled "Social Class and Higher Education: Issues Affecting Decisions on Participation by Lower Social Class Groups" by Connor, H. Dewson, S. Tyers, C. Eccles, J. Regan, J. and Aston, J. This can be downloaded from the Department's research internet site at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/.

This found that finance is one of a number of concerns people had when they were deciding whether or not to attend university. However, among qualified young people who had decided not to go to university the main reason was not related to the likely costs involved but because they wanted to start work or because they did not need a higher education qualification for their chosen career.

The Youth Cohort Study shows that differences in participation rates between different social class groups largely reflect differences in prior attainment. The Department has not commissioned research on whether student loans deter people from less affluent backgrounds from entering FE. FE students are not eligible for student loans.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Carbon Dioxide Reduction

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the projected reduction in carbon dioxide levels by 2010 will be if Government renewable energy targets are met. [217505]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government's 2010 target of 10 per cent. energy coming from renewable sources would mean a reduction of 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide per year over the same energy being produced by gas powered stations.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many gyms are available to staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204376]

Ms Hewitt: The Department of Trade and Industry has one gymnasium at 1 Victoria Street for the use of members of the DTI Sports and Social Association. The Department does not incur any direct costs for this facility.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Republic of South Africa Joint Committee on scientific and technological co-operation met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215904]

Ms Hewitt: The last meeting of the EU-South Africa Steering Committee took place in Brussels on 2 and 3 December 2003 during the Italian presidency. Meetings are convened by the European Commission, and the member states are not invited, therefore no UK officials attend.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the multiannual community programme to stimulate development and use of European digital content on the global networks and to promote linguistic diversity in the information society (e-Content) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217253]

Ms Hewitt: The Committee for the implementation of the multiannual community programme to stimulate development and use of European digital content (e-Content) met three times during the course of the three presidencies (on 11 July 2003, 21 November 2003, 30 September 2004). The meetings took place in Luxembourg and on each occasion the United Kingdom was represented by an official from the Digital Content and Publishing Unit of the Department of Trade and Industry.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee for implementation of the Community market-access strategy met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217835]

Mr. Alexander: The committee met once during each presidency in Brussels on 21 November 2003, 30 June 2004 and 30 November 2004. Officials from the Department of Trade and Industry attended each meeting.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Co-ordinating Group for the Community regime for the control of exports of dual-use goods met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217839]

Nigel Griffiths: The Co-ordinating group met once on 6 November 2003 in Brussels during the Italian presidency. A DTI representative was present at the meeting. There were no meetings during the Irish and Dutch presidencies.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Quota Administration Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217915]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on Common Rules for Imports of Products from Third Countries met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217916]

(3) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on Common Rules for Imports from Certain Third World Countries met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217917]

(4) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Textile Committee (Conventional Regime) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217919]

(5) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on Common Rules for Imports of Textile Products from Certain Third Countries (autonomous regime) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217834]

Mr. Alexander: These committees are not recognised under the titles given. Matters relating to EU quotas would have been discussed in either the "Textile Management Committee" (for textiles) or the EU Regulation Committee (for the EU's Chinese non textile dti quotas). Committee meetings are held in Brussels and would have been attended by a representative of the Department of Trade and Industry.

External Consultants

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much UK Trade and Investment was spent on external consultants and advisors in each of the last three years. [210280]

Ms Hewitt: To date UK Trade and Investment's records show spend of £4.3 million in the current financial year (2004–05) on external consultancy and advice. Spend recorded under the same heads in 2003–04 amounted to £5.7 million. Comparable data are not available for 2002–03.

The largest element of the spend reflects the costs of providing specialist sector and market advice and specialist developmental and training support to SMEs, particularly new to export and new to market companies. Spend in these categories amounted to £2.6 million in 2003–04 and £2.8 million to end January in the current financial year. The cost of marketing support services to UK Trade and Investment—such as project management of events, promotional campaigns and marketing development—amounted to £1.4 million in 2003–04; and is £0.6 million so far this year.

Gas

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of changes in wholesale gas prices on the ability of the UK to meet its carbon dioxide reduction targets. [217491]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Some exploratory analysis of the impact of CO_2 prices on emissions has been produced and reported as part of a November 2004 DTI publication on updated emissions projections. Carbon price analysis can be found at annex 7 of the report. The analysis does not explicitly examine gas price or fuel price differential scenarios but it is noted that the impact of CO_2 prices can be sensitive to the background assumptions, such as energy prices and power station efficiencies. Higher gas prices will tend to require higher carbon prices in order to meet required emission reductions. The report is available electronically:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep2004.pdf

Annex 2a of this report shows the background assumptions for fuel prices.

Hydrogen Fuel

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the *(a)* environmental and *(b)* financial effects of the use of hydrogen fuel for (i) transport and (ii) other users. [218059]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In 2004, the Department for Trade and Industry commissioned E4tech and others to undertake a study of how the UK might develop a strategic framework for hydrogen energy activities in the UK. The study considers the costs and environmental benefits of a number of possible hydrogen energy chains, and concludes that by 2030 six hydrogen energy transport chains could provide cost-competitive CO_2 reductions and greater energy security. Further details of the work are available via the DTI's website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/hydrogen_framework_full.pdf. The Government will be considering the study's recommendations carefully, and will publish these, together with a considered response, shortly.

The financial and environmental impacts of the use of hydrogen as a road transport fuel were also addressed in a report published by the Government in July 2004. This report, which is available at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/futuretransport.shtml, considered issues such as how much hydrogen might be needed to fuel all UK road transport by 2050, and what the impacts of this might be on the UK's wider energy and other policies.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial support *(a)* has been and *(b)* will be made available to support the development of hydrogen fuel cell technologies in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [218060]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In the last five years the Government provided funding averaging £1.5 million a year for research, development and demonstration projects into hydrogen fuel cell technology, as well as over £450,000 for a trial of three hydrogen-powered buses in London. The Government have also recently announced up to £7.5 million of funding for a low carbon and fuel cell technologies centre of excellence, which will open in Loughborough later this year.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to publish the report produced by E4tech for her Department on hydrogen fuel technologies. [218061]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In 2004, the Department for Trade and Industry commissioned E4tech and others to undertake a study of how the UK might develop a strategic framework for hydrogen energy activities in the UK. The study considers the costs and environmental benefits of a number of possible hydrogen energy chains, and concludes that by 2030 six hydrogen energy transport chains could provide cost-competitive CO_2 reductions and greater energy security. Further details of the work are available via the DTI's website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/hydrogen_framework_full.pdf. The Government will be considering the study's recommendations carefully, and will publish these, together with a considered response, shortly.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the economic value of hydrogen fuel technologies to *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the UK in (i) five, (ii) 10 and (iii) 20 years' time. [218062]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The study by E4tech, Element Energy and Eoin Lees Energy[1] looks at the 2030 timeframe, but mainly from an energy policy perspective. It concludes that by 2030; six hydrogen energy chains could provide cost-competitive CO_2 reductions and enhanced energy security. The Renewables Innovation Review[2] concluded that fuel cells could provide significant economic benefits for the UK by 2020, estimated at annual revenues of £1.8 billion per annum as a share of a global market of £50 billion per annum. The report does not provide a separate breakdown for Scotland.

[1] http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/hydrogen_framework_full.pdf
[2] http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/renewables/policy/renewables_innovation_review.shtml

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the PURE hydrogen fuel cell project in Unst; and if she will make a statement. [218058]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I am aware of the PURE hydrogen fuel cell project in Unst, although my Department has not made any formal assessment of the project.

As I said in the adjournment debate on 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2043–46, I would be interested in visiting the Shetland Isles to see the developments taking place at a suitable time.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the *(a)* environmental impact and *(b)* financial cost of small scale hydrogen fuel cell projects where the hydrogen fuel is created from (i) mains electricity, (ii) wind turbines and (iii) solar power. [218050]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The study by E4tech, Element Energy and Eoin Lees Energy[1] reports the modelling of the cost and CO_2 performance of a number of hydrogen energy chains, using a range of data sources which closely match the Markal model used to underpin the Energy White Paper. The study suggests that by 2030 six hydrogen energy transport chains could provide cost competitive CO_2 reductions and enhanced up-stream energy security. The use of hydrogen for stationary power generation and heat did not in general meet these criteria, but hydrogen could be useful in situations where there are substantial renewable energy sources but the export of electricity is constrained (e.g. the Western Isles).

[1] http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/hydrogen_framework_full.pdf.

Internet (Premium Rate Services)

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many incidences of consumers unwittingly using premium rate services when accessing the internet have been recorded in the past 12 months, and how many resulted in *(a)* prosecution and *(b)* compensation. [217526]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: About 80,000 complaints have been recorded by the Premium Rate Regulator the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) in the last 12 months. ICSTIS has no powers to prosecute, but can order redress to be paid to those consumers who claim it, and in these cases redress is paid by the offending service provider. However ICSTIS holds no records of the number of successful claims.

Langage Power Station

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the licence granted for a power station at Langage, Plymouth, is conditional upon the developer establishing an energy park adjacent thereto. [218056]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The power station consent is not dependent on the establishment of an energy park. The energy park is the subject of a separate agreement between South Hams district council and the developer which is legally binding on the current owner or any future buyer.

Legal Expenditure

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the expenditure by her Department on legal fees was in each year since 1997. [213214]

Ms Hewitt: My Department spent just under £5 million in 2003–04 procuring legal advice on commercial matters from private sector firms. The vast majority of these costs relate to the restructuring of

British Energy and British Nuclear Fuel Limited and £1.5 million was recovered by the Department. It has not been possible to provide comparable figures prior to this without disproportionate cost, due to a fundamental change in the Department's accounting systems in 2003. However, the legal costs for BE and BNFL have been falling since 2003–04 and will eventually cease (probably by 2006–07).

Mobile Phones (Health Implications)

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what progress she has made in implementing the recommendations of the National Radiological Protection Board report, mobile phones and health 2004; and if she will make a statement; [217694]

(2) what steps she has taken *(a)* to clarify and *(b)* to make more information available about legal responsibilities and regulations in relation to the installation of microcells and picocells as recommended by the National Radiological Protection Board report, mobile phones and health 2004; [217695]

(3) how she intends to help minimise exposure to radio waves of the potentially vulnerable sub-groups identified in the National Radiological Protection Board report, mobile phones and health 2004. [217698]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government welcomed the timely review undertaken by the National Radiological Protection Board which was published on 11 January 2005. The report made many recommendations about mobile phones and health. We are studying the recommendations and will make a response once we have considered them fully.

Nuclear Industry Safety

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has had from *(a)* the Nuclear Safety Advisory Committee and *(b)* the Health and Safety Advisory Committee in relation to safety in the dismantling of nuclear power stations. [217763]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The Chair of the Health and Safety Commission wrote to me on 18 November 2004 raising some concerns about the pace of competition for nuclear site management for which the NDA will be responsible from 1 April. I have responded to that letter and a copy of the correspondence has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to publish the latest annual nuclear material unaccounted for data for United Kingdom civil nuclear installations; what discussions *(a)* her Department, *(b)* BNFL and *(c)* the UK Atomic Energy Authority has had with (i) the Euratom Safeguards Directorate and (ii) the International Atomic Energy Agency on the verification of the data; and if she will make a statement. [217606]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, British Nuclear Fuels plc and Urenco (Capenhurst) Ltd. published nuclear material unaccounted for data for 2003–04 on 17 February 2005. Prior to publication, the industry wrote to the European Commission's Safeguards Directorate and the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure that the figures to be published were reconciled with safeguards reports made under Commission Regulation 3227/76. This correspondence was conducted through the Safeguards Office in my Department. BNFL and the Safeguards Office are currently in discussion with the European Commission to resolve measurement issues that have been identified in certain aspects of nuclear material accountancy at Sellafield.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will ask the European Commission to publish the letters on Euratom safeguards inspections at Sellafield, to which she referred in her answer of 19 April 2004, *Official Report*, column 73. [217604]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: No but the European Commission provides annual reports on its Euratom safeguards activities, the most recent of which (COM(2004) 861) was published by the Commission on 13 January 2005 and covered safeguards activities during calendar year 2003.

Offshore Wind Programme

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the value of offshore capital funding following the SR04 spending review. [217512]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: To date a total of £117 million in capital grants has been committed to round 1 offshore wind farms. A further £50 million has been allocated to support wave and tidal demonstration projects.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many rounds of funding will be available as part of the Government's offshore wind programme. [217513]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: To date there have been three rounds of capital grant funding made available for offshore wind.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria are used to determine capital grant funding for the offshore wind programme. [217514]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The criteria for determining eligibility for the last round of capital grants for offshore wind projects can be found at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/renewables/support/guidance_notes.pdf.

Renewables

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account was taken of the recent Renewables Innovation Review in planned expenditure on renewables up to 2010; and if she will make a statement. [217509]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Renewables Innovation Review was one of the major pieces of work used by the Government to shape their expenditure plans for renewable energy over the period 2005–08. In total the Government have allocated over £500 million to emerging renewables and low carbon technologies over the period 2002–08 in the form of R&D and spending for capital grants.

Research and Development (Expenditure)

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what expenditure her Department and its agencies have made on research and development with overseas government laboratories or research establishments, including collaborative government funded laboratories and research establishments in each financial year since 2001–02. [201361]

Ms Hewitt: The Department funds research and development with overseas government laboratories and research establishments through the UK Research Councils. A breakdown of significant international subscriptions and funding for overseas research centres by the Research Councils for each financial year since 2001–02 is given in the following table.

Breakdown of international subscriptions by the Research Councils (£ million)

Research Council	*Organisation/Activity*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
EPSRC	Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL)	7.5	8.7	—
	European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF)	5.0	5.5	—
	European Science Foundation	0.1	0.2	0.2
Total		12.6	14.4	0.2
CCLRC	Institut Laue-Langevin (ILL)	—	—	10.8
	European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF)	—	—	6.1
Total		0.0	0.0	16.9
MRC	European Molecular Biology Conference	1.3	1.1	0.3
	European Molecular Biology Laboratory	4.3	5.7	5.9
	International Agency for Research on Cancer	0.9	0.8	0.6
	Human Frontier Science Programme	0.5	0.8	1.0
	Gambia and Uganda centres	12.8	13.5	14.2
Total		19.8	21.9	22.0
NERC	Ocean Drilling Programme (ODP)	2.0	2.0	1.0
	Integrated Ocean Drilling Programme (IODP)	—	—	0.7
	European Space Agency	—	—	46.3
	European Science Foundation	—	0.1	0.2
	New Initiatives	—	—	0.5
Total		2.0	2.2	48.6
PPARC	European Space Agency	28.7	34.5	46.9
	Anglo-Australian Telescope	1.3	1.3	1.5
	European Incoherent Scatter Facility (EISCAT)	0.5	0.5	⩾0.6
	European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN)	69.4	68,9	73.1
	European Southern Observatory (ESO)	—	10.7	15.0
	European Science Foundation	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total		100.0	116.0	137.2
Total		134.5	154.6	208.1

Note:
From 2003–04 responsibility for both ILL and ESRF have transferred to CCLRC from EPSRC

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what expenditure her Department and its agencies has made on research and development by private sector companies in each financial year since 2001–02. [201362]

Ms Hewitt: The Department supports research and development by private sector companies through a number of funding streams including the industrial exploitation of science, support for competitiveness and renewable energy. Total funding for financial years 2001–02 and 2002–03 are given in the table. Final figures for the financial year 2003–04 are not yet available.

	£ million
2001–02	382.5
2002–03	451.3

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what expenditure has been made by her Department and its agencies on research and development relating to the UK university departments and research centres in each financial year since 2001–02. [201363]

Ms Hewitt: The Department through the seven research councils funds research and development in UK university departments and in research council centres and institutes. Total funding in each financial year since 2001–02 was as follows.

£ million

	UK university departments	*Research council institutes*
2001–02	774	500
2002–03	813	545
2003–04	799	522

These figures do not include funding of £675 million from the science budget between 2001–02 and 2003–04 to support both science research infrastructure and knowledge transfer from universities and research council institutes.

Russian Economic Forum

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether *(a)* she and *(b)* members of her Department plan to visit the Russian Economic Forum in London from 10 to 12 April. [217603]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no plans at present to attend the Russian Economic Forum but officials will do so.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what role is fulfilled by the third special adviser in her Department. [210488]

Ms Hewitt: Special advisers in this Department are appointed under the terms and conditions set out in the code of conduct for special advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the speeches her special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210555]

Ms Hewitt: None. All meetings held by special advisers and all speeches given by special advisers are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the code of conduct for special advisers.

Wind Turbines

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the levels of carbon dioxide reduction achieved by the current stock of wind turbines. [217506]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We have not made an estimate of carbon dioxide reductions from the current stock of wind turbines. However, according to the BWEA figures there are currently 1,186 turbines producing 888.8 MW and saving 2,010,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year over the same energy produced by coal powered stations.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the ETSU W/13/00921 REP report on low frequency noise and vibrations was compiled; what size turbines were studied; and if she will make a statement. [217508]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Assuming the reference to ESTU W/13/00921 means the ETSU 97 "The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms" which was published in September 1996. The turbines studied for the report were 450 kW machines at St. Breock in Cornwall.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what reduction in carbon dioxide emissions is expected from the proposed wind turbine programme. [217510]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As stated in my answer to question 217505 Government's renewable target of 10 per cent. of energy from renewable sources by 2010 would mean a reduction, per year, of 2.3 million tons of carbon dioxide over that same energy being produced by gas. The 10 per cent. target relates to all renewable technologies. The Government do not have a wind turbine programme. The support being provided by Government for renewables under the RO is technology neutral.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Anti-social Behaviour Orders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in Northern Ireland since their introduction; and if he will make a statement. [218240]

Mr. Spellar: ASBOs were introduced to Northern Ireland on 25 August 2004. The relevant authorities who may apply for antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs)—the police, the Housing Executive and councils—have received guidelines and training on using ASBOs. These agencies are currently in the process of gathering evidence for potential ASBO applications, but to date none have yet gone to court.

Fair Employment and Treatment Order

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many times the Equality Commission has used its powers of investigation under Article 11 of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998; and if he will make a statement. [216671]

Mr. Spellar: The Equality Commission has not conducted an investigation under Article 11 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (FETO) but rather works with employers through Article 55 FETO review mechanisms in pursuit of fair participation.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many times the Equality Commission has used its powers in relation to contract compliance under Articles 62 to 66 of the Fair Employment and Treatment Order 1998; and if he will make a statement. [216672]

Mr. Spellar: Since its creation in 1999 the Equality Commission has not served a notice that an employer is not qualified within the meaning of Articles 62 to 66 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

Homelessness

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the timetable is for action following the consultation on homelessness; and what steps will be taken once the consultation is completed. [217768]

Mr. Spellar: The Department for Social Development is currently considering the responses it has received to the consultation document "Promoting the Social Inclusion of Homeless People: Addressing the Causes and Effects of Homelessness in Northern Ireland". To date 48 responses have been received. In view of the importance attached to addressing homelessness, an extension was granted to the deadline for responses in order to facilitate a number of organisations. I expect to receive the Department's recommendations for future action by the autumn of 2005.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resources have been earmarked for the implementation of the homeless strategy. [217769]

Mr. Spellar: I understand that the question refers to the strategy being developed by the interdepartmental, cross-sectoral Working Group set up to address the issue of homelessness in the context of promoting social inclusion. The Working Group's remit is to consider how Government Departments, agencies and non-departmental public bodies can best work together to ensure that the risk of homelessness is reduced and that the full range of appropriate services is available to homeless people. The strategy being developed by the Working Group, which must be affordable and deliverable, will aim to ensure that better services are delivered by using existing resources in a more joined-up way. However, the Housing Executive is currently spending almost £30 million per year on temporary accommodation and other services for the homeless.

Housing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many housing executive staff have been seconded to assist local communities and residents groups in each Northern Ireland constituency since 2001; what the length of secondment was in each case; and what the cost of each secondment was. [217503]

Mr. Spellar: A total of 13 staff were seconded to a variety of groups to assist local communities at no cost to the Housing Executive as the salaries were recouped from the organisations concerned. The work of many of these groups would cross constituency boundaries and could not therefore be categorised by constituency. The following table provides the names of the groups, the areas which they serve and shows the period of secondment:

Seconded to	*Area*	*Dates to-from*
Making Belfast Work	All Belfast	July 1996-March 2003
Making Belfast Work	All Belfast	September 1996-March 2003
Making Belfast Work	All Belfast	March 1997-October 2001
North Belfast Partnership Board	North Belfast	May 2000 to date
South Belfast Partnership Board	South Belfast	November 2000-March 2004
North Belfast Community Action	North Belfast	January 2003-January 2004
North Belfast Community Action	North Belfast	January-May 2003
First Housing Aid and Support Service	Londonderry	June 2003-October 2004
North Down Local Strategy Partnership	Bangor	December 2003 to date
North Belfast Community Action	North Belfast	February-August 2004
North Belfast Partnership	North Belfast	February 2004 to date
West Belfast Partnership Board	West Belfast	July 2004 to date
Colin Neighbourhood Renewal	West Belfast	November 2004 to date

Police Service (Protestant Applicants)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Protestant applicants who qualified to join the Police Service of Northern Ireland have been rejected since its establishment because of the 50:50 sectarian recruitment procedures. [214228]

Mr. Pearson: We have been extremely encouraged by the fact that 37,957 applications have been made from across the whole community, to join PSNI as a trainee constable. As a result, large numbers have made it to the pool of suitably qualified candidates, yet failed to be appointed due to the finite number of posts available.

I am advised that there have been 2,427 occasions where qualified non-Catholic applicants have been rejected from the trainee constable competitions run since the introduction of the temporary 50:50 recruitment provisions contained in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

Of these, 408 applications have been rejected as a result of the 50:50 provisions. The remaining 2,019 applications would have been rejected, irrespective of 50:50, if appointment from the pool had been on merit only.

The Government fully acknowledge that 50:50 recruitment amounts to discrimination, but believes that the provisions are justified as a temporary means of rectifying an acute historical imbalance in the composition of the police service. This is clearly working, with the proportion of Catholics among regular officers rising from 8 per cent. in 2001 to 17.14 per cent. today. Our target is to increase this proportion to 30 per cent. by 2010–11.

Social Inclusion Working Group

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who the members are of the sub-committee on housing of the Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. [217771]

Mr. Spellar: The Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group on homelessness is being led by the Department for Social Development. The names of the Working Group's members are on the Department's internet site, at the following address: http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/housing/social-inclusion.asp.

The list of members can be found on the second page of the link "Documents issued by the group to date".

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Overseas Voter Registration

Mr. Evans: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the estimated cost is of the posting of leaflets produced by the Electoral Commission to promote overseas voter registration to embassies and consulates abroad. [218223]

Mr. Viggers: I am informed by the Electoral Commission that 73 Consulates, Embassies and High Commissions have so far ordered a total of 33,000 copies of its leaflet giving electoral information for British citizens living overseas, which includes advice on eligibility to register as an overseas voter, and on how to do so. The total cost to date to the Commission of the associated postage is £510.

Voter Information

Peter Bottomley: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what recent information the Electoral Commission has made available to *(a)* overseas, *(b)* service and *(c)* postal voters; and if he will place copies in the Library. [217549]

Mr. Viggers: I am informed by the Electoral Commission that it has made information available to each of these groups through a range of outlets. Two new leaflets provide electoral information for British citizens living overseas and for members of Her Majesty's armed forces and both include specific information on how to register to vote. These have been widely distributed via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence respectively. The Commission has also carried out a range of other activities targeted at overseas and service voters, including advertising, media relations and information on its website, as well as distributing information via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence. As regards postal votes, the Commission has produced an information leaflet that is available to the public through electoral administrators and from the Commission's voter helpline and website.

I have asked the Commission to place copies of each of the leaflets in the Library.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

"Homes for All" Initiative

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his proposal to provide starter homes at £60,000 each under the "Homes for All" initiative includes public subsidy for the construction of associated infrastructure. [217338]

Keith Hill: "Homes for All", the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's five-year plan launched on 24 January 2005, announced that English Partnerships, on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, will be launching a competition that will invite organisations to bid for the right to construct one or more new developments on sites in their ownership. By using public sector land to provide the sites, the competition can focus on improving construction efficiency, quality and design.

The competition will provide up to 1,000 homes. The winners of the competition will be expected to abide by local planning requirements and provide the usual supporting on-site infrastructure.

A minimum of 30 per cent. of the housing dwellings within the competition will be built to a target cost of £60,000 and the remainder will be larger and smaller dwellings that should be built at an equivalent cost-efficiency. The £60,000 target relates to the construction cost element.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211558]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002. It is not possible to provide information prior to that date, neither is it possible to provide estimates for future spend as this information is not held. For the financial years 2003–04 and the 2004–05 to date, the cost of employing external consultants is as follows:

	£
The Office of the Deputy	
2003–04	47,000,000
Prime Minister	
2004–05 to date	58,940,306.84
Executive Agencies	
2003–04	6,305,906
2004–05 to date	3,079,585

These figures do not include the Government Offices, which perform functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214895]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002. The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Enterprise Gateways/Hubs

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* location and *(b)* cost of each (i) Enterprise Gateway and (ii) Enterprise hubs is, broken down by county. [213173]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is tabled as follows.

£

County	Incubation network	Capital investment	Revenue (per annum)
Berkshire	*Enterprise Hubs*	700,000	255,000
	Newbury		
	Reading		
	Slough		
	Enterprise Gateways	50,000	85,000
	Slough		
Buckinghamshire	*Enterprise Hubs Aylesbury Vale*	100,000	255,000
	High Wycombe		
	Milton Keynes		
	Enterprise Gateways	0	85,000
	Chilterns		
East Sussex	*Enterprise Hubs*	950,000	255,000
	Brighton		
	Eastbourne		
	Hastings		
	Enterprise Gateways	0	85,000
	Newhaven		
Hampshire	*Enterprise Hubs*	400,000	255,000
	Farnborough		
	Solent		
	Southampton		
	Enterprise Gateways	0	0
Isle of Wight	*Enterprise Hubs*	350,000	85,000
	Isle of Wight		
	Enterprise Gateways	0	0
Kent	*Enterprise Hubs*	650,000	340,000
	Canterbury		
	Food Science		
	Medway		
	Sittingbourne		
	Enterprise Gateways	50,000	255,000
	Medway		
	Folkestone		
	Romney Marsh		
Oxfordshire	*Enterprise Hubs*	350,000	255,000
	North Oxford		
	Southern Oxfordshire (1)		
	Southern Oxfordshire (2)		
	Enterprise Gateways	50,000	85,000
	Faringdon		
Surrey	*Enterprise Hubs*	600,000	85,000
	Surrey		
	Enterprise Gateways	0	0
West Sussex	*Enterprise Hubs*	300,000	85,000
	Crawley		
	Enterprise Gateways	2,860,000	85,000
	Adur		

Notes:
1. Revenue cost for each Enterprise Hub and Gateway is £85,000 per year.
2. Capital costs reflect total capital investment to date. This investment is determined by market need for physic incubator space and/or hotdesking and specialist facilities (e.g. laboratory space)

Housing (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he plans to transfer additional powers to the Mayor of London in respect of implementing housing policy for London. [217613]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to make an announcement in the near future about the outcome of the consultation "Housing and Planning in the Regions" that proposed merging Regional Housing Boards and Regional Planning Bodies by transferring to the Regional Assemblies in

England, (and in London to the Mayor) in the second half of 2005 responsibility for the work of the Regional Housing Boards in preparing Regional Housing Strategies and advising Ministers on the allocation of housing investment.

Mobile Phone Base Stations

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will include microcells and picocells in low-height mobile phone stations in the normal planning process. [217702]

Yvette Cooper: Picocells are antennas located inside buildings and microcells are very small and usually disguised on the exterior of buildings. A fundamental principle of the planning system is that it does not seek to control works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any building (other than listed buildings) being works which:

(i) affect only the interior of the building; or

(ii) do not materially affect the external appearance of the building.

The Government have not included these kind of developments in the planning system as it would require fundamental changes to the planning system and primary legislation.

Neighbourhood Improvement Districts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the maximum increase in council tax expected in a neighbourhood improvement district is; [216270]

(2) which tier of Government will be able to introduce a neighbourhood improvement district in a two-tier local government area; [216271]

(3) whether parish councils will be able to introduce a neighbourhood improvement district. [216272]

Mr. Raynsford: As explained in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's recent discussion document 'Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter', we are seeking views on a range of ideas, including possible neighbourhood improvement districts, to provide opportunities and support for neighbourhood activities. This follows the introduction of Business Improvement Districts under the 2003 Local Government Act. We would welcome comments on whether neighbourhood improvement districts might be introduced, and if so, how and what financial arrangements they might have.

Regional Chambers (Incineration and Waste Disposal)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what role regional chambers have in incineration and waste disposal matters. [217792]

Keith Hill: In all regions outside London the regional chamber (known as the regional assembly) is the regional planning body. As the regional planning body, the regional chamber is responsible for keeping the regional spatial strategy under review and preparing draft revisions. These should include, as an integral part of the regional spatial strategy, a clear and deliverable strategy for managing waste.

Regional Housing Funding

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Regional Housing Pot funding will be available in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08, broken down by regional housing board. [217577]

Keith Hill: Figures for 2005–06 are tabled as follows. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will announce regional figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 once we have considered the responses to our consultation paper on how the total resources available (£2,625 million and £2,912 million respectively) should be divided up.

	£ million
North East	86
Yorkshire and the Humber	144
East Midlands	116
East of England	167
London	1,071
South East	367
South West	137
West Midlands	182
North West	250
Total	2,519

Social Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the expenditure was on Transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant in each Government office region in 2003–04; and what the estimated expenditure is for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [217568]

Keith Hill: The following table shows the actual expenditure by region through transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) in 2003–04 and latest estimates of investment for 2004–05 and 2005–06 to registered social landlords (RSLs) operating transitional LASHG schemes in debt free local authorities receiving grant via the Housing Corporation under section 18 of the Housing Act 1996.

Transitional LASHG to debt free local authorities by region

£ million

	Actual	*Forecast*	
	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
London	23	6	9
South East	116	16	16
South West	54	6	5
East	27	10	5
East Midlands	9	1	1
West Midlands	14	2	2
North West	3	1	1
North East	0	0	0
Yorkshire and Humber	3	0	1
Total for all regions	249	42	39

The above does not include information on with debt local authorities who receive revenue support to compensate for the loss of investment income. This is made available through a special grant programme under section 88b of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the redundant NHS sites designated for low-cost homes under the First Time Buyers Initiative will include provision for social rented housing. [217569]

Keith Hill: It is anticipated that much of the surplus NHS land will have the potential to accommodate housing development to address high demand and provide affordable homes. This will be determined following an assessment of each site's potential and taking into account local demand and the planning context. Where residential development is proposed, it will include provision for affordable housing including social rented homes as part of the planning process. It is too early to be more specific.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of the 10,000 new social rented homes that are planned to be built in 2007–08 will be delivered through the expanded private finance initiative; and if he will make a statement. [217570]

Keith Hill: The Housing Private Finance Initiative programme has a target of delivering 6,300 additional dwellings of social rented housing by 2007–08 through a mix of new-build and the acquisition and refurbishment of empty private sector properties.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 440W, on social housing, whether he expects any of the 14,000 social housing units planned to be funded with Transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant not to be completed until after 1 April 2006. [217571]

Keith Hill: Current estimates are that 27 dwellings may complete after 31 March 2006.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 867W, on social housing, (1) how many of the 40,000 low-cost home ownership units will be built in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08; [217573]

(2) how many of the 75,000 social rented homes will be built in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [217574]

Keith Hill: For 2005–06 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister currently estimates that around 27,000 homes will be provided for rent and around 18,000 for low cost home ownership schemes. Decisions have not yet been taken on the allocation of regional housing pot funding, of which the Housing Corporation's approved development programme is one element, for 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Estimates will be dependent on the recommendations made by Regional Housing Boards and the decisions on allocation of resources through the regional housing pot. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will announce decisions on the allocation of funding within regions in the summer.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the criteria for eligibility for the 15,000 homes planned under his First Time Buyer Initiative. [217575]

Keith Hill: I refer the hon. Member to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Public Service Plan 'Homes for All', presented to the House on 24 January of this year. Paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 set out the information requested as well as further information on the First Time Buyers Initiative. Copies of the plan are available from the Library of the House.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Department has made of the capital receipts that will be generated by Right to Buy in *(a)* indebted and *(b)* debt free authorities in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [217572]

Keith Hill: Current estimates are tabled as follows:

£ million

	With-debt	*Debt-free*
2004–05	2,412	272
2005–06	2,339	272
2006–07	2,197	267
2007–08	2,030	262

Waste Disposal/Collection

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what effects the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has had on the role of county councils in determining local policies on waste disposal and collection. [217787]

Keith Hill: Regional planning bodies are expected to seek the advice of county councils when preparing and implementing regional spatial strategies. County councils themselves will be responsible for the preparation and implementation of minerals and waste development frameworks. Both regional and local planning will take a spatial planning approach, bringing together and integrating policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what role regional spatial strategies play in the determination of policies on incineration and waste disposal. [217794]

Keith Hill: Regional Spatial Strategies should enable sustainable waste management in line with the Government's national waste strategy and be capable of being carried forward into local development documents prepared by waste planning authorities. Draft Planning Policy Statement 10 "Planning for Sustainable Waste Management", currently undergoing consultation, proposes that regional spatial strategies should include waste policies, a distribution of waste tonnage requiring management by waste planning authority area and, where necessary, a pattern of waste facilities of national, regional or sub-regional significance.

Westbury Homes Development (Plymouth)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will call in the proposed planning application by Westbury Homes at the former Blue Circle site, Pomphlett, Plymouth for determination by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [218057]

Keith Hill: As of 23 February 2005, no such planning application has been submitted, although Plymouth city council expect one to be submitted in the week commencing 28 February. It will then be for the Council to decide whether the project is a departure from the development plan, and whether it should be referred to the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. It is too early to comment on the application or whether it will be called in, because we do not know what the application will contain, and to comment now could risk prejudicing the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's future decisions.

HEALTH

A and E Admissions

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many accident and emergency admissions there were in *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Preston for (i) adults and (ii) children in each of the last 16 quarters. [215498]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is shown in the tables. Data split by adults and children are not held centrally.

Attendances at accident and emergency (A and E) departments at Lancashire teaching hospitals national health service trust

	Quarter	*Total A and E attendances at Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust*[1]
2004–05	2	27,637
2004–05	1	27,944
2003–04	4	24,898
2003–04	3	24,581
2003–04	2	27,235
2003–04	1	26,883
2002–03	4	23,757
2002–03	3	23,733
2002–03	2	26,272
2002–03	1	26,322

[1] Lancashire teaching hospitals includes both Royal Preston hospital and Chorley and South Ribble district general hospital.

Source:
Department of Health dataset QMAE

Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which NHS bodies pay people employed by Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust; [217941]

(2) how many people and what percentage of people employed by Bucks Mental Health Trust are paid by other NHS bodies; [217949]

(3) how many *(a)* hospitals and *(b)* other NHS bodies have equipment supplied to them by the Central Sterile Supplies Department at Wycombe Hospital. [217950]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The information requested is not collected by the Department.

Consultant Episodes

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many finished consultant episodes in NHS hospitals in England there were in each year from 1999 to 2004. [208798]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Count of finished consultant episodes—national health service hospitals in England 1998–99 to 2003–04

	Finished consultant episodes
1998–99	12,108,141
1999–2000	12,290,278
2000–01	12,476,470
2001–02	12,407,588
2002–03	12,716,440
2003–04	13,175,880

Notes:

1. A finished consultant episode is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

2. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2002–03 and 2003–04, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

3. Figures prior to 2003–04 exclude NHS commissioned activity performed in the independent sector. Additional activity takes place in other care settings: in 2003–04, there were 517,000 operative procedures in primary care and 2,072,000 procedures in outpatients. Equivalent outpatient figures for 2002–03 are 1,735,000 procedures and 1,115,000 procedures for 2001–02.

Source:
Hospital episode statistics, Department of Health.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate his Department has made of the cost of exempting all patients *(a)* over 75 and *(b)* under 21 years from dental charges on the NHS; and if he will make a statement. [213476]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Children and young people under age 18, expectant and nursing mothers and people on low incomes are already exempt from dental charges. The cost of extending these exemptions would be the amount of patient charge income forgone. Patient charges raised from national health service dental treatments in the general and personal dental service amounted to £29.3 million in 2003–04 in England for patients aged 75 or over. £10.7 million was raised for patients aged 18, 19 and 20.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research he has commissioned into the impact on dental laboratories of methods of working under personal dental services contracts; [210823]

(2) what research *(a)* has been commissioned and *(b)* is planned into differences in treatment patterns between dentists operating under general dental service contracts and personal dental service contracts. [216146]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Comptroller and Auditor General presented a report to the House on 23 November 2004 entitled "Reforming NHS Dentistry: ensuring effective management of risks". This includes a review of the Personal Dental Service (PDS) system. This reported that in 1998, the Department commissioned the university of Birmingham to review the implementation of the PDS pilot scheme. The review focused on all 15 first wave pilots and five of the second wave pilots and examined developments over the first three years of operation. As the aim of each pilot was unique the review reviewed each pilot's progress against its specific objectives and did not compare relative performance.

The review's key findings were that the PDS system improved access to national health service dental services and provided greater flexibility to provide NHS services. Changes in the method of payment changed the nature of professional work undertaken; the specialist pilots were successful in providing specialist dental care in a non-hospital setting; and most pilots had a key person whose enthusiasm was central to facilitating progress. There was also some evidence to suggest that dentists may initially prescribe proportionately fewer intricate dental appliances from dental laboratories under the PDS system than dentists working to the current general dental services contract. Against this, the research shows that dentists in the PDS spend more time on treating patients and this should generate more work for dental laboratories. Case studies which the NHS Modernisation Agency are carrying out on the field sites, which they are managing to develop and test new ways of working in NHS dentistry should provide further information on changes in practice.

In managing PDS schemes, primary care trusts seek to ensure that patients receive all the services, which are clinically necessary.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the average percentage of working time that all dentists operating under the general dental contract have spent on NHS work, in each year since 1997. [216144]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The available information is in Appendix E of the supplement to the 30th report 2001 of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration Cm 4999. In table 89, in March 2000, mean hours per week of a general dental practitioner on general dental service (GDS) (national health service) work were 25.13 hours with 7.91 hours on private practice and with 1.16 hours shared time. GDS time as a percentage of GDS time and private practice time in March 2000 was 76 per cent.

We are to introduce new contractual arrangements for NHS dentistry which are intended to make NHS dentistry more attractive to dentists. One of the main changes is the replacement of the treatment based, item of service method of paying dentists with a remuneration package derived from an evidence-based assessment of patients' overall oral health care needs. This will enable dentists to spend more time with their patients and reward them for giving oral health promotion advice.

Eye Tests

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of implementing a policy of free eye tests for all NHS patients. [217492]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Free sight tests on the national health service are already available to priority groups: children under 16, those aged 16–18 in full-time education, people on low incomes who might otherwise be deterred by the cost of a private sight test and defined categories of people at particular risk of developing eye disease. In April 1999 we extended free sight tests to all people aged 60 and over.

Based on the most recent data available, we estimate that the cost of extending free sight tests to all those who currently pay privately for sight tests would be an additional £89 million based on the 2004–05 rate of £17.82 per test.

We believe that the current range of entitlements to free sight tests and optical vouchers is sufficient to meet the needs of young people, people on low incomes and individuals at particular risk of developing eye disease. A further extension would not be the best use of the funds available for the development of the NHS.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the Ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209217]

Dr. Ladyman: Since 1 January 2004, Departmental Ministers have cancelled 31 engagements in London and 19 engagements outside London, which are listed as follows. All engagements are subject to ministerial and parliamentary business. When engagements have had to be cancelled, wherever possible we try to re-instate them at a later date.

London

24 February 20043
March 2004
11 March 2004
30 March 2004 x 3
31 March 2004
21 April 2004
4 May 2004 x 2
10 May 2004
19 May 2004
20 May 2004
21 May 2004
15 June 2004
13 July 2004
14 July 2004 x 2
6 September 2004
15 September 2004
19 October 2004
26 October 2004
9 November 2004

10 November 2004	
16 November 2004	
23 November 2004	
30 November 2004	
14 December 2004	
26 December 2004	
11 January 2005	
2 February 2005	
3 February 2004	

Outside London	
Surrey	28 January 2004
Nottingham	24 March 2004
Rochdale	6 April 2004
Stockport	19 May 2004
Manchester	25 May 2004
Birmingham	27 May 2004
Bedford	10 June 2004
Coventry	22 June 2004
Birmingham	30 June 2004
Birmingham	7 July 2004
Crawley	20 July 2004
Warwick	14 September 2004
North Kirklees	21 October 2004
Northumberland	2 November 2004
Liverpool	10 November 2004
Sheffield	16 November 2004
Keele	23 November 2004
Barnsley	8 December 2004
Crawley	18 January 2005
Welwyn and Hatfield	3 February 2005

Multiple Myeloma

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what treatments are available on the NHS for the treatment of multiple myeloma. [215825]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Treatments available on the national health service for multiple myeloma are listed in the British National Formulary, which can be found at www.bnf.org.

When a patient is being treated by a hospital, the consultant can arrange for the supply of any drug or other substance, even one not normally available on NHS prescription, provided the primary care trust or NHS trust agree to supply it at the NHS's expense.

Orthodontists

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many orthodontists are employed at *(a)* Chorley hospital and *(b)* Preston hospital. [215510]

Miss Melanie Johnson: As at 30 September 2003, there were no orthodontists employed by the Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust. Within the Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority area there were 11 orthodontists in post. This information is shown in the following table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS): dental staff within the orthodontics specialty within Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority

Numbers (headcount)

As at 30 September 2003		*All staff*	*Of which: consultant*
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	11	3
Of which:			
Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre hospitals NHS trust	RXL	2	[1]
East Lancashire hospitals NHS trust	RXR	2	[1]
Morecambe Bay hospitals NHS trust	RTX	4	1
North Cumbria acute hospitals NHS trust	RNL	3	2

[1] denotes zero

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

Prosecutions (Non-entitlement to Treatment)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many individuals have been *(a)* arrested and *(b)* prosecuted for obtaining free treatment on the NHS to which they are not entitled in each year between 1997 and 2004, broken down by the reason for non-entitlement to treatment. [217436]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* Between September 1999 and 2004, a total of 29 persons have been arrested for obtaining or seeking to obtain free national health service treatment to which they were not entitled. These arrests occurring in the following years;

	Number of arrests
1999	1
2000	1
2001	3
2002	3
2003	9
2004	12

During the same period 35 persons[1] were successfully prosecuted for obtaining or seeking to obtain free NHS treatment to which they were not entitled.

Prosecutions were broken down to the following reasons to non-entitlement in each year between 1999 and 2004.

[1] The disparity between persons arrested (29) and persons prosecuted (35) is caused by the fact that an arrest is not always required to progress to criminal prosecution.

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Use of false identity	1	1	—	2	8	7
False claim of exemption	—	—	—	—	4	3
Use of stolen/altered prescription	—	—	2	—	4	3

Waist Size

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average *(a)* weight and *(b)* waist size of (i) men and (ii) women was in each of the last 10 years. [214788]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* Figures for the average weight and waist circumference for men and women in England in each of the last 10 years are shown in the table.

Mean weight and waist circumference, by survey year and sex—age 16 and over with a valid weight and waist circumference measurement

Weight[1] and waist circumference[2]	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Men										
Weight	79.4	79.5	80.0	80.6	80.8	80.5	81.6	82.5	82.4	82.9
Waist circumference	93.8	—	—	94.6	94.3	—	—	96.8	96.6	97.6
Women										
Weight	66.9	66.9	67.3	67.8	68.3	68.2	68.8	69.3	69.4	69.7
Waist circumference	82.5	—	—	83.3	83.2	—	—	85.8	85.9	86.7
Bases										
Men	6,869	6,809	7,093	3,738	6,709	3,256	3,312	6,408	3,035	6,077
	6,184	—	—	3,425	6,099	—	—	5,531	2,580	4,968
Women	7,982	7,877	8,239	4,332	7,887	3,787	3,774	7,622	3,583	7,278
	7,113	—	—	3,908	7,160	—	—	6,529	3,107	5,999

[1] Kilograms
[2] Centimetres
Source:
Health Survey for England

York NHS Hospital Trust (Expenditure)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much capital has been spent in *(a)* York District Hospital and *(b)* York NHS Hospital Trust in each year since 1992–93; and what the purpose was of each investment worth more than one million pounds made since 1997. [217621]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* Information on the purpose of capital investment is not held centrally. The following table shows the value of capital investment at York Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

York Hospitals NHS Trust, net book value of purchased capital additions for each year

	Cash terms (£000)
1992–93	5,791
1993–94	6,028
1994–95	7,456
1995–96	8,841
1996–97	2,708
1997–98	1,457
1998–99	3,185
1999–2000	2,778
2000–01	6,571
2001–02	4,159
2002–03	10,232
2003–04	11,247

Source:
York Hospitals NHS Trust audited summarisation schedules 1992–93 to 2003–04.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 28 February 2005

WORK AND PENSIONS

New Deal (Nottingham)

15. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact of the new deal in Nottingham, North. [218096]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal has succeeded in helping more than 1.2 million people into work, including more than 3,000 people in Nottingham, North. It has helped to reduce long-term adult unemployment by 82 per cent. and long-term youth unemployment by 68 per cent. in my hon. Friend's constituency.

Attendance Allowance (Coventry)

16. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Coventry receive attendance allowance. [218097]

Maria Eagle: Some 8,200 people in Coventry were receiving attendance allowance on 31 August 2004.

Income-related Benefits

17. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the latest take-up rates for income-related benefits. [218098]

Malcolm Wicks: Office for National Statistics data for the period 2002–03 were published on 8 February. The figures predate the introduction of pension credit. Nearly 1.8 million households were getting the minimum income guarantee in October 2003, but by December last year, over 2.6 million households—over 3.2 million individuals—were getting pension credit.

The latest departmental estimates for pension credit show that, in 2004–05, take-up is over 80 per cent. for those on the guarantee element, and could be as high as 90 per cent. for single women pensioners entitled to the guarantee element.

Welsh Language

18. **Hywel Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of services in Welsh provided by third parties acting on behalf of his Department. [218100]

Jane Kennedy: DWP has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales it will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality. Some services are delivered through contracts with third parties or partnerships involving other Government Departments or the Voluntary Sector. In all such cases we ensure that our contractors and partners understand and abide by the provisions of the DWP Welsh Language Scheme. An assessment of services in Welsh forms part of the Department's standard contract monitoring processes and any failings identified will be dealt with under the terms of the individual contract.

Child Support

19. **Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the operation of the Child Support Agency. [218101]

Mr. Pond: We have acknowledged problems with the new IT system. The agency is working with EDS to resolve the problems. Work to stabilise the system is under way and it has already brought about improvements. We expect the remedial work to be completed later this year.

However, it is important that we remember that it is the responsibility of parents to support their children and there is nothing to stop them making their own arrangements to do so.

Departmental Staff (Wales)

21. **Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received from *(a)* the National Assembly for Wales and *(b)* local authorities in Wales regarding the proposed closure of his Department's offices in Wales. [218104]

Jane Kennedy: We have received a number of representations from Assembly Members and local authorities.

But the service we provide is not just about offices; and our innovative approach means that our customers, including sick and disabled people, no longer have to visit an office to access many of our services.

Massive investment of over £2 billion over four years since 2002 means that we can deliver more responsive services with fewer offices and with a more modern approach.

Incapacity Benefit

22. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his plans for reforms of incapacity benefit; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who will find work as a result of his plans. [218105]

Maria Eagle: We have recently set out our plans for fundamental reform of incapacity benefits in our Five Year Strategy. We want to create a new framework of support for people who can return to work and offer greater security to those who face the greatest obstacles to doing so.

Our aim is to have the key elements of the package in place by 2008, but this will be dependent on being able to roll out Pathways to Work nationally first. We cannot yet make an estimate of the numbers who find work as a result of these reforms.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proposed changes to the linking rules for existing receivers of incapacity benefit formed the basis of his Department's five year strategy. [215054]

Maria Eagle: As set out in the Department's five year strategy we are taking the opportunity to review a range of aspects of the linking rules with a view to improving their effectiveness in encouraging people on incapacity benefits to try a return to work.

We are considering proposals for change from a number of sources from both inside and outside the Department. We have agreed to look at the feasibility of making the incapacity benefit linking rules more flexible, for example by allowing automatic registration and a faster return to work after using the linking rules. We aim to make them simpler, less restrictive and easier to understand and use.

Employment

Mr. David: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his Department's progress towards full employment. [218088]

Jane Kennedy: Since 1997 the number of people in work in the UK has risen by more than 2 million and the employment rate to 74.9 per cent., one of the highest figures on record.

However, we aim to go further—our long-term aspiration is to reach an employment rate of 80 per cent.—by maintaining economic stability and building on the success of our welfare reforms.

Access to Work Programme

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have received *(a)* full and *(b)* partial grants from the Access to Work programme in each year since its introduction; and if he will make a statement. [209714]

Maria Eagle: Access to Work is a specialist disability programme which was introduced in 1994. It provides practical advice and support to help disabled people enter or stay in paid employment. The support is aimed at overcoming work related obstacles resulting from disability. It does this through a system of grants towards the cost of providing support. The amount of support available to any individual will depend on their work related needs resulting from disability. Grants made under the programme are not specifically categorised as "full" or "partial"

Information on the number of people helped each year since Access to Work was introduced is in the table.

Number of people helped each year since Access to Work was introduced

	New beneficiaries	*Existing beneficiaries*	*Total beneficiaries*
1994–95	7,669	2,725	10,394
1995–96	9,579	4,098	13,677
1996–97	3,639	6,480	10,119
1997–98	5,167	7,658	12,825
1998–99	6,326	9,768	16,094
1999–2000	9,786	10,943	20,729
2000–01	12,318	13,569	25,887
2001–02	13,137	19,661	32,798
2002–03	15,199	21,407	36,606
2003–04	15,433	19,411	34,844
Total	98,253	115,720	213,973

Note:
New beneficiaries are people who receive Access to Work Assistance for the first time ever within the financial year. Existing beneficiaries are people who received Access to Work assistance in a previous financial year, and continue to receive financial support. Existing beneficiaries in 1994–95 are people who were transferred to Access to Work from other programmes.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus internal Management Information

Benefits

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioner households received *(a)* free TV licences, *(b)* winter fuel payment, *(c)* pension credit and *(d)* council tax benefit in (i) Lancashire and (ii) Chorley in 2003–04. [217594]

Malcolm Wicks: TV Licensing, which administers free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, is not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over with entitlement to the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 63,590 in Lancashire and 5,065 in the Chorley constituency. These households would be eligible for free TV licences.

Information on the number of households in Lancashire and Chorley that received a winter fuel payment in 2003–04 is in the Library.

The most recent numbers of households and individuals receiving pension credit in Lancashire and Chorley are set out in the following table:

	Households	*Individuals*
Lancashire	54,275	66,270
Chorley	3,920	4,795

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Pension credit—individuals comprise claimants and partners and may contain a small number of partners aged under 60.
3. Parliamentary constituencies and local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS directory.
4. The Pension credit figures are for December 2004.
5. Council tax benefit (CTB) data for pensioners can only be taken from an annual 1 per cent. sample. To provide these statistics at a lower than regional level would be subject to a high degree of sampling variation. Therefore county level figures for Lancashire are not available.
6. Parliamentary constituency level statistics are not available for CTB, therefore Chorley data cannot be supplied.
Source:
IAD Information Centre.

The information on council tax benefit (CTB) is not available in the format requested.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in the Bridgewater constituency were in receipt of means-tested benefits in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [217344]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available.

Income-related benefits include income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit and jobseekers allowance (income based). Housing benefit and council tax benefit figures are not available at constituency level.

Income support, jobseekers allowance (income based) and pension credit (from October 2003) data are available by parliamentary constituency as shown in the following table.

Thousand

IS/JSA(IB)/PC(GC) beneficiaries aged 60 and over	*Bridgewater parliamentary constituency*
May1997	3.1
August 2004	3.5

Notes:
1. Figures are based on 1 per cent. and 5 per cent. samples and subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. IS/JSA(IB) figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Pension credit is guarantee credit only.
4. Beneficiaries are all claimants and partners aged 60 or over. This includes claimants aged under 60 where there is a partner aged 60 or over.

New Deal

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average cost is of a job obtained through the new deal since it commenced. [214847]

Jane Kennedy: The average cost of helping an individual into work through new deal is £3,258.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what role the new deal is playing in north-east Wales in progress towards his targets for full employment. [218083]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal has played a vital role in achieving one of the highest employment rates on record. Nearly 9,000 people have been helped into work through the new deal in north-east Wales, including more than 1,500 in Wrexham.

The employment rate in north-east Wales has risen by more than 6 percentage points since 1997 and by over 8 percentage points to nearly 77 per cent. in my hon. Friend's constituency.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many disabled people living in the Greater London area have participated in the new deal for disabled people. [218204]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is that a total of 8,940 people in the London Jobcentre Plus Region have started the new deal for disabled people since the start of the programme in July 2001.

Pensions

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the financial assistance that will be available to people who have been affected by the wind-up of their pension scheme. [218375]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer to the written ministerial statement on the Financial Assistance Scheme, I gave on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 16WS.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pension service surgeries have been *(a)* cancelled and *(b)* earmarked for cancellation in Scotland as part of his Department's efficiency programme. [217080]

Malcolm Wicks: No local service information points, previously termed surgeries, have been cancelled nor are there any current plans to cancel local service information points as a direct result of the Department's efficiency programme.

At a local level, information points are subject to constant evaluation to ensure their viability and effectiveness. This means that information points may be withdrawn or be relocated depending on changing demands in the locality. The fact that an information point is useful today does not mean that it always will be. This is not new, is not related to the efficiency challenge and will continue to be a feature of the Pension Service local service operations.

The Pension Service will continue to meet the needs of customers by providing a wider range of different service offerings within information points (either on our own or in conjunction with our partners) supported by the telephony service offered by our pension centres and the face to face service offered by local service and partners.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many women received a state pension on the basis of their own contributions in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* each year since 2001, broken down by region and county; how many of these pensions were (i) 50 per cent. or less, (ii) 75 per cent. or less and (iii) 75 per cent. or more of the basic pension rate. [216218]

Malcolm Wicks: The available information is set out in the tables. Information prior to 1999 cannot be broken down by region or county.

Numbers of female state pension recipients receiving a state pension based wholly or partly on their own national insurance contributions by government office region (GOR), county or unitary authority as at: March 2000; March 2001; March 2002; March 2003 and March 2004

Thousands

	March 2000	*March 2001*	*March 2002*	*March 2003*	*March 2004*
North East GOR	169.4	174.9	180.1	184.6	190.9
Darlington	6.7	6.8	7.0	7.1	7.5
Hartlepool	6.8	7.0	7.1	7.3	7.5
Middlesbrough	8.5	9.0	9.2	9.3	9.5
Redcar and Cleveland	9.3	9.4	9.7	10.1	10.7
Stockton-on-Tees	10.6	10.9	11.1	11.8	12.2
Durham	31.0	32.3	33.5	34.7	36.4
Northumberland	19.6	20.4	21.5	22.5	24.0
Tyne and Wear	76.9	79.1	80.9	81.9	83.3

Numbers of female state pension recipients receiving a state pension based wholly or partly on their own national insurance contributions by government office region (GOR), county or unitary authority as at: March 2000; March 2001; March 2002; March 2003 and March 2004

Thousands

	March 2000	*March 2001*	*March 2002*	*March 2003*	*March 2004*
North West GOR	498.9	509.3	522.9	536.2	551.9
Blackburn with Darwen	10.4	10.2	10.3	10.3	10.4
Blackpool	13.1	13.7	14.1	14.3	14.6
Halton	7.2	7.4	7.6	8.1	8.5
Warrington	12.2	12.6	13.1	13.5	14.2
Cheshire	47.7	49.4	51.3	53.2	55.8
Cumbria	35.1	36.6	38.0	39.2	40.8
Greater Manchester	178.8	180.9	185.0	188.6	192.9
Lancashire	89.2	91.1	93.8	97.1	101.3
Merseyside	105.3	107.6	109.7	111.8	113.4
Yorkshire and the Humber GOR	315.9	323.9	332.4	344.0	356.2
East Riding of Yorkshire	22.4	22.7	23.9	25.2	26.8
Kingston upon Hull	13.9	14.3	14.7	14.9	15.4
North East Lincolnshire	10.5	10.9	11.1	11.5	11.6
North Lincolnshire	9.2	9.7	10.0	10.7	11.3
York	11.6	12.0	12.3	12.9	13.5
North Yorkshire	40.2	41.5	43.4	45.2	47.0
South Yorkshire	73.4	75.4	77.7	81.1	84.4
West Yorkshire	134.7	137.3	139.3	142.4	146.4
North Yorkshire	315.9	323.9	332.4	344.0	356.2
South Yorkshire	22.4	22.7	23.9	25.2	26.8
East Midlands GOR	255.7	265.0	273.6	285.2	300.0
Derby	13.4	13.8	14.0	14.6	14.9
Leicester	16.1	16.3	16.6	16.6	16.8
Nottingham	15.0	15.6	15.6	15.7	16.2
Rutland	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.7	3.0
Derbyshire	42.7	44.3	45.7	47.9	50.8
Leicestershire	38.9	39.9	41.7	43.3	45.7
Lincolnshire	35.7	36.7	37.8	39.4	42.1
Northamptonshire	46.2	48.0	49.5	52.3	55.2
Nottinghamshire	255.7	265.0	273.6	285.2	300.0
West Midlands GOR	342.8	353.3	364.4	378.7	393.1
County of Herefordshire	12.5	13.0	13.5	14.2	15.0
Stoke-on-Trent	19.6	19.8	20.1	20.5	20.9
Telford and Wrekin	7.7	7.9	8.2	8.9	9.5
Shropshire	19.6	20.4	21.4	22.2	23.3
Staffordshire	51.4	53.9	56.3	59.4	62.0
Warwickshire	33.4	34.1	35.8	37.9	39.2
West Midlands	163.5	167.4	170.8	175.5	180.8
Worcestershire	35.0	36.8	38.2	40.1	42.5
East GOR	340.8	351.5	365.6	381.0	396.2
Luton	8.8	9.3	9.6	9.7	9.9
Peterborough	8.9	9.1	9.5	9.8	10.0
Southend-on-Sea	11.4	11.5	12.1	12.7	12.8
Thurrock	6.[illegible]	7.1	7.4	7.7	7.9
Bedfordshire	22.[illegible]	22.8	23.6	24.5	25.8
Cambridgeshire	30.[illegible]	31.3	32.9	34.6	36.5
Essex	85.4	88.1	91.6	96.1	100.5
Hertfordshire	62.9	64.1	65.8	68.2	70.9
Norfolk	59.5	62.0	64.9	67.4	69.8
Suffolk	45.0	46.2	48.2	50.3	52.2
London GOR	378.6	385.1	390.8	396.4	404.7
Inner London—West	47.9	48.0	48.0	48.5	49.3
Inner London—East	76.9	77.7	77.1	77.3	78.7
Outer London—East and North East	92.7	95.1	97.0	98.7	101.0
Outer London—South	69.6	71.8	74.0	75.5	77.2
Outer London—West and North West	91.5	92.5	94.8	96.4	98.5
South East GOR	515.1	531.8	547.3	570.7	594.1
Bracknell Forest	5.0	5.2	5.2	5.5	6.0
Brighton and Hove	17.6	17.8	17.7	17.5	17.6
Isle of Wight	11.5	12.0	12.5	13.0	13.6
Medway	12.8	13.4	13.5	14.2	14.8
Milton Keynes	8.9	9.4	9.9	10.5	10.8

Numbers of female state pension recipients receiving a state pension based wholly or partly on their own national insurance contributions by government office region (GOR), county or unitary authority as at: March 2000; March 2001; March 2002; March 2003 and March 2004

Thousands

	March 2000	*March 2001*	*March 2002*	*March 2003*	*March 2004*
Portsmouth	11.7	12.0	12.4	12.2	12.2
Reading	7.3	7.4	7.4	7.8	8.1
Slough	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.5
Southampton	11.1	11.2	11.2	11.4	12.0
West Berkshire	7.6	7.5	7.7	8.4	9.3
Windsor and Maidenhead	8.4	8.5	8.5	8.9	9.5
Wokingham	7.2	7.5	7.7	8.1	8.6
Buckinghamshire	28.2	29.3	29.9	31.2	32.9
East Sussex	43.9	45.0	46.6	48.2	49.6
Hampshire	76.6	79.9	82.6	87.6	91.8
Kent	90.2	93.3	96.0	100.6	104.3
Oxfordshire	31.8	33.0	34.1	36.1	38.0
Surrey	68.6	70.7	73.1	76.0	79.2
West Sussex	61.6	63.6	65.8	68.1	70.0
South West GOR	357.3	369.3	382.8	398.4	415.4
Bath and North East Somerset	11.6	11.9	12.3	12.5	13.0
Bournemouth	14.1	14.2	14.0	13.9	14.4
Bristol	22.7	23.1	23.5	24.3	24.9
North Somerset	14.9	15.2	16.1	16.6	17.6
Plymouth	15.3	16.0	16.4	17.1	17.6
Poole	11.0	10.9	11.3	11.8	12.2
South Gloucestershire	14.1	14.7	15.1	15.9	17.1
Swindon	9.3	9.7	10.2	10.6	11.0
Torbay	12.2	12.2	12.5	12.6	12.9
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	37.5	39.3	41.9	43.9	46.4
Devon	56.2	58.7	61.0	63.6	65.9
Dorset	35.1	36.4	37.6	39.2	40.7
Gloucestershire	39.5	40.4	41.5	43.5	45.2
Somerset	37.3	39.0	40.6	42.7	44.9
Wiltshire	26.5	27.5	28.9	30.2	31.6
Wales GOR	196.7	203.7	212.2	221.0	229.9
Blaenau Gwent	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.7	5.0
Bridgend	8.4	9.0	9.3	9.6	9.9
Caerphilly	9.2	9.7	10.2	10.8	11.3
Cardiff	18.2	18.6	19.4	19.9	20.4
Carmarthenshire	13.1	13.7	14.0	14.4	15.1
Ceredigion	4.9	5.2	5.5	5.6	5.7
Conwy	10.6	10.8	11.0	11.8	12.1
Denbighshire	7.9	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.8
Flintshire	9.5	9.8	10.3	10.9	11.5
Anglesey	5.3	5.5	5.9	5.9	6.3
Gwynedd	9.0	9.5	9.8	10.2	10.3
Merthyr Tydfil	3.9	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.4
Monmouthshire	5.6	5.9	6.4	6.8	7.1
Neath Port Talbot	9.0	9.0	9.2	9.6	10.1
Newport	8.3	8.8	9.4	9.6	10.0
Pembrokeshire	7.7	8.1	8.3	8.6	9.1
Powys	8.0	8.2	8.7	9.4	10.0
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	15.2	15.5	16.3	17.3	18.0
Swansea	16.5	17.0	17.7	18.4	19.2
The Vale of Glamorgan	8.1	8.2	8.4	8.7	8.9
Torfaen	6.1	6.4	6.7	6.8	7.1
Wrexham	8.1	8.3	8.8	9.1	9.5
Scotland GOR	378.4	390.0	399.7	412.1	426.6
Aberdeen City	15.5	15.8	15.9	15.9	16.0
Aberdeenshire	13.0	13.4	13.8	14.8	16.5
Angus	8.6	8.8	8.8	9.1	9.5
Argyll and Bute	7.6	7.7	8.0	8.5	9.1
Clackmannanshire	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.6
Dumfries and Galloway	12.1	12.7	13.2	13.9	14.9
Dundee City	14.3	14.5	14.5	14.8	15.0
East Ayrshire	9.0	9.5	9.8	9.9	10.5
East Dunbartonshire	7.9	8.4	8.7	8.8	9.3
East Lothian	6.5	6.6	6.7	7.0	7.3
East Renfrewshire	6.5	6.9	7.1	7.6	7.9
Edinburgh	29.7	30.1	30.6	31.0	31.9
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.1

Numbers of female state pension recipients receiving a state pension based wholly or partly on their own national insurance contributions by government office region (GOR), county or unitary authority as at: March 2000; March 2001; March 2002; March 2003 and March 2004

Thousands

	March 2000	*March 2001*	*March 2002*	*March 2003*	*March 2004*
Falkirk	10.2	10.6	10.9	11.5	11.9
Fife	25.2	26.1	26.9	28.1	29.6
Glasgow City	47.6	48.2	48.2	48.0	48.4
Highland	15.6	16.3	16.8	17.6	18.4
Inverclyde	7.9	8.2	8.2	8.5	8.6
Midlothian	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8
Moray	5.5	6.0	6.1	6.4	6.9
North Ayrshire	11.3	11.8	12.3	12.7	13.3
North Lanarkshire	23.8	24.5	25.0	25.8	26.7
Orkney Islands	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.4
Perth and Kinross	10.8	11.2	11.7	12.4	12.5
Renfrewshire	13.9	14.2	14.7	15.1	15.4
Scottish Borders	8.8	9.1	9.2	9.4	9.6
Shetland Islands	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.6
South Ayrshire	9.4	9.4	9.8	10.3	11.0
South Lanarkshire	23.5	24.5	25.3	26.3	26.9
Stirling	6.0	6.4	6.8	7.1	7.2
West Dunbartonshire	7.8	7.8	8.1	8.2	8.3
West Lothian	7.6	8.1	8.7	9.2	9.4
Great Britain	3,749.8	3,857.9	3,971.7	4,108.3	4,259.0

The number of women in Great Britain receiving a basic state pension based wholly or partly on their own national insurance contribution record

Thousands

	Total number of women in Great Britain receiving a basic state pension based on their own national insurance record	*Number of women in Great Britain receiving 50 per cent. or less of a basic state pension*	*Number of women in Great Britain receiving 51 per cent. to 75 per cent. of a basic state pension*	*Number of women receiving 76 per cent. or more of a basic state pension*
March 2000	3,749.8	286.9	336.2	3,126.7
March 2001	3,857.9	277.7	363.9	3,216.3
March 2002	3,971.7	270.1	391.4	3,310.2
March 2003	4,108.3	267.1	427.2	3,414.0
March 2004	4,259.0	263.3	465.1	3,530.6

1. Numbers are taken from a five per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and are expressed in thousands.
3. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
4. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
5. Numbers also refer to women who are receiving a basic state pension based on their own contribution record which is increased by using the contribution record of their husband or former husband. Numbers do not include women entitled to a basic state pension based on their own record which is then increased when they meet the conditions for a category D pension.
6. Category A basic state pension rates:
March 2000—£66.75;
March 2001—£67.50;
March 2002—72.50; March 2003—75.50; and
March 2004—£77.45.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample as at 31 March for the years shown

PRIME MINISTER

Official Histories

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Prime Minister how many Government-sponsored official histories are in preparation; when each was commissioned; who the authors are; what the estimated date of completion is in each case; and what the estimated cost in each case is. [218676]

The Prime Minister: The following official histories are currently in preparation:

Title	*Author*	*Date commissioned*	*Estimated publication date*
From Defence by Committee to Defence by Ministry	Professor Donald Cameron Watt	1974	2006
External Economic Policy since the War Volume 2	Professor Leslie Pressnell	1974	2006
Special Operations Executive in Greece	Professor Richard Clogg	1984	2006
Special Operations Executive in Italy	Christopher Woods	1989	2006
Falklands Campaign	Professor Lawrence Freedman	1997	2005
UK Accession to the EEC Volume 2	Professor Alan Milward	1997	2006
UK Accession to the EEC Volume 3	Professor Alan Milward	1997	2009
The Development of North Sea Oil and Gas	Professor Alexander Kemp	1999	2006
Channel Tunnel	Dr. Terence Gourvish	2001	2006
The Civil Service since Fulton	Professor Rodney Lowe	2002	2008
The Official Biography of Desmond Morton	Mrs. Gill Bennett	2002	2006
D-Notice System	Rear Admiral Nick Wilkinson	2004	2008
Privatisation	Professor David Parker	2004	2009

In the financial year 2003–04 the cost of running the official history programme was £190,000. This includes fees and expenses of historians and research assistants and costs associated with publication, but excludes staff costs of Cabinet Office administrative support and accommodation-related overheads. In the case of the SOE histories no fee is paid for the authors' work, instead they seek recompense through royalties from their publishers.

Iraq

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister whether the statement made by the Attorney-General on 17 March 2003 setting out his views on the legality of the use of armed force against Iraq was a summary of the advice received by the Government. [218322]

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Prime Minister whether he had a role in the *(a)* framing, *(b)* drafting and *(c)* drawing up of the Answer given by the Attorney-General on 17 March 2003 on Iraq. [218595]

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister whether the summary of the Attorney-General's advice on the legality of the war in Iraq published in the Official Report on 17 March 2003 was drafted by *(a)* Downing street and *(b)* Cabinet Office officials. [218430]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given by my right hon. noble Friend the Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith, today.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister whether the complete text of the Attorney-General's opinion on the legality of the invasion of Iraq was seen by the full Cabinet. [218540]

The Prime Minister: Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice and the proceedings of Cabinet and Cabinet Committees is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

Ministerial Travel

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Prime Minister (1) how many days he has spent overseas on official business in each year since 1997; [211247]

(2)when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Mid-Dorset and North Poole on 24 January, reference 211247. [215730]

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the overseas trips he has made on official business or using official transport, since 1997, broken down by date. [211869]

The Prime Minister: Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, and the Civil Service Management Code.

Due to an administrative error the following was omitted from the list published in 1999: 2–26 August 1997—Italy and France.

Prime Minister's Questions

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the merits of altering the format of Prime Minister's questions. [218566]

The Prime Minister: None.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Prime Minister whether he has plans to bring forward proposals to alter the format of Prime Minister's questions. [218567]

The Prime Minister: No.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Prime Minister whether he has received representations from the public about the impression of the House given by the broadcasting of Prime Minister's question time. [218858]

The Prime Minister: The information is not available in the format requested. Given the volume of correspondence I receive covering a broad spectrum of issues, my office records letters by subject rather than by the view expressed.

US Presidential Meeting

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* matters he discussed and *(b)* decisions were reached at his breakfast meeting in Brussels with President Bush on 22 February. [217940]

The Prime Minister: I discussed a wide range of issues with President Bush, including the Middle East Peace Process, the UK's G8 presidency and Iraq.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Apiculture

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what consultation process was undertaken with stakeholders prior to the announcement of changes to scientific resources available to support beekeeping. [216700]

Alun Michael: None. The proposed 20 per cent. reduction in expenditure with the National Bee Unit was determined following an internal review of resource allocation across the whole of Defra.

The reduction will be concentrated on the field force of bee inspectors rather than the Unit's scientific services, which will be substantially maintained. The decision does not apply to the Department's spend on bee health research and development.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the reason was for the reduction in the funding allocation to the Bee Health Programme at the National Bee Unit. [216911]

Alun Michael: The budget for the Bee Health Programme in England was identified in Defra's Activity Baseline Review as an area where 20 per cent. savings (equivalent to £250,000 p.a.) could be realised from 2008. The review examined all of the Department's existing activities and the resources available to them.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has commissioned on the effectiveness of shook swarming as a means of controlling foulbrood. [216690]

Alun Michael: National Bee Unit studies on the application of the 'shook swarm' technique with antibiotic for the control of European foul brood disease have already been subject to independent scientific peer review. It is our intention that the results from trials of the technique without the use of antibiotic should be independently assessed once enough data have been gathered and evaluated.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what level of inspection of bee colonies she is proposing when European foulbrood is removed from statutory controls. [216691]

Alun Michael: Once a decision had been made to remove a statutory enforcement role for control of European foul brood in England, inspections would no longer be targeted on this disease. However, the National Bee Unit would continue to offer advice to beekeepers on managing the disease through its extension programme. Apiary inspections would thereafter concentrate on maximising control of American foul brood disease and surveillance for notifiable exotic bee pests, including the small hive beetle.

Arrangements for bee health matters in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the respective devolved Administrations.

Earth Observation Summit

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the results of the Earth Observation Summit in Brussels on 16 February. [217762]

Mr. Morley: The Summit participants adopted a resolution on the future of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. The resolution included endorsement of a 10-year implementation plan. The plan details the work needed to assess the capacity of existing observation systems, identify gaps in the global observational network, and to work with others to address those gaps and develop more coordinated and comprehensive systems. A further result was the issue of a communiqué that emphasised the high priority that should be given to tsunami and multi-hazard warning systems within the GEOSS.

The UK endorsed the plan and the communiqué along with the other 57 countries participating in GEO.

EU Subsidies

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the monetary value of direct EU export subsidies for agricultural goods exported by the EU to Africa in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [217200]

Alun Michael: Total expenditure on EU export refunds (subsidies) is as follows.

	Expenditure (£ million)
1999	5,572.8
2000	5,646.2
2001	3,400.6
2002	3,432.4
2003[1]	3,703.0

[1] Data for 2003 refers to appropriations for commitments entered in the budget for 2003.

Sources:

"Agriculture in the European Union" for 2000-03 and "The Agricultural Situation in the European Union" for 1999.

However, information on expenditure on export subsidies is not available by destination country and thus subsidised exports to Africa are not separately identifiable.

Horse Passports

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated revenue raised from *(a)* horse passports and *(b)* animal passports is. [217529]

Alun Michael: The Government do not collect any revenue from the issue of horse passports. Charges are made by individual Passport-Issuing Organisations and retained by those organisations. The Government do not charge pet passports since any charges are a matter for the vets who issue pet passports to pet owners. No charges are made for cattle passports.

Meat/Dairy Products

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the main export markets are for *(a)* beef, *(b)* lamb, *(c)* dairy products and *(d)* pork produced in England. [216568]

Alun Michael: The following table shows UK exports of beef, lamb/sheep, dairy products, pork/bacon and ham by main export market for the 12 months to November 2004. Exports from England are not separately identified.

UK exports of specified commodities, December 2003-November 2004

Commodity/country	*Total (t'000)*
Dairy produce	
Irish Republic	414.0
Belgium	76.8
Netherlands	55.7
Germany	48.8
France	44.5
Others	193.9
Dairy produce total	833.6
Pork	
Germany	29.2
Irish Republic	21.9
Belgium	9.9
Hong Kong	8.7
Netherlands	8.6
Others	26.9
Pork total	105.2
Bacon, ham etc.	
Irish Republic	11.2
Spain	0.6
Denmark	0.4
France	0.4

UK exports of specified commodities, December 2003-November 2004

Commodity/country	*Total (£'000)*
Portugal	0.2
Others	0.6
Bacon, ham etc. total	13.4
Beef	
Irish Republic	5.5
Germany	1.2
France	1.0
Netherlands	0.9
Belgium	0.6
Others	1.3
Beef total	10.5
Lamb	
France	49.0
Belgium	8.7
Germany	3.3
Italy	2.0
Irish Republic	1.2
Others	2.0
Lamb total	66.1
Sheep	
France	6.9
Italy	1.1
Irish Republic	1.0
Germany	0.4
Belgium	0.4
Others	1.0
Sheep total	10.7

Note:
Data are subject to amendments until 30/06/2005
Source:
HM Customs and Excise
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, DEFRA

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what quantity of *(a)* milk, *(b)* eggs, *(c)* beef and lamb, *(d)* chicken and *(e)* pork was imported to the UK from (i) the EU and (ii) outside the EU in the last period for which figures are available. [216566]

Alun Michael: The following table shows UK imports of milk, eggs, beef, lamb/sheep, chicken, pork/bacon and ham from EU and Non-EU countries over the 12 months to November 2004.

UK imports of specified commodities, December 2003-November 2004

£'000

Commodity	*EU*	*Non-EU*	*Total imports*
Milk and cream (liquid)	93.2	0.0	93.2
Birds' eggs (in shell)	41.2	0.2	41.4
Beef	324.8	137.3	462.1
Lamb	9.2	19.8	29.0
Sheep	9.2	81.7	91.0
Chicken	361.4	97.3	458.7
Pork	470.5	5.1	475.6
Bacon, ham etc.	301.4	0.0	301.4
Commodity total	1,610.9	341.4	1,952.3

Note:
Data are subject to amendments until 30 June 2005
Source:
HM Customs and Excise
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, DEFRA

Further information on the production and supply of agricultural commodities can be found at: http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/publications/auk/2004/excel.asp.

Single Farm Payments

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the timing of single farm payments to farmers entitled to receive them in 2005–06. [216646]

Alun Michael: The payment window for the Single Payment Scheme is 1 December 2005 to 30 June 2006. The objective is to make as many payments as possible as early as practicable, within that window.

The Rural Payments Agency issued a News Release on 19 January confirming that the most probable date for payments to start is February 2006.

Waste

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how waste from schools is defined with respect to the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and what duties are incumbent on *(a)* waste authorities and *(b)* schools for the collection and disposal of waste from schools. [218307]

Mr. Morley: Section 75(5)*(d)* of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 defines waste from premises forming part of a university or school or other educational establishment as household waste. In addition, Schedule 2 to the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992 classifies this waste as household waste for which a charge for collection may be made.

Section 45(1) of the 1990 Act places a statutory duty on waste collection authorities to arrange for the collection of household waste. Section 48(1) of the 1990 Act requires waste collection authorities to deliver for disposal to the waste disposal authority all waste which has been collected under section 45.

Section 51(1) of the 1990 Act requires waste disposal authorities to arrange for the disposal of the waste collected in its area by the waste collection authorities.

Schools may arrange for the collection of their waste with either the waste collection authority or any other person who is an "authorised person" for the purposes of section 34 of the 1990 Act (the duty of care).

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what date Newcastle upon Tyne city council applied for a grant for a gas from waste burning plant; what *(a)* volume and *(b)* type of materials are proposed to be gasified and burnt; what sum of money has been requested; and if she will place the application in the Library. [218033]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The Strategy Unit report "Waste Not, Want Not" (published in November 2002) pointed out that new options for dealing with residual waste need to be developed and tested as landfill diminishes in importance. To address this issue, Defra's Waste Implementation Programme is currently delivering a programme of advice on and development of new technologies including pilots for

more innovative waste management practices—providing detailed and impartial technical and operational data to inform future decision-making.

Defra's latest call for industrial research proposals or projects aimed at developing pilot scale treatment equipment closed on 30 November 2004. Project proposals are now being evaluated by an expert advisory committee, including representatives from the public, private, community, NGO and financial sectors against a range of key criteria. Full details of the evaluation process are available on the Defra website.

I can confirm that Newcastle city council has submitted a proposal for a pilot scale gasification and pyrolysis plant as part of the current bidding round on 29 November 2004. It would not be appropriate at this stage to release detailed information on any individual proposal as this would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of local authorities' industry partners. However, details of preferred bidders and information on their specific projects will be announced publicly in the spring.

TRANSPORT

Congestion (Birmingham)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect on congestion of the suspension of bus lanes on Tyburn Road in Birmingham. [218012]

Charlotte Atkins: This is a matter for Birmingham city council and the Department has made no formal assessment of the impacts. I understand the city council is monitoring the traffic flows and will make the information available in due course.

Disability Discrimination Act

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* applications for special authorisation orders were made and *(b)* special authorisation orders were granted under section 43 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [218493]

Charlotte Atkins: The table details the number of applications for special authorisation and the number of special authorisations granted.

	Applications received	*Special authorisations granted*
2001	116	111
2002	70	70
2003	79	79
2004	269	189
2005	13	13

These figures include applications and special authorisations that may have been granted, but have now expired. The total number of special authorisations currently in force is 208.

The increase in numbers in 2004 is attributable to short-term special authorisations granted for a single vehicle type. We would not expect this to occur again.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultation he undertakes before issuing special authorisation orders for public service vehicles under section 43 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; and if he will make a statement. [218494]

Charlotte Atkins: Section 43 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 does not require consultation before a Special Authorisation is issued.

However, key stakeholders are often consulted during the process to ensure that all parties are fairly represented. These would include the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), the Department's statutory advisers on disability issues, groups representing disabled people, trade bodies representing vehicle manufacturers and operators.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many public service vehicles are subject to current special authorisation orders granted under section 43 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; what percentage of all regulated public service vehicles this represents; and if he will make a statement. [218495]

Charlotte Atkins: An annual survey of vehicle operators carried out by the Department for Transport indicates that there are 9,770 regulated full size buses. Although there is no similar data for coaches, these are likely to represent an almost insignificant proportion of the regulated Public Service Vehicle fleet.

There are currently 208 buses and coaches operating under special authorisation representing approximately 2 per cent. of all regulated Public Service Vehicles.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the fines which have been issued under section *(a)* 40 and *(b)* 41 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; and what plans he has to alter the enforcement procedure for vehicles that contravene public service vehicle accessibility regulations. [218234]

Charlotte Atkins: The Vehicle Operator and Services Agency of the Department for Transport has made no prosecutions to date for contravention of the public service vehicles accessibility regulations. Instead it has been found that close liaison between operators, manufacturers and the Department has been effective in resolving the few cases of non-compliant vehicles found within the public service vehicle fleet.

The current enforcement procedure generally requires a thorough inspection by a departmental certifying officer before each and every vehicle, falling within the scope of these regulations, is introduced into service. Subsequent in-service inspections can be carried out by VOSA as part of their ongoing targeted enforcement regime.

The Department continuously monitors its enforcement programme and has no evidence to suggest that current provisions are ineffective, and therefore has no plans to modify the enforcement procedures.

Blue Badge Scheme

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish revised draft regulations for disabled parking permits. [218421]

Charlotte Atkins: We expect to consult on the draft amendment regulations this summer. These will make the following changes to the blue disabled persons parking badge scheme:

extend the scheme to children under the age of two with specific medical conditions requiring the transport of bulky medical equipment;

introduce temporary badges to those people with temporary mobility impairment which makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for them to walk and which is likely to last for a period of at least 12 months;

modify the wording for the upper limb criterion;

change the wording on the badge to indicate the side to be displayed; and

reintroduce a hologram onto the badge as an additional security measure.

Highway Maintenance

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on the percentage of road length, broken down by highway category type, which should be considered for structural maintenance work in each local authority area in 2004. [218211]

Charlotte Atkins: Structural maintenance work on highways last year, as at any time, was a matter for the local authorities themselves to decide.

The Department recommends that local authorities maintain their roads in accordance with the code of practice for maintenance management "Delivering best value in highway maintenance" published in 2001. In deciding on structural maintenance work authorities should pay regard, amongst other things, to the surface condition surveys of carriageways they are required to carry out annually. These produce the best value performance indicators 96, 97a and 97b (for principal, non-principal classified and unclassified roads respectively) that indicate the proportion of the network that should be considered for structural maintenance. ODPM will publish the 2004–05 results of these surveys for each English local authority later this year.

Parking

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much *(a)* income was derived from and *(b)* expenditure has been incurred by each local authority on parking, broken down by (i) charges and (ii) penalties where available, in financial year 2003–04. [218207]

Charlotte Atkins: Information on local authority parking income and expenditure for the financial year 2003–04 is not available. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intend to publish the information by the end of April.

Public Service Vehicles

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of public service vehicles are required to comply with public service vehicle accessibility regulations; and if he will make a statement. [218235]

Charlotte Atkins: An annual survey of vehicle operators carried out by the Department for Transport indicates that there are almost 80,000 public service vehicles operating in Great Britain. These comprise a range of vehicles, including minibuses, full size buses and coaches. Vehicle size, age, carrying capacity and type of operation will dictate which of these must meet the requirements of the public service vehicle accessibility regulations. This makes it impossible accurately to determine what percentage of public service vehicles are currently required to comply with the regulations.

Nevertheless, the regulatory impact assessment (RIA) carried out prior to the introduction of the PSV accessibility regulations predicted future changes in bus fleet composition, including reduced numbers of double deck buses and increased numbers of minibuses. It was estimated that by the time of full compliance, i.e. 2017 for buses and 2020 for coaches, almost 53,000 buses will fall within the scope of regulations, representing towards 95 per cent. of the bus fleet capacity at that time. Numbers of coaches were more difficult to predict but the RIA estimated that 1,250 vehicles would fall within the scope of regulations. This is likely to represent 5 per cent. of the total coach fleet in 2020.

However, the Department is currently discussing with industry whether it might be possible to extend the scope of regulations to include coaches used on tour services. If vehicles operated in this way were brought within scope of the regulations, this would result in a far greater proportion of accessible coaches in the fleet.

Railway Property (Crime)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many persons were prosecuted for criminal acts committed on or against railway property in the last year for which figures are available. [218011]

Mr. McNulty: The British Transport Police (BTP) have informed me that in the year April 2003–March 2004 a total of 12,189 people were prosecuted by the BTP in England and Wales. This figure represents all offences excluding revenue offences.

St. Pancras Station

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will set a completion date for the fitting-out of the Thameslink Box at St. Pancras station; [218638]

(2) when the Department expects to complete the fitting-out of the Thameslink Box at St. Pancras station. [218640]

Mr. Darling: The Department is committed to delivering the station fit-out, but needs to look further at the options for completing the work, including timing, before we can give the go-ahead. Consequently the Department has not set any dates for the start and completion of the work.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the fitting-out of the Thameslink Box at St. Pancras station will cost. [218641]

Mr. Darling: The most recent projected cost of the fitting-out of the St. Pancras Midland Road station is approximately £60 million (at 2003–04 prices) which includes the fitting out, rail systems alterations and client costs required to make the station operational. This figure may change depending, for example, on future decisions on the scope and programme for the works.

Trust Ports

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason trust ports which are classified as public corporations have not produced resource accounts for 2003–04; and whether they will be required to do so for 2004–05. [218687]

Mr. Jamieson: Trust Ports are not required to produce resource accounts. This is a requirement of Government departments and Trading Funds only.

Working Time Direqtive

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce the final details of the Working Time Directive regulations applicable to road haulage operators. [218633]

Mr. Darling: I expect to be able to publish our formal guidance and table the implementing regulations before Parliament very shortly.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academy Teachers

Mr. Pollard: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what professional regulation applies to academy teachers. [217590]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Academies are registered independent schools. Like all independent schools, they are not bound by the legislation which requires teachers in maintained schools to register with the General Teaching Council for England (GTC), which is the professional regulating body for teachers in the maintained sector. However, as the vast majority of teachers within academies will have moved across from the maintained sector, most will already be registered with the council and are likely to remain so. We will be writing shortly to academies to clarify this issue and will certainly encourage them to continue to register existing staff with the council. Ultimately, however, this is a matter for individual teachers to decide.

Faith Schools (West Midlands)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many private faith schools there are in the West Midlands region, broken down by constituency. [217690]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The figures provided by independent schools at the last annual schools census for which figures are available, January 2004, are shown in the following table.

Independent schools: number of schools by faith

January 2004

By parliamentary constituency in the West Midlands Government office region	*No religious character*	*Church of England*	*Roman Catholic*	*Muslim*	*Other Christian faith*[1]	*Other*
Aldridge-Brownhills	0	0	0	0	1	0
Birmingham, Edgbaston	5	3	1	0	2	0
Birmingham, Erdington	1	0	0	0	0	0
Birmingham, Hall Green	2	0	0	0	0	0
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	0	0	0	1	0	0
Birmingham, Ladywood	4	0	0	3	1	0
Birmingham, Northfield	1	0	0	0	0	0
Birmingham, Perry Barr	0	0	0	0	0	0
Birmingham, Selly Oak	1	0	0	0	0	0
Birmingham, Sparkbrook and Small Heath	3	0	0	5	0	1
Birmingham, Yardley	1	0	0	0	0	0
Bromsgrove	3	1	0	0	0	0
Burton	2	1	0	0	0	0
Cannock Chase	0	0	0	0	2	0
Coventry North East	1	0	0	1	0	0
Coventry North West	1	0	0	0	2	0
Coventry South	4	1	0	0	1	1
Dudley North	2	0	0	0	0	0
Dudley South	1	0	0	0	0	0
Halesowen and Rowley Regis	1	0	0	0	0	0
Hereford	1	2	0	0	1	0
Leominster	6	1	1	0	1	0
Lichfield	5	0	0	0	0	0
Ludlow	5	1	1	0	0	0
Meriden	0	0	0	0	1	0
Mid Worcestershire	4	0	0	0	1	0
Newcastle-under-Lyme	3	0	0	0	0	0
North Shropshire	5	2	0	0	0	0
North Warwickshire	1	0	0	0	0	0
Nuneaton	1	0	0	0	0	0
Redditch	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rugby and Kenilworth	1	2	2	0	1	0
Shrewsbury and Atcham	6	2	1	0	1	0

Independent schools: number of schools by faith

January 2004

By parliamentary constituency in the West Midlands Government office region	*No religious character*	*Church of England*	*Roman Catholic*	*Muslim*	*Other Christian faith*[1]	*Other*
Solihull	4	0	0	0	1	0
South Staffordshire	0	0	0	0	1	0
Stafford	4	1	0	0	1	0
Staffordshire Moorlands	1	0	0	0	0	0
Stoke-on-Trent Central	1	0	0	0	0	0
Stoke-on-Trent North	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stoke-on-Trent South	0	0	1	0	0	0
Stone	0	0	1	0	0	0
Stourbridge	1	0	0	0	0	0
Stratford-on-Avon	4	0	0	0	1	0
Sutton Coldfield	1	0	0	0	0	0
Tamworth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Telford	2	0	0	0	0	0
The Wrekin	2	2	0	0	1	0
Walsall North	0	0	0	0	1	0
Walsall South	1	0	0	2	2	0
Warley	0	0	0	0	0	0
Warwick and Leamington	3	1	0	0	4	0
West Bromwich East	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Bromwich West	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Worcestershire	3	3	0	0	1	0
Wolverhampton North East	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wolverhampton South East	0	1	0	0	0	0
Wolverhampton South West	3	0	0	1	0	0
Worcester	3	2	1	0	1	0
Wyre Forest	4	0	0	0	1	0
Total	108	26	9	13	30	2

[1] Includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs.

Grammar School Ballots

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list each request for an electoral roll in connection with a grammar school ballot made in the last 12 months; and what the *(a)* name of the education authority area, *(b)* date of the request and *(c)* name of the person or persons making the request were in each case. [218428]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In the last 12 months there has been only one request for petition thresholds to be set, which is the first step in the petition process. The request, made on 22 December 2004, asked that thresholds be set for all local education authority areas that have grammar schools. No threshold will be set for Ripon in Yorkshire, as there was an unsuccessful ballot in March 2000 and the five year moratorium on further ballots is still in effect.

I cannot name those who requested the petition, as to do so would not comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Higher Education

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of university students who would have been entitled to receive the higher education grant in the current academic year; and what estimate she has made of the number who will apply for it in the academic year beginning in 2006. [217996]

Dr. Howells: Preliminary data from the Student Loans Company show that just over 100,000 students are entitled to either a full or a partial grant for academic year 2004/05. We expect to have firmer figures of the number of applications made in 2004/05 by April 2005 and will then be better placed to estimate the number of students applying for the grant in academic year 2006/07.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with the higher education sector concerning the future take-up of courses in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* scientific disciplines; and if she will make a statement. [218881]

Dr. Howells: As Minister for Higher Education I regularly meet representatives of the sector to discuss this issue.

The Government are committed to increasing the number of students taking up higher education courses in mathematics and scientific disciplines. The 10-year science and innovation investment framework, published jointly by Treasury, the Department for Trade and Industry and the Department for Education and Skills last July, sets out a range of new measures to address the problem. These cover all phases of education from schools through to higher education. In addition, the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills wrote to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) at the beginning of December asking their advice on what types of action should be considered to strengthen and secure subjects of strategic national importance, including mathematics and science.

Looked-after Children

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many looked-after children have not had a school place in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* accommodation and *(b)* age. [217668]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not collected centrally.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate the Government have made of the number of looked-after children that receive lay visitors; and what measures the Government have taken to increase this number. [217669]

Margaret Hodge: The DfES does not collect statistics on the number of looked-after children for whom an independent visitor has been appointed. The Government currently have no plans to collect this information.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the official residences for which her Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the occupants of each make towards running costs; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment was in 2003–04. [213561]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills is not responsible for any official residences.

Primary Teachers

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what financial support is available to students undertaking qualifications to enter teaching at primary education level; [218817]

(2) whether tuition fees support available to students undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Education qualification is available to students undertaking work-based primary education degrees; and if she will make a statement. [218847]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Students on undergraduate courses of initial teacher training are eligible for the same package of financial support as other undergraduates. Students taking Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses currently receive full tuition fee remission and a £6,000 training bursary.

My right hon. Friend has no present plans to extend these incentives to undergraduates.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out statistical information relating as closely as possible to the Rochdale constituency, with effects of her Department's actions and policies on Rochdale since 1997. [217368]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Rochdale constituency lies within Rochdale local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents Achievement for pupils attending schools in Rochdale are given in the following tables.

Key Stage 2 Achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Rochdale constituency

	Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above		
	1997	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Rochdale—English[1]	54	67	13
Rochdale—Maths[1]	56	65	9
National Average—English[2]	63	78	15
National Average—Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Rochdale constituency.
[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools)

GCSE and equivalents[1] Achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Rochdale constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Rochdale—5+A*–C	37.1	41.7	4.6
Rochdale—5+A*–G	81.1	86.2	5.1
National Average—5+A*–C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National Average—5+A*–G	87.0	88.8	1.8

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.
[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The Primary and Key Stage 3 National Strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offer comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and cover five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post 16, Higher Education and Adult Education

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The In Your Area website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional

information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post 16.

Schools

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been made available for computers for schools in Coventry since 1997. [217689]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold information on funding for ICT at constituency level. However, Coventry South is in Coventry LEA and allocations for this authority, since 1998, are detailed in 'Funding for ICT in Schools in England' which is available in the House Library.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many competitions have been held by local education authorities for the provision of a new school since the powers were introduced. [218481]

Derek Twigg: There have been no competitions for new secondary schools since the requirement for a competition for additional secondary schools was introduced in June 2003. The Education Bill currently before Parliament will extend the requirement for a competition to all new secondary schools, including schools replacing existing schools as a result of reorganisation, unless the Secretary of State agrees that in a particular case the objectives of increasing the quality and diversity of provision could be met by other proposals commanding support in the area.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the ratio is of students to teachers in the town of Romford. [217145]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table provides pupil and staff information for maintained primary and secondary schools in Romford constituency in January 2004, the latest information available.

	Pupil:Teacher ratio[2]	*Pupil:Adult ratio*[3]
Maintained primary schools[1]	24.0	14.7
Maintained secondary schools[1]	17.5	12.2

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Based on the full-time equivalent of qualified teachers.

[3] Based on the full-time equivalent of all teaching and support staff (excluding admin and clerical staff).

Source:

Annual School Census.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, on the effects on Huddersfield of the Government's programme for capital investment in schools since 1997. [217461]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table sets out the capital allocation to Kirklees metropolitan council and its schools for the years since 1997 to 1998. Information is not held centrally on allocations at constituency level.

Kirklees

	£000
1997–98	3,573
1998–99	4,899
1999–2000	6,808
2000–01	74,020
2001–02	12,187
2002–03	44,421
2003–04	17,253
2004–05	19,324

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many primary schools in the Greater London area she estimates will need to be replaced within the next five years; and if she will make a statement. [218199]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department does not hold information that would be needed to estimate how many primary schools in the Greater London area will need to be replaced within the next five years.

The bulk of schools capital is now allocated by formula to authorities and schools, so that they can address their local priorities. Prioritisation of need should be through an open, rigorous and consultative asset management planning process, based on assessments of the needs of all schools. Where work is needed, there should be consideration of whether repair, remodelling, or replacement is appropriate.

Central Government capital support for investment in schools has increased from under £700 million in 1996–97 to £4.9 billion this year and will rise further to £6.3 billion by 2007–08. Progress is being made year-by-year in improving the quality of the school building stock.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in the Greater London area have only outside toilet facilities on their premises; and if she will make a statement. [218200]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department does not hold this information.

In March 1998 the then Secretary of State announced that £35 million had been allocated to address the issue of school toilets which could only be accessed from outside and certain energy management improvements. At that time around 450 projects were supported by the Department, with most local education authorities submitting proposals and over the two years 1998–1999 and 1999–2000 a large proportion of outside toilets (and inefficient boilers) were replaced at a cost of about £70 million. It was, and still is, the responsibility of LEAs to identify needs and to seek funding.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in Greater London, broken down by London borough, ran a budget deficit in the year ended 31 March 2003; and how much this deficit was for each school. [217541]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Teacher Recruitment

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the cost of the fast track teacher recruiting programme in each year from 2001–02 to 2009–10; and if she will make a statement. [216742]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Fast Track teaching programme invests in developing effective leadership in schools; it is not primarily a recruitment programme.

The cost of Fast Track for the years 2001–04 and estimated costs for 2004–06 are shown as follows. We are reviewing the cost of the programme for future years.

	£ million
2001–02	8.27
2002–03	8.07
2003–04	12.9
2004–05	[1]18.4
2005–06	[2]23.0

[1] estimated end of year forecast
[2] estimate

Teacher Training Agency

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the administration budget of the Teacher Training Agency was in the last financial year for which figures are available; and what allocations have been made for each year to 2009–10. [216740]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Teacher Training Agency's grant letter for 2005–06 says the following about the TTA's administrative costs taking into account efficiency savings levels measured against the 2004–05 baseline.

"We have agreed the following:

an administrative costs baseline of £23.8 million for 2004–05

£22.5 million for 2005–06

£21.2 million for 2006–07

£19.9 million for 2007–08

Administrative costs here mean all costs involved in running the TTA's business as distinct from delivering front-line services."

Figures for 2008–09 and 2009–10 are not available.

TREASURY

Alcohol/Tobacco Smuggling

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action his Department is taking to clarify the rules on the importation of cigarettes and alcohol for personal use only following visits to Europe; and if he will make a statement. [217735]

John Healey: Information for travellers is available from the National Advice Service, the Customs website (www.hmce.gov.uk) and in posters and public notices available at major ports and airports within the UK and some European airports.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many individuals have been prosecuted for bringing *(a)* too many cigarettes and *(b)* too much alcohol into the UK from Europe in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [217736]

John Healey: The information is not readily available in the format requested. HM Customs and Excise central records collate the number of prosecutions but do not distinguish the specifics of smuggling within and from outside Europe.

For details of the number of prosecutions since 2001, I refer the hon. Member to the Customs and Excise annual report 2003–04, which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many privately owned vehicles have been destroyed following seizure at UK ports by HM Customs and Excise due to suspicion of smuggling cigarettes and alcohol purchased in Europe; and if he will make a statement; [217738]

(2) how many privately owned vehicles have been seized and subsequently returned to the owner by HM Customs and Excise at UK ports on suspicion of smuggling cigarettes and alcohol from Europe in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement; [217739]

(3) how many privately owned vehicles have been seized by HM Customs and Excise at UK ports due to suspicion of smuggling cigarettes and alcohol from Europe in each year since 2001. [217740]

John Healey: HM Customs and Excise records on seized vehicles do not distinguish between privately owned vehicles and those owned by commercial entities.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* annual and *(b)* monthly cost of using private security firms to secure and patrol the vehicles seized by HM Customs and Excise at UK ports has been in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [217737]

John Healey: HM Customs and Excise have a single contract for the storage of all goods, including all vehicles, which are seized throughout the UK, not just UK ports.

Costs for private security to secure and patrol the vehicles seized by HM Customs and Excise at UK ports are included in the overall costs of this contract and are not available individually.

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will ask the Director of Child Benefit and Tax Credit Operations to reply to a letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 4 February about Mr. and Mrs. R. Bridle of Brixham, regarding alleged overpayment of tax credits; and for what reason Mr. Bridle was advised that this matter would be dealt with in six to eight weeks. [218306]

Dawn Primarolo: The Tax Credit Office (TCO) aims to deal with 80 per cent. of letters from customers within 15 days and 95 per cent. within 40 days. Where it looks as if they will be unable to reply quickly, TCO aims to

acknowledge receipt of the customer's letter and say when they expect to be able to reply. TCO will reply to the hon. Member and his constituent shortly.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Clwyd, South constituency, the effect on the constituency of policies pursued by his Department at the Council of Ministers since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [215719]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor of the Exchequer attends the ECOFIN formation of the Council of Ministers. One policy that benefits the Clwyd, South constituency is Structural Funds and Cohesion Policy, agreed as part of the EU budget. At ECOFIN, the UK has consistently argued both that the overall EU budget should be constrained, and focused on value for money, and also that spending should provide a good budgetary deal for the UK. In the current Financial Perspective, part of my hon. Friend's constituency is included in the west Wales and the valleys area, for which the Government secured objective 1 status at the Berlin European Council in 1999. The outcome also included funding through objective 3, which applies in the parts of Clwyd, South not covered by objective 1, and objective 2 which also applies in some parts of Clwyd, South. Based on this, in subsequent spending reviews, the Treasury has made available extra allocations, outside the Barnett formula, for the Welsh Objective 1 programmes, including in the 2004 Spending Review £106 million for 2005–06, £128 million for 2006–07 and £147 million for 2007–08.

This has allowed the Objective 1 programme so far, for example, to commit £1 billion to 1,300 projects reporting the creation and safeguarding of some 84,000 gross jobs. This funding, together with other Government policies, has helped to support the Clwyd, South economy, to reduce unemployment from 1,422 in 1997 to 1,058 in 2000 and to 752 now—overall, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 48 per cent., while long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have fallen by 88 and 81 per cent. respectively.

Energy Products Directive

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the amount of revenue forgone in respect of rebated diesel for private leisure craft in each year since the Energy Products Directive came into force; [218521]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of private leisure craft which have used rebated red diesel in each year since the Energy Products Directive came into force. [218531]

John Healey: No robust estimate of the revenue forgone has been possible due to a lack of data. The Government do not hold any figures for numbers of private pleasure craft. The British Marine Federation has estimated that there are approximately 451,000 private pleasure boats in the UK, although this figure includes all types of boats, not just those using red diesel.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on Excise Duties met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217890]

Dawn Primarolo: The Committee on Excise Duties meets in Brussels approximately twice a year as determined by the European Commission.

The Committee met once during the Italian Presidency, on 12–14 December 2003, once during the Irish Presidency, on 1–2 April 2004 and once during the Dutch Presidency, on 1–2 July 2004.

Officials from HM Customs and Excise represented the UK.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Economic Policy Committee: Working Party and Reduced Compositions met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217897]

Mr. Timms: The Economic Policy Committee (EPC) met formally 16 times during the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidencies of the EU. All meetings were held in Brussels, with the exception of one Informal meeting held in London in June 2004. The various working groups and reduced compositions of the EPC met on 30 occasions in Brussels during these three Presidencies. The UK Government was represented on each occasion by Treasury officials.

Inspection and Enforcement Activities

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of inspection and enforcement activities carried out by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* regulatory bodies and agencies sponsored by his Department was in (i) 1996–97 and (ii) 2003–04. [217786]

Dawn Primarolo: The Chancellor's Departments which carry out inspection or enforcement type activities are the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. In the course of achieving their objectives, however, neither Department separately identifies inspection or enforcement activity, with the exception of the law enforcement work of HM Customs and Excise. This focuses on the management of risks to society that arise from the illegal importation of prohibited or restricted goods such as class A drugs, firearms or paedophile material. It is not therefore possible to provide the information requested on costs of inspection and enforcement activities for 1996–97 and 2003–04, although more information on the activities of HM Customs and Excise and of the Inland Revenue and the administrative costs of running the Departments, including the costs to HM Customs and Excise of working to reduce crime and drug dependency and on investment in compliance activity in the Inland Revenue, can be found in their annual reports and accounts.

Mobile Phones

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what tax and national insurance benefits will be available from April to employers who supply mobile phone and associated contracts to employees and their families. [217704]

Dawn Primarolo: The provision of a mobile phone by an employer to a director or employee or any member of their family or household has been exempt from tax and national insurance contributions since April 1999.

Pensioners (Employment)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of *(a)* men aged 65 years or over and *(b)* women aged 60 years or over are in (i) full-time and (ii) part-time employment; and if he will provide corresponding estimates at three-yearly intervals since 1975. [217997]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 28 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about employment. I am replying in his absence. (217997)

The attached table gives estimates, based on the Labour Force Survey, of the proportion of men aged 65 and over and women aged 60 and over who were in full and part-time employment for the three month periods ending May every three years from 1986 to 2004. Data for earlier periods are not available on a consistent basis.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling variability.

People over retirement age[1] working full or part-time as a percentage[2] of population over retirement age

Percentage (not seasonally adjusted)

Three month period ending May	*Full-time*			*Part-time*		
	All	*Men*	*Women*	*All*	*Men*	*Women*
1986	1.9	2.4	1.6	4.8	4.8	4.8
1989	2.2	2.7	1.9	5.7	5.7	5.6
1992	2.5	3.1	2.2	5.6	5.4	5.7
1995	2.2	2.7	1.9	5.7	5.3	5.9
1998	2.1	2.5	1.8	5.5	4.9	5.9
2001	2.2	2.4	2.0	5.7	4.6	6.3
2004	2.6	2.8	2.4	6.7	5.7	7.4

[1] Defined as men aged 65 and over and women aged 60 and over.
[2] Percentages are based on people working full or part-time as a percentage of all those in the relevant age groups.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) in how many cases where the Inland Revenue has contacted child care providers whose details have been provided by claimants of the child care element of child tax credit the child had been removed from the child care provider; [217687]

(2) how many times the Inland Revenue contacted child care providers whose details have been provided by claimants of the child care element of child tax credit in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [217688]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* Where a 2003–04 or 2004–05 tax credit award includes an element of help towards the cost of child care, the Inland Revenue has contacted child care providers to verify the details that have been provided by the claimant.

In 2003–04, the Department contacted around 215,000 child care providers to check information and so far in 2004–05 they have contacted around 251,000 providers. Wherever possible, the Department sends a single, composite inquiry covering all the claims in which the child care provider features.

Unlike the previous tax credits, the amount of help towards child care is not fixed for the duration of the award. The new tax credit system is designed to respond to changes in circumstances and where people alter their child care arrangements the amount of tax credits they receive may be adjusted to ensure they continue to receive the right amount of money. Claimants are required to tell the Inland Revenue within three months where the amount they pay for child care falls by £10 per week or more. Other changes can be reported when finalising the claim after the end of the tax year, although the Inland Revenue encourages claimants to report changes as and when they happen to avoid over and under payments.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards (Inquiry Costs)

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Leader of the House if he will bring forward proposals to enable the recovery of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards' inquiry costs from the hon. Member concerned where a complaint is upheld; and if he will make a statement. [217797]

Mr. Hain: I have no plans to do so.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures his Department is taking to limit the number of deaths and injuries in Afghanistan resulting from unexploded ammunition; and what proportion of such deaths and injuries has been of children. [218823]

Hilary Benn: DFID is supporting mine and undeveloped ordnance clearance in Afghanistan. In the period 2002–04 we provided £3.8 million to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) for its clearance work in Afghanistan.

DFID is also supporting the Halo Trust's Weapons and Ammunition Disposal Programme through its contribution to the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP). In 2004–05, the GCPP has provided £430,000 to this programme, which is focused on destroying excess ammunition and small arms, much of which is unserviceable and unsafe.

It is difficult to obtain precise information casualties from landmine and unexploded ammunition in Afghanistan. However, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, in 2003 (the latest year for which there are figures) there were 846 new casualties, of which 184 resulted in death. Of the 846 casualties, 384 casualties were children under the age of 18 years. The information available does not provide a breakdown by age of the casualties resulting in death.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the principal lessons learned by his Department on reconstruction and development during the reconstruction period in Bosnia-Herzegovina were. [218048]

Hilary Benn: DFID, MOD, the FCO and the Cabinet Office are setting up the 'Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit' to do more to improve the United Kingdom's capacity to deal with post conflict stabilisation. The experience of reconstruction and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the reconstruction phase, while not recorded formally, did highlight a number of lessons that the new unit will consider as well as lessons identified from other post conflict stabilisation and reconstruction scenarios where HMG has been involved. It is hoped to link this process to the US Office of the Co-ordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilisation and draw from the UN Lessons Learned Unit.

Emergency Aid

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much in the aid budget for 2004–05 is set aside for dealing with emergency situations; where the money has been pledged; and if he will make a statement. [218824]

Hilary Benn: DFID sets aside a sum of money each year to a central Contingency Reserve to enable the UK to respond to both humanitarian emergencies and reconstruction needs. In 2004–05 this amounted to £30 million. DFID also had a humanitarian assistance contingency budget of £49 million in 2004–05, of which about £12 million was allocated to provide emergency relief.

The Government's immediate humanitarian response to the Asia tsunami relief effort included committing the full Contingency Reserve of £30 million as well as £20 million from the humanitarian response budget.

The UK has provided over £6 million in non-tsunami emergency funding in 2004–05. A breakdown of the recipients is as follows:

Country	*Emergency situation*	*Total committed (£)*
Madagascar	Cyclone	255,000
Morocco	Earthquake	155,000
Haiti	Complex emergency	1,891,000
Dominican Republic	Floods	57,168
Haiti	Floods	418,400
Tajikistan	Floods	25,000
Nepal	Floods	100,000
Paraguay	Fire	10,000
Caribbean	Hurricane Ivan	1,829,527
Haiti	Tropical Storm Jeanne	884,976
Indonesia	Earthquake	30,000
Philippines	Storms and typhoons	300,000
Colombia	Floods	82,500

In addition, humanitarian assistance is provided through a number of our country programmes. The bulk of this is within Africa; and in 2004–05 this provision amounted to an earmarking within country budgets of approximately £110 million. An Africa regional humanitarian budget of £37 million was used to meet unexpected humanitarian needs. The country budgets allocations have also been varied within year depending on circumstances. The following table sets out the initial humanitarian allocations, by country, for 2004–05:

Country	*Humanitarian assistance (£)*
Angola	2,980,000
Burundi	1,680,000
Eritrea	1,050,000
Somalia	1,880,000
Congo	15,640,000
Ethiopia	10,000,000
Sudan	30,530,000
Kenya	8,740,000
Tanzania	9,920,000
Uganda	7,080,000
Malawi	2,000,000
Zimbabwe	13,800,000
Sierra Leone	2,000,000
Liberia	3,000,000
Guinea Conakry	1,000,000
RCI	1,000,000

In other regions, we did not set aside separate budgets for emergency and humanitarian work. However assistance has been provided in, for example, Iraq and Afghanistan.

HIV/AIDS

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what financial assistance his Department has provided in each of the past five years to voluntary organisations working to prevent HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. [218244]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* This information is not available from our statistics. DFID tends to support integrated HIV/AIDS programmes and it is therefore difficult to break down support for HIV/AIDS prevention as distinct from treatment and care activities. Also, our support to voluntary organisations takes three forms (direct support to UK-based organisations through our Civil Society Challenge Fund, direct support to local organisations through our country programmes and Partnership Programme Agreements) only the first of which can be readily disaggregated in the way requested.

We support 18 major UK voluntary organisations through Partnership Programme Agreements. These are strategic level agreements based on shared aims and specific outcomes rather than individual project activities. It is therefore not possible for us to apportion support to HIV/AIDS activities. However the majority

of these organisations do have an agreed outcome specifically targeted at HIV/AIDS. The level of our support for Partnership Programme Agreements has increased from £47 million to £62.5 million over the past five years.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) whether the Department's field offices will be producing detailed action plans in addition to the revised country assistance plans in those countries with large numbers of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS; [217557]

(2) what steps the UK Government are taking to ensure that the Department's field offices help to increase the capacity of ministries in developing countries responsible for protecting the rights and meeting the needs of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. [217556]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: I refer the hon. Member to the responses I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North, (Ms Keeble) on 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1638W and 1394W respectively (UIN 215342 and UIN 215343).

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government are taking to ensure that the issue of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS is made a priority during the review of the European Union's Programme for Action on Poverty Diseases in 2005. [217559]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: I refer the Member to the response I gave to the Member for Mid Dorset and North Poole, (Mrs. Brook), on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 794W. (UIN 211156),

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what investigations the Government has undertaken on the possible involvement of UK *(a)* individuals and *(b)* companies in the mismanagement of Iraq reconstruction funds. [217903]

Hilary Benn: No investigations have been carried out by the Government on the possible involvement of UK individuals or companies in the mismanagement of Iraqi reconstruction funds.

The UK supported the establishment of the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB) —mandated by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483 of 22 May 2003—as an independent, objective body to oversee coalition management of Iraqi oil revenues and reconstruction spending.

The IAMB'S report on the two independent audits of coalition use of Iraqi funds in the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) states that

"all known oil proceeds ... have been properly and transparently accounted for in the DFI".

IAMB audit reports are available on the IAMB website at www.iamb.info.

Landmines

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government is taking to eliminate the problem of landmines; and what funding was made available to countries affected by landmines in the last year for which figures are available. [218884]

Hilary Benn: The following table lists DFID's contributions to global mine action in financial year 2003–04.

	£
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)—Core Support	650,000
United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)—Core Support	2,000,000
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)—Core Support	600,000
Research and Knowledge	1,766,720
Ottawa Sponsorship Programme (support to poor countries to enable attendance at international mine action meetings).	16,660
Angola—HALO Trust demining (Road Verification)	117,650
Angola—Mines Advisory Group (MAG) demining via UN office of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	100,000
Angola—UNDP Capacity Building	300,000
Afghanistan—UNMAS Demining	2,000,000
Cambodia (MAG)	271,250
Iraq—(MAG) demining S Iraq	781,639
Iraq—UNMAS Demining	4,357,378
Iraq MAG Preparedness	80,883
N Caucasus—UNICEF Mine Risk Education, Victim Support	60,000
Sudan UNMAS	1,000,000
HALO Other	32,402
Total	14,134,582

In addition the UK share of European Community global mine action for the calendar year 2003 (the latest year for which we have figures), was £2.9 Million.

Malawi

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when the extra funds from the new six-year programme of support to the Malawi health service will be released. [217545]

Hilary Benn: DFID financing will begin in April 2005. By that time, we expect the Government of Malawi to have implemented the conditions for the release of our aid for the grant. These are to present a plan to reform the Central Medical Stores and to increase the Government health budget by the amount of additional funding to be provided through its budget by DFID, Norway and the World Bank.

Uganda

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what development assistance has been provided by the UK Government to Uganda in each year since 1997; and what it has been spent on. [217470]

Hilary Benn: The development assistance provided by the UK Government as bilateral aid to Uganda in each year since 1997–98 is shown in the following table. This is mainly in the form of Poverty Reduction Budget Support, project or sector aid in health and education, technical co-operation and grants to Civil Society Organisations. Further details are available in Table 7.1 of our annual publication "Statistics on International Development", copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Bilateral aid to Uganda

£ thousand

Fiscal year	*Total UK Government expenditure*
1997–98	59,325
1998–99	64,261
1999–2000	90,286
2000–01	97,572
2001–02	68,724
2002–03	54,868
2003–04	59,614

Source:
Statistics on International Development

In addition the UK supports Uganda through its multilateral contributions.

Figures are given as follows for the imputed UK share of EC aid for calendar years over the same period.

UK share of EC aid (imputed)

£ million

1997	4.7
1998	5.0
1999	4.9
2000	5.4
2001	7.5
2002[1]	2.7

[1] Most recent year available.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Electricity Payments

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to reduce the differentials between pre-payment meters for electricity and other payment methods. [218822]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Tariffs are a commercial matter for individual supply companies, some of whom have reduced differentials between pre-payment meters for electricity and other payment types.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on implementation of the multiannual programme for enterprise and entrepreneurship, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217254]

Nigel Griffiths: The Enterprise Programme Management Committee met twice during the Italian presidency, on 4 July and 12 November 2003; once during the Irish presidency, on 18 March 2004; and twice during the Netherlands presidency on 8 July and 8 December 2004. Each meeting took place at the European Commission in Brussels. One member of the Small Business Service attended two of these meetings and two members attended the other three meetings. The Committee fulfils an important task in managing the Multi-Annual Programme, which helps to improve enterprise and entrepreneurship policy at Governmental and Commission levels and provides support to businesses. The UK nominates experts for the Programme's project groups that advise on aspects of enterprise and entrepreneurship. The Programme is due to be replaced by the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme in 2007. My hon. Friends the Economic Secretary, the Minister with responsibility for food, farming and sustainable energy and I have jointly sent UK recommendations to the European Commission on the content of the new Programme.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee for the harmonisation of credit insurance provisions for transactions with medium- and long-term cover met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217838]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The Committee concerned meets only to consider a limited number of issues. It did not meet during the Italian, Irish or Dutch Presidencies.

The European Council Working Group on Export Credits met five times in Brussels during each of the three Presidencies in question. Officials from ECGD were present at each of these meetings.

Gas Prices

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the causes of wholesale gas price rises in the past 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [218819]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Spot wholesale gas prices have risen due to a number of factors: tighter gas markets as production from the North Sea declines and the UK becomes a net importer of gas, and high-fossil fuel prices driving higher gas prices on the Continent, which feed into UK prices via the gas interconnector. On the forward market, there is also a fair amount of 'market sentiment' about tightness of supply over the next two winters as we move towards more import dependency. The Ofgem Price Probe, published on 5 October 2004, also attributed these reasons for the price movements over the previous year, and the concurrent Financial Services Authority investigation into gas prices in autumn 2003 found no evidence of market abuse.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met representatives of the energy intensive sectors of industry before Christmas and has asked officials to work with them to develop ideas for improving the operation of the forward gas market. My Department has also commissioned an independent consultant to analyse the current operation of the UK gas forward market and to identify the underlying causes of high forward prices for the next two winters.

The Government are working to ensure that the right framework is in place to allow the market to deliver sufficient quantities of gas at competitive prices. This is already happening, as major new import projects come forward, due to come on-stream over the next 3 years. The Government are also encouraging the European Commission to ensure prompt and full implementation of the second EU liberalisation package, which will contribute to the development of more competitive markets across Europe.

Nuclear Security

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many incidents characterised as failures of security leading to unacceptable or undesirable consequences *(a)* have occurred at and *(b)* have been associated with personnel employed at licensed nuclear installations since 1 January 2004. [217494]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I am advised that since 1 January 2004, there have been four incidents, which could be characterised as failures of security leading to unacceptable or undesirable consequences, that have occurred at licensed civil nuclear installations and one of these may have involved an employee.

Oil and Gas Production

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the ratio of offshore and onshore *(a)* flared and *(b)* vented associated gas to oil produced gas was in each year for which figures are available. [217103]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The tables show annual offshore and onshore oil production, associated gas production, flaring and venting from oil producing fields, and the ratios of flaring and venting to the oil produced, since combined records for landward and seaward flaring and venting have been kept.

Offshore oil production, gas flaring and venting—in cubic metres (m^3) and thousand cubic metres (Km^3)

	Oil Production m^3	Associated Gas Production Km^3	Gas Flared Km^3	Gas Vented Km^3	Ratio of Flared Gas to Oil Production (1 to n Km^3/m^3)	Ratio of Vented Gas to Oil Production (1 to x Km^3/m^3)
1979	61,482,814	7,207,480	6,528,344	0	106	—
1980	64,933,732	7,245,871	4,580,540	0	71	—
1981	77,932,535	10,334,941	4,238,218	0	54	—
1982	95,583,994	13,935,654	4,017,198	0	42	—
1983	107,655,522	16,346,156	3,734,138	19,985	35	0
1984	141,430,215	21,925,657	3,399,136	329,176	24	2
1985	149,116,847	24,327,363	2,677,625	338,428	18	2
1986	154,679,166	25,865,305	2,155,514	379,269	14	2
1987	155,774,808	27,935,387	2,256,414	339,341	14	2
1988	164,597,956	32,180,666	2,335,759	312,769	14	2
1989	138,914,095	30,906,713	2,485,698	185,187	18	1
1990	138,119,864	28,888,023	2,732,865	97,453	20	1
1991	135,920,216	31,221,148	2,476,022	56,641	18	0
1992	141,837,918	35,924,277	2,438,222	69,807	17	0
1993	143,121,367	40,863,083	2,479,598	65,274	17	0
1994	165,237,678	51,049,012	3,156,534	56,383	19	0
1995	165,343,790	55,508,296	5,805,151	33,257	35	0
1996	162,503,170	59,718,242	2,513,065	24,434	15	0
1997	157,909,202	60,580,328	2,205,676	35,554	14	0
1998	159,084,087	68,388,042	2,137,428	40,792	13	0
1999	160,437,949	77,044,484	2,189,774	270,815	14	2
2000	148,032,604	76,489,996	1,858,075	123,389	13	1
2001	138,282,385	77,820,312	1,737,953	76,332	13	1
2002	136,526,578	81,664,017	1,609,620	78,612	12	1
2003	125,061,489	77,188,639	1,488,068	133,335	12	1
2004	110,528,268	70,004,711	1,503,565	30,504	14	0

Onshore oil production, gas flaring and venting—in cubic metres (m^3) and thousand cubic metres (Km^3)

	Oil Production m^3	Associated Gas Production Km^3	Gas Flared Km^3	Gas Vented Km^3	Ratio of Flared Gas to Oil Production (1 to n Km^3/m^3)	Ratio of Vented Gas to Oil Production (1 to x Km^3/m^3)
1979	52,825	1,595	1,595	0	30	—
1980	198,926	7,848	7,570	0	38	—
1981	173,377	5,888	1,933	0	11	—
1982	196,386	7,257	1,432	0	7	—
1983	258,597	10,197	3,634	0	14	—
1984	275,864	11,053	5,363	0	19	—
1985	349,142	15,817	9,134	0	26	—
1986	500,770	37,165	18,418	0	37	—
1987	592,161	59,709	19,230	65	32	0
1988	827,419	75,047	21,636	301	26	0
1989	788,704	87,203	18,121	1,313	23	2

Onshore oil production, gas flaring and venting—in cubic metres (m^3) and thousand cubic metres (Km^3)

	Oil Production m^3	*Associated Gas Production Km^3*	*Gas Flared Km^3*	*Gas Vented Km^3*	*Ratio of Flared Gas to Oil Production (1 to n Km^3/m^3)*	*Ratio of Vented Gas to Oil Production (1 to x Km^3/m^3)*
1990	2,042,300	158,580	80,943	2,140	40	1
1991	4,416,671	311,038	41,749	16,696	9	4
1992	4,746,264	347,107	29,049	12,513	6	3
1993	4,469,458	343,413	39,957	13,174	9	3
1994	5,597,733	409,066	38,210	11,421	7	2
1995	6,101,749	452,801	36,320	16,842	6	3
1996	6,375,987	408,847	48,477	14,526	8	2
1997	6,066,305	398,918	30,613	14,808	5	2
1998	6,285,694	410,141	27,199	23,423	4	4
1999	5,160,063	357,094	24,525	26,470	5	5
2000	3,940,434	264,071	20,912	10,078	5	3
2001	3,596,477	239,680	15,944	545	4	0
2002	3,244,733	243,339	19,625	526	6	0
2003	2,666,145	202,182	25,024	845	9	0
2004	2,325,763	158,245	21,770	467	9	0

Petrol Stations

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many retail petrol stations there were in the UK in each year since 1997 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by region. [218208]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Energy Institute, formerly known as Institute of Petroleum, produces an annual "Retail Survey" of the number of retail petrol filling stations in the UK. Historically, the regional breakdown data on petrol filling stations numbers have not been collected.

	Total UK retail petrol filling stations
1997	14,824
1998	13,758
1999	13,716
2000	13,043
2001	12,201
2002	11,425
2003	10,535
2004	Figure to be published

Small Businesses (Lancashire)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government have taken to help small businesses in Morecambe and Lunesdale since 1997. [216786]

Nigel Griffiths: The Business Link Operator for Lancashire has supported 2,318 businesses in the Lancaster area (which includes Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency) since 2001. This information is not available at constituency level. The Small Business Service (SBS) was set up as an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry in April 2000. Contracts were exchanged with a national network of 45 Business Link Operators (seven in the North West) to provide Business Support to small and medium sized enterprises from April 2001. Before this date Government support to businesses was provided through Training and Enterprise Councils and the Small Business Service does not have access to this data.

The type of assistance provided by the Business Link Operator includes pre-starts, start up advice, intensive assistance, IT support and Investors in People.

In addition a number of companies in the Morecambe and Lunesdale constituency have received support under DTI programmes since 1997:

Smart and its successor the Research and Development Scheme: Six companies—£434,207

Regional Selective Assistance Scheme: One company—£180,000

Enterprise Grant Scheme: 12 companies—£577,360.

The Enterprise Grant scheme was replaced by the Selective Finance for Investment in England on 1 April 2004. No offers have been made to companies in this constituency under this scheme.

A summary of support from Lancaster city council shows it paid out grants of £848,678 to support more than 30 companies in the Morecambe and Lunesdale area under the following schemes:

Scheme	*Number of businesses receiving grant*	*Amount of grant paid out (£)*	*Duration of scheme*
Lancaster City Council Business Development Scheme	12	25,459	1990 onwards
North West Tourist Board Invest in the Best	8	94,709	1998–2002
Promenade Business Frontage Scheme (SRB funded)	Unspecified	220,958	1996–97
Central Promenade Enhancements Scheme	Unspecified	300,000	1996–97
Poulton Neighbourhood Renewal	4	5,770	2003–04
Enterprise in Rural Communities	6	[1]201,782	2002–04
Total	30 plus	848,678	

[1] This total included a grant payment of £129,606 to Carnforth Station Railway Trust, to generate Carnforth Station which now provides business space for four businesses creating 11 jobs.

CABINET OFFICE

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213828]

Mr. Milburn: Responsibility for congestion charges and penalty notice charges incurred by vehicles provided to Government Departments by the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA), rests with them. I have asked its Chief Executive, Nick Matheson, under the terms of the Framework Document to the GCDA to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Excluding GCDA services provided to the Cabinet Office, the amount spent on congestion charges by the Department is shown in the table.

	Congestion charges (£)
2002–03	8,928
2003–04	9,608
2004–05 (to date)	9,423

The Cabinet Office has not incurred any congestion penalty charges.

Ministerial Vehicles

David Taylor: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what proportion of the fleet of ministerial vehicles used low sulphur fuels; [216299]

(2) how many ministerial car journeys *(a)* over 10 miles and *(b)* under 10 miles were undertaken in *(a)* 1998 and *(b)* 2004; [216300]

(3) what procedures are in place to measure the annual carbon dioxide emissions from ministerial vehicles; [216301]

(4) what steps have been taken since 1997 to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from ministerial vehicles. [216302]

Mr. Milburn: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car and Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr. Nick Matheson to write to my hon. Friend. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library and will be printed in the *Official Report*.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Contact Committee for implementation of the Television without frontiers Directive met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217951]

Mr. Caborn: The EU Contact Committee for the implementation of the Television without frontiers Directive met once during each presidency. The meetings took place in Brussels on:

21 October 2003

11 March 2004

21 October 2004

A DCMS official was present on each occasion.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee for Cooperation in the Field of Tourism met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [218309]

Mr. Caborn: The Advisory Committee for Cooperation in the Field of Tourism, known as the Tourism Advisory Committee, met in Brussels on 4 September 2003 during the Italian presidency and on 15 September and 12 November during the Dutch presidency. The Committee did not meet during the Irish presidency. The UK Government was represented at these meetings by tourism officials from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

National Trust

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions *(a)* she and *(b)* her Department has had with the Director General of the National Trust. [218476]

Mr. Caborn: The Secretary of State, the Minister for Media and Heritage and DCMS officials have regular discussions with the Director General of the National Trust. They most recently met on 2 February 2005.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance *(a)* she and *(b)* her Department has given to the Director General of the National Trust about its proposed administrative changes. [218544]

Mr. Caborn: The National Trust is an independent, registered charity. The decision to implement any administrative changes rests solely with them.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations her Department has received about the proposed changes at the National Trust. [218545]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has not received any representations about proposed changes at the National Trust.

Sport (West Midlands)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding has been allocated to building new sports facilities in the West Midlands region in the last five years. [217692]

Mr. Caborn: In the last five years, Sport England, the Big Lottery Fund and the Football Foundation have allocated £131,463,349 to the West Midlands region through a wide range of sports facilities programmes.

DEFENCE

Allied Rapid Reaction Corps

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps' training programme is for the next 18 months. [216543]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The only dedicated element of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps is its Headquarters, which is currently training as a High Readiness Force (Land) HQ. This involves exercising as a Corps and Land Component Headquarters for generic multinational deployments on warfighting and peace support operations. From April 2005 HQ ARRC will begin preparation for an expected deployment to Afghanistan in 2006 to lead the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). On present plans, HQ ARRC's ISAF training will involve two self contained Command Post exercises, periods of individual and collective military training and the NATO pre-operational directed training package. In addition, HQ ARRC will continue to support the training of UK formations, including the UK elements of the NATO Response Force throughout this period.

Army Prosecuting Authority

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on *(a)* the remit and *(b)* the powers of the Army Prosecuting Authority in (i) Northern Ireland and (ii) the rest of the United Kingdom; [212036]

(2) what the membership is of the Army Prosecuting Authority; and if he will make a statement; [212037]

(3) how many times the Army Prosecuting Authority has met since its coming into operation; and what the outcome was in each case. [212047]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The Army Prosecuting Authority (APA) is a serving officer of Major General rank appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The APA came into being on 1 April 1997 and meets regularly with his staff to discuss cases. In 2003 and 2004, 550 and 627 cases, respectively, were referred to the APA.

The remit of the APA is to bring prosecutions under military law against British Army personnel in UK or abroad. Once a case has been referred to the APA, he has the power to determine, prefer or amend an appropriate charge, conduct court martial proceedings or discontinue proceedings on any charge. He also has the power to delegate any of his functions to a suitable qualified officer appointed by him. When exercising his prosecution function, the APA is subject to the general superintendence of the Attorney-General and is independent of the Chain of Command. There is no difference in these matters between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

Colombian Army

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 4 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1173W, on the Colombian Army, to which Colombian *(a)* engineer units and *(b)* national police units his Department has provided military assistance. [217547]

Mr. Ingram: The assistance in question is to train individual trainers in bomb disposal. It is not given to formed units. Information on which engineer or police units the trainees come from is not held centrally.

Deepcut Barracks

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to investigate the allegations of Surrey police concerning intimidation of witnesses stationed at Deepcut Barracks by uniformed members of the Royal Military Police. [208381]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is aware of a media report concerning an allegation that a witness stationed at Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut was subject to intimidation by uniformed members of the Royal Military Police. We understand that this allegation has not been formally reported to either the Surrey police during the course of their investigations, or to the Ministry of Defence. Our own inquiries have, however, proved this allegation to be unfounded.

Defence Expenditure (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year from 1997–98 to 2001–02 the RAF Personnel Manning Agency spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each year; and if he will make a statement. [215911]

Mr. Caplin: The RAF Personnel Management Agency (PMA) is located at RAF Innsworth, Gloucester and relinquished Agency status on 1 April 2004. RAF PMA does not undertake specific activity in Scotland and no staff are employed in this area. There is, therefore, no identifiable expenditure within the personnel budget.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 1999–2000, *(d)* 1998–99 and *(e)* 1997–98 the Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency spent in Scotland in (i) monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each year; and if he will make a statement. [216282]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency (DGIA) was established in April 2000.

The Agency has not directly employed any staff in Scotland since its formation, although members of both JARIC and GEG have deployed to Scotland in support of Defence Training Exercises.

Rugby and Kenilworth	1	2	2	0	1	0
Shrewsbury and Atcham	6	2	1	0	1	0

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 the Disposal Services Agency spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each case; and if he will make a statement. [215438]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 the Defence Secondary Care Agency spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each case; and if he will make a statement. [215451]

Mr. Caplin: The Defence Secondary Care Agency (DSCA) was disbanded on 31 March 2003 and its functions were subsumed by the Defence Medical Education and Training Agency and the Defence Medical Services Directorate.

For the numbers of DSCA personnel employed in Scotland in 2002–03 and 2001–02 I refer the hon. Member to the answers given on 26 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 513W and 27 February 2002, *Official Report*, column 1284W. For the years 1997–98 to 2000–01 inclusive the only information available is that provided centrally by the Defence Analytical Services Agency in respect of civilian staff. This shows that no civilian staff were employed in Scotland by DSCA during that period.

Financial information, including overall personnel related expenditure, for each financial year from 1997–98 to 2002–03 is detailed in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts for each of the years in question. These were placed in the Library of the House. Personnel expenditure by region is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 the Defence Procurement Agency spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each case; and if he will make a statement. [215456]

Mr. Ingram: The DPA does not record costs on a geographical basis, neither does it retain historical information on the number of personnel employed in various locations, including Scotland, and as such cannot provide numbers relating to previous periods. Currently, the DPA has 112 posts in Scotland that, based on an average capitation rate, account for some £4.4 million. This is some 2.4 per cent. of the total personnel budget.

Defence Procurement

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much and what percentage of the UK procurement budget was spent in non-NATO countries in each year since 1997; what these figures represent as a percentage of the total defence budget in each year; and if he will make a statement. [216255]

Mr. Hoon: Estimates of equipment expenditure in non-NATO countries since 1997 are provided in the following table.

	£ million
1997–98	35
1998–99	45
1999–2000	30
2000–01	30
2001–02	25
2002–03	50
2003–04	80

These include sums spent with the United Kingdom owned companies and their subsidiaries attributed to these locations. The numbers have been rounded to the nearest £5 million.

Because of lack of consistency over time, and limited coverage in the defence procurement Vote[1], we have employed the Procurement Expenditure series that was published by the Defence Analytical Services Agency[2] in deriving the following percentages:

[1] Class 1, Vote 3, Systems Procurement and Research, was discontinued after 1998–99.

[2] The figures used were taken from Table 1.7, UK Defence Statistics 2002.

	Percentage of procurement expenditure
1997–98	0.37
1998–99	0.44
1999–2000	0.30
2000–01	0.29
2001–02	[1]n/a
2002–03	[1]n/a
2003–04	[1]n/a

[1] With the introduction of Resource Accounting and Budgeting, the Procurement Expenditure series was discontinued.

As a percentage of defence expenditure these figures constitute:

	Percentage of Defence expenditure
1997–98	0.17
1998–99	0.20
1999–2000	0.13
2000–01	0.13
2001–02	[1]0.10
2002–03	[1]0.19
2003–04	[1]0.27

[1] With the introduction of RAB there is a break in series in 2001–02. The "cash" defence expenditure figure is no longer prepared: MOD's net cash requirement has been employed in subsequent calculations to provide a figure that is roughly comparable.

Departmental Documents

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list extant Defence Council Instructions. [217845]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested has been placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by how much his Department's end of year

year 2004/05. We expect to have firmer figures of the

(a) accommodation and (b) age. [217668]

flexibility was changed following the introduction of the Treasury's cash management scheme in financial years (a) 2002–03 and (b) 2003–04. [217840]

Mr. Ingram: Following the introduction of the Treasury's cash management scheme, the Department's end year adjustment (net charge) was £10K in 2002–03 and £25K in 2003–04. These adjustments were reflected in the carry forwards for 2003–04 and 2004–05 respectively.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of the monthly forecasts of payments and receipts provided to the Treasury under its cash management scheme for financial years 2002–03 to 2004–05. [217841]

Mr. Ingram: Copies of the monthly forecasts of payments and receipts provided to the Treasury under its cash management scheme for financial years 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 (April 2004 to January 2005) will be placed in the Library of the House in the next few days.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to publish his Department's SR 2004 Departmental Investment Strategy. [217842]

Mr. Ingram: The SR2004 Defence Departmental Investment Strategy will be published on the Ministry of Defence's website before Easter 2005.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in (a) 2005–06, (b) 2006–07, and (c) 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213263]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 910W.

Diversity and Equality

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many officially designated diversity and equality officers have been appointed in each of the three armed forces to date; whether he plans to appoint further such officers in financial year 2004–05; and what estimate he has made of the total (a) pay, (b) allowances and (c) supporting staff for these officers in 2005–06. [218019]

Mr. Caplin: The number of officially designated diversity and equality officers appointed in each of the armed forces to date is as follows:

Diversity and equality officers

Service	Number	Officer
RN/RM	1	Commander
	2	Lieutenant Commander
Army	1	Colonel
	1	Lieutenant Colonel
	2	Major
RAF	1	Warrant Officer

There are no plans to appoint any further diversity and equality officers in financial year 2004–05. The estimated cost of the total pay and allowances for designated diversity and equality officers in 2005–06, based on general capitation rates for the relevant rank or grade, is £901,894.

In the case of the Army the E1 civil servant provides dedicated support to the Equal Opportunities team. It is not possible to provide the exact cost for the RN and RAF of supporting staff as they provide services as part of a wider range of duties.

In addition, every unit of the armed forces has an Equal Opportunities Adviser (EOA) who provides support to personnel by giving advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues. EOAs are not dedicated diversity and equality officers, the duties involved are performed as part of the individual's normal role.

The total number of EOAs in the armed forces is not held centrally. EOAs do not receive any special allowances for carrying out their duties.

EU Defence Procurement

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his policy towards COM (2004) 608, the Communities Green Paper on Defence Procurement. [215200]

Mr. Ingram: The European Commission's Green Paper on Defence Procurement sets out to open the debate on creating a more transparent and open European defence equipment market, and on promoting further the global competitiveness of European defence industry. The Government supports any initiative that aims to create a more open, effective and competitive European Defence Equipment Market and provided a detailed response on the Green Paper to the European Commission on 15 February 2005.

Financial Submissions

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of his Department's monthly financial submissions to the Treasury's general expenditure monitoring system for (a) financial years (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04 and (b) the first nine months of 2004–05. [213584]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Ministers in his Department have visited Gibraltar in the last six months; how long each visit was; what the reason for the visit was; whom each Minister met; how many visits by Trident nuclear submarines there were to (a) Spain and (b) Gibraltar in the last three years; and what the purpose of each visit was. [217555]

Mr. Ingram: Two Defence Ministers have visited Gibraltar over the last six months. The Under Secretary of State for Defence, my hon. Friend the Member for Hove (Mr. Caplin), visited on 13–14 September 2004. He met Jewish Community Leaders, Royal Naval Hospital staff, Welfare Staff, Chief Minister, Regiment of Gibraltar members and veterans, and His Excellency the Governor. The primary purpose of the visit was

discussions relating to the Royal Naval Hospital Gibraltar. I visited Gibraltar on 10 February 2005. I met the Chief Minister, HQ British Forces Gibraltar staff, the Deputy Governor, Regiment of Gibraltar and Gibraltar Squadron personnel. The primary purpose of my visit was to inform the Chief Minister of the MOD's decision to outsource facilities management services in Gibraltar. There have been no visits to Spain or Gibraltar by Trident nuclear submarines in the last three years. .

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the number of jobs in his Department in Gibraltar; and what plans he has to change the number. [217597]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence currently employs 519 military personnel, 61 UK based civil servants and 1,038 locally employed civilians in Gibraltar. It was announced last week that, in line with Government policy to obtain best value for defence from the tax payer's money, we are implementing in Gibraltar the current UK and overseas best practice model for delivering facilities management. This involves outsourcing all the activities of the Gibraltar Defence Estates and the Joint Logistic Unit (except laundry and Motor Transport Engineering which are subject to separate efficiency proposals). Some two military, five UK based civilian and 296 locally employed civilian posts fall within the scope of the contract and are likely to transfer to the successful contractor. In addition to this initiative, a review of the supply of support services (eg janitorial, catering and motor transport) is also underway. The review team has yet to report, but a reduction of about 70–90 posts is likely if an in-house option is secured. If not, up to 300 posts could be contractorised.

In addition, the Defence Communications and Services Agency (DCSA) in Gibraltar is also undertaking a review of its structure to improve effectiveness. It is planned that the DCSA will reduce the total number of staff and change the balance of employee types in favour of locally employed civilians. This is separate from the Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) initiative, which is due to impact on Gibraltar in 2007–08 and could lead to further outsourcing proposals. The DII initiative will replace our current administrative IT system. It is too early to assess what the impact will be, but up to 10 posts may be affected. As with all organisations, the MOD in Gibraltar will change and adapt to reflect an evolving defence need and the most effective way of delivering it.

Interrogation Techniques

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the UK Government has carried out a comparative analysis of the interrogation techniques used by UK forces in South Eastern Iraq and US forces at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. [205681]

Mr. Ingram: Although we have considered reports of the United States interrogation techniques as part of our approach to prisoner transfer arrangements, no comprehensive comparison has been undertaken.

Iraq

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the longest period of time that a *(a)* man and *(b)* woman has been held in detention or imprisonment by British military forces in Iraq. [208743]

Mr. Ingram: The longest period of time that a male security internee has been held by the United Kingdom forces is 22 months, since April 2003. For part of this period UK security internees were held by US forces at Camp Bucca. Since December 2003. all UK internees have been held at the UK-run Divisional Temporary Detention Facility.

Records indicate that the only female security internee held at the DTDF by UK forces was in custody for three months, between November 2003 and February 2004.

The only people currently in UK custody are security internees. The UK does not hold any criminal detainees or other categories of prisoners.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have been released from detention or prison in Iraq by British military forces since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. [208748]

Mr. Ingram: As at 21 February 2005, 400 male security internees and one female security internee have been released from the UK's Divisional Temporary Detention Facility (DTDF) at Shaibah Logistics Base in Southern Iraq. This does not include several thousand Prisoners of War released in April and May 2003.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Iraqis killed in respect of whom UK military personnel are subject to investigation but where charges have not yet been brought; and if he will make a statement. [211403]

Mr. Ingram: There are 21 Iraqi deaths for which the United Kingdom military personnel are under investigation, excluding those cases which have already been directed for trial. The names of the 21 are:

Zaher Sabti Zaher

Ather Khalaf Mohammed

Ali Saleem Aziz Mohammad

Ahmed Jabber Kareem

Said Shabram

Waleed Sayay Muzban

Baha Daoud Salim Musa

G. G. H. D. Roomi

Ali Alwan Sa'doon

Tahseen Aliwey Mustasher

Ukla Ataya, Alia Aziz, Basim Jassim Ja'Far Alar

Husband of Mrs. Zinab Hydra Hussein

Eheter Salman

Abdul Hussan Talab Hassan

Mrs. S. Kazim, Mrs. RZ Habib, Mrs. FT Zaab, Mrs. HS Naama, Mrs. S. Aziz

In addition there are 12 cases under investigation where UK forces returned fire after being attacked and believe that one or more unknown Iraqis may have been killed.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on troop deployments in Iraq. [214110]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently approximately 9,200 UK service personnel deployed on Operation TELIC, of which 7,900 are currently serving in Iraq. The figure includes 220 additional personnel deployed from 1 February 2005 in order to provide logistics and other essential support following the expected Dutch withdrawal from Al Muthanna province in March 2005. Approximately 70 of these personnel will return to the UK in March.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has made for permanent military bases and posts in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [218826]

Mr. Ingram: There are no plans for any permanent UK military bases in Iraq.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many deaths there have been in custody in Iraq *(a)* under UK forces control and *(b)* under US forces control; how many individuals taken into custody in Iraq have been moved outside the country by (i) UK forces and (ii) US forces; how many complaints alleging maltreatment of individuals taken into custody in Iraq have been made against (A) UK forces and (B) US forces; and if he will make a statement. [206717]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* The service police have investigated seven incidences where individuals have died while in the custody of UK forces in Iraq. Three deaths occurred during detention at a UK facility, three occurred during operations shortly after the individuals were taken into custody, but before they had been formally detained, and one occurred during the transfer of a detainee on an aircraft. No individuals taken into custody by UK forces have been removed from Iraq. We have recorded 14 formal complaints made by detainees about their treatment after being taken into custody by the UK armed forces. All 14 have been investigated by the service police. We do not hold this information for US forces.

Kosovo

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost to the UK was of military action in Kosovo. [217431]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence identifies the costs of operations in terms of the net additional costs it has incurred.

Additional costs incurred for Kosovo are as follows:

	£ million
1998–99	13.9
1999–2000	325.2
2000–01	220
2001–02	141.9
2002–03	87
Total	788

From 2003–04 operations in Kosovo and Bosnia were merged into a joint Balkans operation for which costs are gathered centrally. The cost for the Balkan Operation (Kosovo/Bosnia) for 2003–04 was £103.6 million.

Figures for 2004–05 will be published in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts for 2004–05 in the autumn.

Nepal

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to review the provision by his Department of military assistance and training to the Government of Nepal following King Gyanendra's abolition of democracy in the country; and if he will make a statement. [215938]

Mr. Ingram: Her Majesty's Government are extremely concerned by the recent events in Nepal and by the actions of the King there. We are monitoring the situation as it develops and working closely with interested countries such as India and the US to achieve a co-ordinated international response. As announced on 21 February, we have suspended plans to deliver to Nepal a package of non-lethal military equipment. We are also keeping under review other aspects of our policy with regard to Nepal, including the issue of military training.

Northern Ireland

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what figures the Government uses as representing the total number of service personnel who have died in the troubles in Northern Ireland *(a)* on active duty, *(b)* through suicide and *(c)* through accidents. [216410]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence does not hold centrally compiled data covering deaths that occurred before 1984 as information on them is known to be unreliable.

During the period 1 January 1984 and 31 December 2004, there were a total of 228 deaths of regular service personnel in Northern Ireland. Of these, 132 occurred on-duty and 49 occurred off-duty. The duty status of 47 personnel cannot be readily identified.

The term "active service" has various meanings in different contexts. However, the Service Discipline Act contains a specific definition for the purposes of that legislation. In order to avoid a more restrictive interpretation than may be intended by the question, the above figure is based on all deaths that have occurred on-duty.

Forty-five of the 228 deaths were suicide or open verdict deaths, a further 86 of the 228 deaths were due to accidents. Some of the suicide and open verdict deaths, and deaths due to accidents occurred on duty and some occurred off duty. There are currently five deaths that are awaiting a coroner's verdict.

In addition, between 1 January 1984 and 31 December 2004, there were 32 deaths among non-regular service personnel (TA, Royal Irish Regiments 3–9, NRPS, Reserve) in Northern Ireland. Of these, 10 were due to suicide and open verdicts. Information on the cause of the remaining 22 has not been centrally compiled.

Porton Down

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the letter reference D/US of S/K 0565/05/L of 8 February to the hon. Member for Linlithgow, when he expects to obtain a date for the Judicial Review into aspects of the death of service volunteers at Porton Down in the 1950s and 1960s. [218429]

Mr. Caplin: An application seeking permission judicially to review the inquest into the death of Ronald Maddison has been filed in court. The parties are due to acknowledge receipt formally. It is anticipated that formal permission to go to judicial review, if granted, will be given during April, with potential for the hearing in late spring or early summer.

Procurement Costs

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the current forecast unit production cost is of the *(a)* Nimrod MRA4 and *(b)* Type 45 destroyer. [217961]

Mr. Ingram: A contract for the production of 12 Nimrod MRA4 is planned for later in 2005 at which time a forecast unit production cost will be established. The current forecast unit production cost of a Type 45 Destroyer is £576 million based on the currently approved programme of six ships.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with BAE Systems on *(a)* price and *(b)* time variations on the (i) Nimrod and (ii) Type 45 destroyer projects. [217963]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is in constant discussion with BAE Systems on a wide range of issues on both of these projects including time and cost.

Negotiations are planned for the latter part of 2005 leading to a contract for the production phase of Nimrod MRA4, and to complete the contracting arrangements for the second batch of Type 45s (ships 4–6).

US Nuclear Weapons

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many United States nuclear weapons are deployed in the United Kingdom; and what plans there are to change the numbers. [217488]

Mr. Hoon: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave on 28 April 2004, *Official Report*, column 996W, to the hon. Member for Ceredigion (Mr. Thomas).

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the interoperability of United Kingdom nuclear weapons with *(a)* current United States forces and *(b)* future United States forces and equipment deployed (i) in the United Kingdom and (ii) at United Kingdom bases elsewhere. [217489]

Mr. Ingram: No such assessment has been made.

World Security

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the nature is of the standing commitment referred to in each of the tables in the annex to Cm 6269, "Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities". [199990]

Mr. Ingram: The annex to the "Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities" White Paper (Cm 6269) set out the force elements required to deliver UK defence policy, including meeting a range of 'Standing Commitments'. The force elements shown in the 'Standing Commitments' column in the annex are those permanently committed to a range of Military Tasks which are required concurrently with the forces for contingent operations (as described in the introduction to the annex). These include Strategic Intelligence; Nuclear Deterrence; Integrity of UK Waters and Airspace; and Defence and Security of the Overseas Territories.

These Military Tasks (grouped under the headings: Standing Strategic Tasks and Standing Home and Overseas Commitments) are described in Supporting Essay 2 in the "Delivering Security in a Changing World" White Paper (Cm 6041) of December 2003. These 'Standing Commitments' are part of the Department's overall approach to force structure planning. They should not be confused with the routine activities on which military units are employed on a day to day basis (tasks known colloquially as current military tasks or 'standing tasks' by the Royal Navy).

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the UN Security Council regarding illicit drug production and trafficking in Burma. [209372]

Mr. Rammell: We have not made any representations to the UN Security Council specifically about the drug situation in Burma, since opium and amphetamine production and trafficking from Burma, although serious, does not represent a direct threat to the UK.

We have however made clear to the UN, including members of the Security Council, our concerns about the situation in Burma, in which the destabilising effect of drugs is one part. There is no consensus at present to bring Burma before the Security Council.

Chagos Archipelago

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the British representative in Diego Garcia and *(b)* the US authorities about the impact of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami on the Chagos Archipelago. [207842]

Mr. Rammell: My officials are in daily contact with the British Representative on Diego Garcia who, in liaison with the US authorities there, has provided information about the damage sustained to the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Initial reports from the British Representative suggested that the island sustained minimal damage. The most significant damage occurred in the south of the island, where a 500 metre tract of vegetation was destroyed. There was no loss of human life or damage to

facilities. He has also reported that there has been no visible damage to the outer islands. The British Indian Ocean Territory Conservation Adviser will visit the Territory in February to make a formal assessment.

China

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Chinese authorities about the detention of the Chinese journalist Zhao Yan; and if he will make a statement on freedom of the press in China. [216123]

Mr. Rammell: We are aware of Zhao Yan's case and are monitoring the situation. We are concerned about the freedom of the press in China and regularly raise our concerns at our biannual UK/China Human Rights Dialogue, the last round of which was held in Beijing on 22 November 2004.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the differences are between the European Code of Conduct on Arms Export criteria and the European Arms Embargo criteria as they apply to China; and if he will make a statement. [216124]

Mr. Rammell: The EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 8 June 1998. It contains eight criteria which member states must follow when assessing applications for export of items on an agreed Common List of Military Equipment, which extends significantly beyond directly lethal weapons. In the UK, the Code is applied through the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, set out in a Statement given to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Laura Moffatt) on 26 October 2000, *Official Report*, columns 199–203W, by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my right hon. Friend the Member for Neath (Mr. Hain). The Code also contains the obligation on member states to provide data for an annual report on EU arms exports, and a denial notification and consultation mechanism. The embargo has no such transparency arrangements.

The EU Arms Embargo on China predates the Code and the establishment of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. In contrast with the Code, member states are free to interpret the embargo as they see fit, and there is no common understanding of its scope. The UK's interpretation was set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) on 3 June 1998, *Official Report*, columns 240–41.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205590]

Mr. Rammell: The cost for providing *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Diplomatic Posts

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what effects on UK interests in South America he expects there to be as a result of the closure of the British embassy in Asunción, Paraguay. [217754]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The decision to close the British embassy in Asunción was taken based on the need to align our resources with our priorities, to maximise efficiency and ensure that the UK has a cost-effective and flexible network of overseas representation.

Her Majesty's Government continue to engage actively with Latin American Governments. I have travelled extensively in the region, taking the opportunity to discuss important bilateral and multilateral issues. The UK and Latin America share many values and international concerns and I have no doubt that our strong links will continue.

As we have made clear to the Paraguayan Government, we aim to conduct future relations and look after UK interests, via the accreditation of our ambassador in Buenos Aires and through the appointment of an honorary consul in Asunción.

EU Constitutional Treaty

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how he plans to co-ordinate his Department's efforts to promote the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union with the EU Parliament's task force. [218227]

Mr. MacShane: I have no such plans.

EU Enlargement

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of Article I-5 of the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe on *(a)* future internal enlargement of the EU whereby part of an existing member state becomes a separate member state of the EU, *(b)* transfer of territory from one member state to another and *(c)* the scope of possible arrangements between the UK and Spain on the future of Gibraltar. [218323]

Mr. MacShane: In relation to *(a)* and *(b)* , the hypothetical implications, legal and political, of part of an existing EU member state becoming independent or of the transfer of territory from one member state to another would have to be considered at the time in the light of all the circumstances. In relation to *(c)* the EU Constitutional Treaty preserves continuity for Gibraltar's status.

European Constitution

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* a

decision in Parliament and *(b)* a referendum will be required for the accessions of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey to the EU if the European Constitution is ratified and accession negotiations are successful. [218018]

Mr. MacShane: Romania and Bulgaria officially closed their accession negotiations at the European Council in December 2004. The EU will sign an Accession Treaty with both countries on 25 April with the aim of completing their accession on 1 January 2007. As in the case of previous enlargements, a referendum is not necessary but legislation will be needed to amend the European Communities Act 1972 to give effect to the Accession Treaty in UK law. The same procedure will apply for Turkey if its accession negotiations are successful.

For applications made after entry into force of the Constitutional Treaty, there would be one change to the existing procedures. The existing Treaties require an application to join the EU to be "addressed to the Council". The Constitutional Treaty would require, in addition, that in future

> "The European Parliament and national parliaments shall be notified of this application".

But the remaining stages of an accession process (including those in the UK) would, under the Constitutional Treaty, proceed along the same lines as at present.

European Court of Justice

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the *(a)* name and *(b)* nationality is of each member of the European Court of Justice; and if he will list for each member (i) any known political affiliation, (ii) any known religious affiliation or denomination and (iii) any known membership of trade unions, Masonic organisations, religious groups or other bodies. [218427]

Mr. MacShane: The members of the European Court of Justice are:

Vassilios Skouris, Greek
Francis Geoffrey Jacobs, British
Claus Christian Gulmann, Danish
Antonio Mario La Pergola, Italian
Jean-Pierre Puissochet, French
Philippe Léger, French
Peter Jann, Austrian
Dámaso Ruiz-Jarabo Colomer, Spanish
Romain Schintgen, Luxembourgeois
Ninon Colneric, German
Stig von Bahr, Swedish
Antonio Tizzano, Italian
José Narciso da Cunha Rodrigues, Portuguese
Christiaan Willem Anton Timmermans, Dutch
Leendert A. Geelhoed, Dutch
Christine Stix-Hackl, Austrian
Allan Rosas, Finnish
Rosario Silva de Lapuerta, Spanish
Koen Lenaerts, Belgian
Juliane Kokott, German
Luis Miguel Poiares Pessoa Maduro, Portuguese
Konrad Hermann Theodor Schiemann, British
Jerzy Makarczyk, Polish
Pranas Kuris, Lithuanian
Endre Juhász, Hungarian
George Arestis, Greek
Anthony Borg Barthet, Maltese
Marko Ilesic, Slovenian
Jiri Malenovsk?, Czech
Jan Klucka, Slovakian
Uno Lõohmus, Estonian
Egils Levits, Latvian
Aindrias O Caoimh, Irish
Roger Grass, French

Like judges in most democracies members of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) are not required to disclose the religious, political or other details sought by the hon. Member. Details of the members' backgrounds can, however, be found on the ECJ website: http://www.curia.eu.int/.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his statement on Iraq on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 573, what the source is of the statement that the remains of 300,000 people had been buried in mass graves in Iraq; and what steps the Government have taken to verify these figures. [214216]

Mr. Rammell: In May 2003 Human Rights Watch estimated that there were at least 290,000 people missing in Iraq and stated

> "the answer to their whereabouts likely lies in these graves".

USAID is quoted as estimating in January this year that there are between 260 and 270 mass graves in Iraq and they estimate that between 300,000 and 400,000 people are buried in them. More recent estimates of the number of mass graves have revised the figure downward to 187. The final figure will not be known until all the graves have been completely exhumed. The figures we have used are the best estimates available to us at the moment.

We are working with the authorities in Iraq and in co-ordination with the United Nations to establish a national centre for missing persons and exhumations policy in Baghdad. It will provide the forensic and social expertise to manage the sensitive task of helping reunite families with the remains of their lost relatives and provide forensic evidence to support prosecutions of those who perpetrated mass murder. We have provided training for forensic and other experts who will carry out the exhumations and we are also providing judicial, prosecutor and investigator training for the Iraq Special Tribunal tasked with bringing to justice those responsible for mass killings in Iraq. So far one gravesite in Hatra has been partially exhumed to obtain forensic evidence for prosecutions and a second exhumation is planned soon. No official humanitarian exhumations have begun partly due to poor security but also because the infrastructure has not yet been established to manage this properly. We will continue to work with the Iraqi authorities and the United Nations to establish this infrastructure so that humanitarian exhumations can start as soon as possible.

Lesotho

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the withdrawal of the UK High Commissioner to Lesotho. [217774]

Mr. Mullin: Our high commissioner to Lesotho has not been withdrawn. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear in his written statement on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–41WS, we are making changes to our overseas network to reflect changing demands and challenges and to ensure the UK has a cost-effective and flexible network of overseas representation. This involves the closure of several diplomatic posts including the high commission in Maseru. We envisage the high commission closing around the end of 2005.

This is in no way a reflection on the current Government of Lesotho or on the quality of our bilateral relations. We will work with the Government of Lesotho to establish alternative forms of British representation, probably through an honorary consul in Maseru, supported by non-resident accreditation from Pretoria.

Ministerial Articles (Remuneration)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what financial remuneration has been received by Ministers in his Department for the writing of articles in foreign media since May 1997. [216063]

Mr. Straw: None.

Russia

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when *(a)* he and *(b)* a delegation from his Department last visited Russia. [217757]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* My last visit to Russia was from 6–7 July 2004, although I regularly see Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in the margins of international meetings and speak to him on the telephone.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers and staff frequently make working visits to Russia. The most recent was on 21–22 February, when my hon. Friend the Minister responsible for the UK's relations with Russia, my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Rammell) visited Moscow. In addition to his programme of meetings with the Russian Government, my hon. Friend launched a major UK-Russia education initiative for the North Caucasus and took part in a conference on "British Political Traditions and Russian Reform".

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to meet the Russian Foreign Minister. [217758]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* I plan to have a bilateral meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, in London on 1 March. Mr. Lavrov will attend "The London Meeting on Supporting the Palestinian Authority" the same day.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he and *(b)* other Ministers in his Department have plans to visit Russia. [217759]

Mr. Straw: I do not have any plans to visit Russia in the immediate future. However, I will be meeting Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in London on 1 March.

As the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Rammell) has visited Russia very recently, there are not yet plans for another visit by a Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he and *(b)* members of his Department plan to visit the Russian Economic Forum taking place in London from 10 to 12 April. [217760]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* At the moment I have no plans to attend the Russian Economic Forum, although the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will certainly be represented. In previous years Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers and officials have played an active part in the Forum, which is the most important annual UK-Russia economic event.

UN Committee on Torture

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the United Nations Committee on Torture's conclusions in relation to the UK's adherence to the Convention against Torture in Iraq and Afghanistan. [202531]

Mr. Rammell: The United Kingdom Government notes the Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee against Torture following its dialogue with the Committee on the UK's 4th Periodic Report on 17 and 18 November. The Government always takes seriously the recommendations made by any of the UN's treaty monitoring bodies.

The Government are studying the Committee's observations and recommendations in detail, including on the application of the UN Convention in Iraq and Afghanistan, and will respond to the Committee well within the period of one year set by the Committee.

HEALTH

Alcohol-related Hospital Admissions

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many admissions to *(a)* the Leicester Royal Infirmary accident and emergency department and *(b)* accident and emergency departments in England were found to be directly caused by alcohol consumption in each year since 1997. [217987]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available in the format requested. However, information for finished admission episodes for alcohol-related incidents is shown in the following tables.

Alcohol related accidents[1]: count of finished admission episodes for listed trusts, national health service hospitals in England—1996–97 to 2003–04

	Leicester Royal Infirmary NHS trust	*Total figures for Leicester Royal Infirmary NHS trust, Leicester general hospital NHS trust, Glenfield hospital NHS trust*	*University hospitals of Leicester NHS trust*
1996–97	77	80	—
1997–98	79	83	—
1998–99	140	144	—
1999–2000	85	89	—
2000–01	—	—	83
2001–02	—	—	75
2002–03	—	—	98
2003–04	—	—	207

[1] ICD—10 codes = "alcohol related accidents" as advised by NHSIA Clinical Coding Service Primary Diagnosis:
SOO—T74 Injuries (excludes certain cause of injury).
Secondary Diagnosis:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol.
R78.0—Finding of alcohol in blood.
X45—Alcohol poisoning and exposure to alcohol.
Y90—Evidence of alcohol involvement determined by alcohol level.
Y91—Evidence of alcohol involvement determined by level of intoxication.
Notes:
1. The Leicester Royal Infirmary ceased to exist as an independent trust in 2000–01, when it merged with Leicester general hospital NHS trust and Glenfield hospital NHS trust to form university hospitals of Leicester NHS trust. Figures have been provided in column one for Leicester Royal Infirmary NHS trust, and a total in column two in order to provide equivalent figures for the three trusts that now constitute the university hospitals of Leicester NHS trust column three.
2. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Alcohol related accidents[1]: count of finished admission episodes for listed trusts, national health service hospitals in England—1996–97 to 2003–04

	Finished admission episodes
1996–97	23,546
1997–98	25,294
1998–99	24,157
1999–2000	24,519
2000–01	23,570
2001–02	23,198
2002–03	22,787
2003–04	27,902

[1] ICD—10 codes = "alcohol related accidents" as advised by NHS Information Authority clinical coding service.
Primary Diagnosis:
SOO—T74 Injuries (excludes certain cause of injury).
Secondary Diagnosis:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol.
R78.0—Finding of alcohol in blood.
X45—Alcohol poisoning and exposure to alcohol.
Y90—Evidence of alcohol involvement determined by alcohol level.
Y91—Evidence of alcohol involvement determined by level of intoxication.
Notes:
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

Ambulance Services

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on ambulance services within the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [215143]

Dr. Ladyman: The London Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust covers the whole Greater London area.

The information requested is not held centrally. However, the table shows income figures for the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust for the past three years.

Income—London Ambulance Services NHS Trust

	Amount (£)
2001–02	135,775,000
2002–03	160,750,000
2003–04	168,508,000

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many ambulances are operational in Lancashire during the *(a)* day and *(b)* night; [216829]

(2) what the average time patients waited to be taken home by ambulance following discharge was at *(a)* Chorley Hospital and *(b)* Preston Hospital in the last period for which figures are available. [216892]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Child Mental Health

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialists in child mental health are employed in Lancashire Mental Health Trust. [216893]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health service: medical staff within the child and adolescent psychiatry specialty in Lancashire Care National Health Service Trust—as at 30 September 2003

	Number (headcount)
All staff	1
of which:	
Senior house officer	1

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Departmental Expenditure (Research and Development)

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* his Department's expenditure and *(b)* the expenditure of each agency for which his Department is responsible on research and development relating to UK university departments and research centres was in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [206997]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 15 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 139–42W.

Drug Misusers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many drug misusers were also diagnosed with mental illness in each year since 1986; and what proportion these figures represent of the total number of drug misusers in each year. [216156]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The data are not collected centrally.

Endometriosis

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been provided for research into endometriosis in each year since 1997–98. [216180]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

MRC expenditure in the seven years from 1997–98 on research into endometriosis is shown in the table.

	£ million
1997–98	1.7
1998–99	1.8
1999–2000	1.8
2000–01	1.2
2001–02	1.2
2002–03	1.0
2003–04	Not yet available

The MRC does not normally allocate funds to particular topics. Research proposals in all areas compete for the funding available. When appropriate, high quality research, in particular areas of strategic importance, may be given priority in competition for funds, but research excellence and importance to health continues to be the primary considerations in funding decisions. The MRC always welcomes high quality applications for support into any aspect of human health and these are judged in open competition with other demands on funding.

The Department funds research to support policy and to provide the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the national health service. The Department's national research programme has, since 1997, funded one project related to endometriosis at a cost, to 31 March 2004, of £320,000.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of completed and ongoing projects, including a number concerned with endometriosis, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Food Dyes

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence the Food Standards Agency has examined concerning the effect of azo dyes other than Sudan I in food. [217714]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Standards Agency has reviewed the available safety data on three other Sudan dyes (Sudan II, Sudan III and Sudan IV) and concluded that as with Sudan I that they should also be regarded as genotoxic carcinogens.

A number of other azo dyes are permitted for use as food colours in the European Union based on opinions on their safety delivered by independent experts on the Scientific Committee on Food. The safety of all permitted additives is kept under review. The European Commission has recently asked the European Food Safety Authority to re-evaluate the safety of all permitted food additives.

General Practitioners (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average number of people per general practitioner is in *(a)* Chorley constituency and *(b)* the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust. [216827]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not available relating to the Chorley constituency. Information relating to the Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust (PCT) is shown in the table.

Population per general medical practitioner (excluding retainers, registrars and locums), for Chorley and South Ribble PCT—as at 30 June 2004

Chorley and South Ribble 5F2	*Number (headcount)*
All general medical practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums)	115
Weighted population	201,241
Population per general medical practitioner (excluding retainers, registrars and locums)	1,750

Note:

All practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums) include general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (para. 52 SFA), PMS other and flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

Sources:

Department of Health GMS and PMS statistics.

Department of Health populations adjusted for age and need using the GMS non cash-limited component of the weighted capitation formula.

Health Service Expenditure

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much public funding has been spent on health in Morecambe and Lunesdale in each of the last 10 years. [216780]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Expenditure based on individual constituencies is not available, nor are data prior to 1996–97. The expenditure in Morecambe Bay Health Authority area and Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority area is shown in the table.

Expenditure in Morecambe Bay Health Authority and Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority

Morecambe Bay Health Authority area	*£000*
1996–97	202,763
1997–98	203,353
1998–99	253,162
1999–2000	327,800
2000–01	424,583
2001–02	555,771
2002–03	n/a
2003–04	n/a
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority area	
1996–97	n/a
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	n/a
1999–2000	n/a
2000–01	n/a
2001–02	n/a
2002–03	2,337,249
2003–04	2,421,861

Notes:

1. Expenditure is taken from audited health authority summarisation forms and primary care trust summarisation schedules, which are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. Figures are given in cash terms.
2. Allocations per weighted head of population provide a much more reliable measure to identify differences between funding of health authorities and primary care trusts.
3. Figures for 1996–97 to 2001–02 have been prepared using gross expenditure figures. Figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 have been adjusted to eliminate expenditure which would be double counted where an authority acts as a lead in commissioning healthcare or other services.
4. In many health authorities there are factors which distort the expenditure. These include:
the health authority acting in a lead capacity to commission healthcare or fund training on behalf of other health bodies; and asset revaluations in national health service trusts being funded through health authorities or primary care trusts.
Cumbria and Lancashire acting as paying authority for student bursaries.
5. For these reasons expenditure cannot be compared reliably between health authorities or between different years.

Sources:

1. Morecambe Bay Health Authority audited accounts 1996–97 and 1997–98.
2. Morecambe Bay Health Authority audited summarisation forms 1998–99 to 2001–02.
3. Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority audited summarisation forms 2002–03 and 2003–04.
4. Primary care trust audited summarisation schedules 2003–04 for bodies within the above health authority areas.

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average health expenditure per head of population in Rochdale constituency was in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [217369]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information requested on expenditure based on individual constituencies is not collected.

However, the expenditure per weighted head of population in Bury and Rochdale health authority in 1996–97 was £645.61 and in the Greater Manchester strategic health authority (SHA) area in 2003–04 £1,097.30.

Sources:

Bury and Rochdale Health Authority audited accounts 1996–97
Greater Manchester SHA audited summarisation forms 2003–04
Primary care trust audited summarisation schedules 2003–04 for bodies within the Greater Manchester area.
Weighted population figures 1996–97 and 2003–04.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to *(a)* Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Primary Care Trust and *(b)* Preston Primary Care Trust for treating AIDS patients was in the last year for which figures are available. [217476]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally. In line with our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", primary care trusts (PCTs) now control over 80 per cent., of the national health service budget and are responsible for planning and developing services according to the health needs of local people. In 2004–05, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT and Preston PCT received allocations of £114.1 million and £155 million respectively.

By 2007–08, these allocations will increase to £166.4 million and £207 million.

Mental Health

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in NHS hospitals in England have been under the care of *(a)* a mental illness consultant and *(b)* a learning disabilities consultant in each year since 1986. [216165]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the format requested. Information on the number of admissions to national health service hospitals under mental illness and learning disability specialties in each year since 1986 is shown in the table.

Admissions to NHS hospitals under mental illness and learning disability specialties, 1986–87 to 2003–04

	Mental illness	*Learning disability*
1986	197,250	40,060
1987–88	187,800	37,600
1988–89	190,600	36,800
1989–90	185,010	39,110
1990–91	188,310	48,360
1991–92	200,110	48,570
1992–93	209,730	51,410
1993–94	217,310	52,500
1994–95	216,550	53,990
1995–96	214,560	52,500
1996–97	210,320	53,200
1997–98	203,760	54,030
1998–99	198,640	44,580
1999–2000	195,320	37,920
2000–01	186,990	35,610
2001–02	182,220	38,200
2002–03[1]	174,450	35,180
2003–04[1]	162,250	28,820

[1] Figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 have not yet been adjusted for shortfalls in data.

Note:

Data for 1986 are for the calendar year. From 1987 to 1988, data are for financial years.
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
The columns in the table relate to patients who are admitted to hospital under mental illness and learning disability specialties.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have been detained under (i) section 2, (ii) section 3 and (iii) section 4 of the Mental Health Act 1983 in England in each year since 1986; and how many have been voluntarily detained as psychiatric in-patients in each year since 1986. [216175]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the requested format. Information on the number of detentions under sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Mental Health Act 1983 of patients, on admission and subsequent to admission in national health service facilities, including high security psychiatric hospitals, in England in each of the last 17 and eight years for which data are available is shown in table A. Information on the number of detentions under these sections of the Act of patients on admission and subsequent to admission in independent hospitals in England in each of the last eight years for which information is available is shown in table B. Information on the gender of patients detained subsequent to admission to hospital is not collected.

Table A: Number of detentions under the Mental Health Act 1983 of patients, on admission under Section 2, Section 3 and Section 4 and subsequent to admission in NHS facilities (including high security psychiatric hospitals), in England, 1987–88 to 2003–04

		Detentions on admission in NHS facilities						
		Male			Female			
	Total detentions (on admission and subsequent to admission) in NHS facilities	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Detentions subsequent to admission in NHS facilities
2003–04	31,852	6,908	4,437	865	6,742	3,798	718	8,384
2002–03	31,952	6,989	4,460	900	6,634	3,926	903	8,140
2001–02	32,082	6,530	4,272	1,059	6,497	3,877	976	8,871
2000–01	32,348	6,746	4,729	967	6,406	4,226	816	8,458
1999–2000	32,214	6,502	4,793	1,010	6,438	4,297	827	8,407
1998–99	32,398	6,632	4,657	937	6,568	4,434	752	8,418
1997–98	30,212	6,140	4,580	857	6,085	4,274	723	7,553
1996–97	28,022	5,652	4,402	788	5,432	4,077	694	6,977
1995–96	29,098	6,078	4,671	733	6,214	4,244	630	6,528
1994–95	28,918	6,376	4,188	726	6,472	4,143	685	6,328
1993–94	26,430	5,952	3,713	640	6,209	3,719	656	5,541
1992–93	24,350	5,451	3,108	633	5,963	3,243	604	5,348
1991–92	23,125	5,089	2,616	800	5,980	2,858	755	5,027
1990–91	20,786	4,504	1,881	687	5,639	2,168	799	5,108
1989–90	18,741	4,195	1,415	822	5,286	1,578	1,047	4,398
1988–89	18,910	4,010	1,312	879	5,416	1,517	1,139	4,637
1987–88	17,218	3,655	1,182	940	5,060	1,313	1,240	3,828

Notes:

1. A patient may be detained more than once.
2. Data on patients detained subsequent to admission were not collected in respect of high security psychiatric hospitals prior to 1996–97.
3. Data on patients detained subsequent to admission are not collected by gender.
4. Data on patients detained in 1986 were collected on a calendar year basis and therefore are not included in the table.
5. Detentions subsequent to admission include changes from Section 136 to Sections 2 and 3 and Informal to Sections 2 and 3.
6. Section 4 are emergency admissions therefore changes from Informal to Section 4 are not collected.

Table B: Number of detentions under the Mental Health Act 1983 of patients, on admission under Section 2, Section 3 and Section 4 and subsequent to admission in independent hospitals, in England, 1996–97 to 2003–04

		Detentions on admission in independent facilities						
		Male			Female			
	Total detentions (on admission and subsequent to admission) in independent facilities	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4	Detentions subsequent to admission in independent facilities
2003–04	1,253	262	395	1	198	257	6	134
2002–03	1,286	264	370	6	159	251	6	230
2001–02	1,680	329	476	11	244	370	9	241
2000–01	1,367	271	406	6	220	299	6	159
1999–2000	1,480	302	381	9	243	288	10	247
1998–99	1,289	261	313	12	193	248	18	244
1997–98	1,061	208	246	11	181	211	9	195
1996–97	941	166	198	15	156	214	24	168

Notes:

1. A patient may be detained more than once.
2. Data on patients detained subsequent to admission were not collected in respect of Independent hospitals prior to 1996–97.
3. Data on patients detained subsequent to admission are not collected by gender.
4. Detentions subsequent to admission include changes from Section 136 to Sections 2 and 3 and Informal to Sections 2 and 3.
5. Section 4 admissions are emergency admissions therefore changes from Informal to Section 4 are not collected.

Information on the number of admissions to NHS hospitals under mental illness and learning disability specialties since 1986 is shown in table C. This includes both voluntary and compulsory admissions. This information is not available for the independent sector.

	Mental illness	*Learning disability*
1986	197,250	40,060
1987–88	187,800	37,600
1988–89	190,600	36,800
1989–90	185,010	39,110
1990–91	188,310	48,360
1991–92	200,110	48,570
1992–93	209,730	51,410
1993–94	217,310	52,500
1994–95	216,550	53,990
1995–96	214,560	52,500
1996–97	210,320	53,200
1997–98	203,760	54,030
1998–99	198,640	44,580
1999–2000	195,320	37,920
2000–01	186,990	35,610
2001–02	182,220	38,200
2002–03[1]	174,450	35,180
2003–04[1]	162,250	28,820

[1] Figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 have not yet been adjusted for shortfalls in data.

Notes:

1. Data for 1986 is for the calendar year. From 1987 to 1988, data is for calendar years.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
3. The columns in the table relate to patients who are admitted to hospital under mental illness and learning disability specialities.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on new money for mental health in Lancashire; [217591]

(2) what funding has been allocated to health services in rural areas in South Lancashire in 2004–05. [217593]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Over 80 per cent. of national health service resources are allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs), which are responsible for commissioning health services to meet the needs of their local populations. The table shows allocations to PCTs in the Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area.

PCT resource revenue allocations: Cumbria and Lancashire SHA area

£ million

PCT	*Allocation*			
	2004–05	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Blackburn with Darwen	158,299	175,336	207,706	227,152
Blackpool	166,655	182,076	213,766	232,537
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	264,963	289,574	339,612	371,238
Carlisle and District	102,316	111,989	187,964	158,474
Chorley and South Ribble	171,696	188,153	242,737	266,714
Eden Valley	58,439	63,669	83,150	90,291
Fylde	63,955	69,679	87,963	95,208
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	103,859	114,072	152,279	166,452
Morecambe Bay	289,864	316,293	404,393	438,522
Preston	141,957	154,662	191,684	207,042
West Cumbria	122,798	133,788	171,945	188,244
West Lancashire	97,085	106,387	136,355	149,392
Wyre	112,822	123,458	158,954	174,770

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on funding for the Lancashire Mental Health Trust. [216894]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department does not provide funding directly to the Lancashire Care Trust. Resources are allocated to local primary care trusts to enable them to commission services to meet the health needs of their local population.

MRSA

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the percentage of patients in hospitals in each NHS Trust in Greater London who are infected with MRSA. [214796]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the percentage of patients in hospitals who are infected with methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is not collected centrally.

However, national and regional information on the mandatory MRSA surveillance system is published on the Health Protection Agency's website at www.hpa.org.uk/cdr/archives/2004/cdr2904.pdf.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the steps which are being taken to fight MRSA at *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Preston Hospital. [216205]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department takes the issue of healthcare associated infections very seriously and has told the national health service that infection control should be at the heart of good management and clinical practice.

The Department has set a target to reduce methicillin resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" by 50 per cent., by 2008 from an April 2005 baseline. The National Patient Safety Agency launched the first national hand hygiene campaign, "cleanyourhands" in September 2004. Commitments in the Chief Medical Officer's publication, "Winning Ways" and the Department's action plan, "Towards Cleaner Hospitals and Lower Rates of Infection" and the NHS's "Matron's Charter" have focused on evidence-based actions to reduce infections.

NHS Investment (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what capital investment was made in NHS facilities in Chorley in each year since 1998. [217592]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not available in the format requested. The table shows capital investment in national health service organisations that provide services in Chorley.

	Amount (£000)
1998–99	3,786
1999–2000	7,021
2000–01	7,403
2001–02	18,727
2002–03	19,544
2003–04	31,469

Notes:

1. The figures in the table do not include private finance initiative (PFI) expenditure where PFI costs are revenue expenditure in the books of NHS bodies.
2. Capital investment will vary between years owing to the investment decisions at individual NHS bodies.

Sources:

1. Audited summarisation schedules of Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (2002–03 and 2003–04) and its predecessor NHS trusts (1998–99 to 2001–02).
2. Audited summarisation schedules of Chorley and South Ribble Primary Care Trust 2001–02 to 2003–04.

Self-harm

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital admissions have been due to deliberate self-harm in *(a)* persons aged under 18 and *(b)* persons aged 18 years and over in each year since 1986. [216168]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not centrally available. The Department collects information on numbers of finished consultant episodes of people who have been admitted in national health service hospitals with a primary diagnosis of injury and poisoning. However, it is not possible to ascertain the number of admissions due to deliberate self harm.

As part of the implementation of the national suicide prevention strategy, three centres have been established to monitor deliberate self-harm and provide accurate data on national trends and patterns to help inform suicide prevention interventions and detect changing patterns or local variations.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Beneficial Ownership

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on progress with the review of beneficial ownership of land. [217446]

Mr. Lammy: The report on Land Registry's Quinquennial Review, published in June 2001, recommended that consideration be given to including details of the beneficial or true ownership of land on the land register for England and Wales. In response to a previous question from my right hon. Friend on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 217W, I announced that the planned consultation between Land Registry, the then Lord Chancellor's Department and other Government departments would be deferred pending a review of the timing of the several consultations to be carried out by Land Registry.

Following completion of this review in summer 2004, it was agreed that internal consultation with other interested Government departments should proceed with a view to deciding whether the recommendation warrants being taken forward to a public consultation. This internal consultation is still on-going. No time limit has been set for final decisions to be made although I can confirm that they will be announced to Parliament in due course.

European Convention on Human Rights

Adam Price: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the United Kingdom Government plans to ratify the Seventh Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights. [218681]

Mr. Lammy: The Government will be in a position to ratify this Protocol when legislation revoking some obsolete family law provisions has been passed. The Government are awaiting a suitable legislative vehicle to achieve that.

Iraq

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Lord Chancellor was involved in *(a)* framing, *(b)* drafting and *(c)* drawing up the parliamentary answer given by the Attorney-General on 17 March 2003 on Iraq. [218548]

Mr. Leslie: The Lord Chancellor, the Lord Falconer of Thoroton had no role in framing, drafting or drawing up the answer.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department and its predecessors; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215838]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Cleaning

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the costs of cleaning the Department and its predecessors were in each year since 1997. [213834]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established in May 2002, since when the following has been spent on office cleaning in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (C).

	£
May 2002-March 2003	765,200
April 2003-March 2004	707,600

These figures do not include VAT or any sums recovered from other Government Departments, but do include consumable items such as toilet paper, soap, etc. The figures include all internal cleaning and cleaning of some external windows where it has not been possible to identify this as a separate cost.

The cost of cleaning the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's agencies in the same period was:

	£
May 2002-March 2003	600,000
April 2003-March 2004	598,500

These figures include the Rent Service, which was an agency of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister during the period covered. It transferred to the Department of Work and Pensions on 1 April 2004. The figures do not include the Fire Service College, where the internal cleaning costs cannot be separated from the "housekeeping" costs attributed to student occupation.

This answer does not include the buildings occupied by Government offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

The costs for predecessor Departments are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate the total council tax revenue raised by local authorities from charging on empty properties in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05. [218677]

Mr. Raynsford: It is provisionally estimated that just over £200 million is being raised by local authorities from charging council tax on long-term empty homes in 2004–05. Homes that have been empty for less than six months are exempt from council tax.

Corresponding estimates for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are not available as information on empty homes collected for those years did not include a breakdown by council tax band, and estimates for the total amount collected are dependent on this breakdown.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of total council tax revenue which will be raised by local authorities for charging on second homes in 2005–06. [218879]

Mr. Raynsford: None. Information relating to council taxes and second homes in 2005–06 is not yet available.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the annual revenue grant increase was for Worcester city council in each year from 1992–93 to 2004–05 in *(a)* real and *(b)* cash terms. [213456]

Mr. Raynsford: The changes in revenue grant for Worcester city council in each year from 1993–94 to 2004–05 in *(a)* real and *(b)* cash terms are tabled as follows.

Changes in revenue grant for Worcester city council

	Cash £000	Real terms at 2004–05 prices	Cash % change	Real term % change
1993–94	5,710	7,484	—	—
1994–95	6,285	8,120	10.1	8.5
1995–96	6,271	7,873	-0.2	-3.0
1996–97	6,329	7,688	0.9	-2.3
1997–98	6,186	7,327	-2.3	-4.7

Changes in revenue grant for Worcester city council

	Cash £000	Real terms at 2004–05 prices	Cash % change	Real term % change
1998–99	6,595	7,592	6.6	3.6
1999–2000	6,686	7,533	1.4	-0.8
2000–01	6,920	7,707	3.5	2.3
2001–02	7,130	7,744	3.0	0.5
2002–03	7,281	7,646	2.1	-1.3
2003–04	7,387	7,545	1.5	-1.3
2004–05	8,222	8,222	11.3	9.0

The cash figures have been deflated using the GDP deflator. Changes between years are not directly comparable because they do not take account of changes in function or funding.

The data are as supplied by the local authority and for 2003–04 and 2004–05 are budget data what the authority anticipate they will be receiving. Data for 1992–93 are not available. The budget data for 2004–05 include a large amount for "Planning developments", which will be funded by "special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance".

Revenue grants include special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, SSA reduction grant, Revenue Support grant, Central Support Protection grant and Redistributed Non-domestic rates.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213629]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established in May 2002. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (C) has two staff canteens and one bar, with the latter run by the sports and social club (SPARTA). None of these receive any sponsorship and they are provided at no cost to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Agencies provide two staff canteens, of which only the facility at the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol receives any sponsorship. The costs for the Planning Inspectorate facility are:

£

	Running cost	Staffing cost	Supply cost	Total cost
May 2002-March 2003	55,520	0	0	55,520
April 2003-March 2004	48,174	0	0	48,174

These figures are exclusive of VAT, and include subsidies paid to contractors. The figures do not include sums recovered from other Government Departments.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Agencies provide three bars which are at the Fire Service College and are for the use of those attending residential courses. None of these receives any sponsorship and they are provided at no cost to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

This answer does not include the buildings occupied by Government Offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on postage by the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [215030]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established in May 2002. Since that date the following has been spent on postage in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (C).

	£
May 2002-March 2003	297,846
April 2003-March 2004	300,713

In addition the following has been spent by the Office Deputy Prime Minister's agencies, mainly by the Planning Inspectorate and by the Rent Service (which was an agency of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister during the period in question).

	£
May 2002-March 2003	667,605
Apr 2003-March 2004	649,074

These figures do not include VAT (where levied) or amounts recovered from other Government Departments. Postage includes franked or stamped items dispatched by Royal Mail or alternative provider, but not items dispatched by inter-departmental services (IDS), courier and inter-office vans. The figure for agencies includes a parcel service at the Fire Service College.

It is the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policy to dispatch mail by second class post, unless otherwise instructed by the originator.

This answer does not include the buildings occupied by Government offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

The costs of postage for predecessor Departments are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215079]

Yvette Cooper: The cost of producing an Office of the Deputy Prime Minister staff identity pass issued for long-term use in its headquarters buildings is £13.08. This includes materials, printing costs and staff costs for administration.

Identity passes may need to be replaced for a variety of reasons including loss, theft, damage or change of name. Until April 2004, when procedures for issuing passes were changed, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister did not, as standard practice, record the reasons for the replacement of an identity pass. It is thus not possible to say how many were lost or stolen in each year. Data are only available for those that were reported .

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. The number of passes that were reported lost or stolen in each year since then are shown in the following table, together with the total number of replacement passes issued.

Period	*Replacement passes issued*	*Passes recorded lost*	*Passes recorded stolen*
1 June 2002–31 December 2002	68	0	1
2003	167	0	2
2004	143	32	7

Procedures are in place to ensure that electronic passes are deactivated as soon as their loss is reported. In addition, pass designs do not identify the building or organisation.

This answer does not include passes for buildings occupied by Government offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by his Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [202464]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in May 2002. This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Fire Services

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultation his Department has had with the West Midlands Fire Authority on proposed changes to night-time cover in the West Midlands region. [217691]

Mr. Raynsford: As was made clear in the debate on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 55WH, the introduction of Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs) in April 2003 allows fire and rescue authorities to target resources to address local risk, as well as to make the most effective use of their resources in preventing fires. Responsibility for the preparation of IRMPs lies with each individual Fire and Rescue Authority, having regard to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister.

As well as setting out general principles and guidance, the National Framework makes it clear that each Fire and Rescue Authority should consult with interested parties in its area when preparing its IRMPs. The West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service has issued its proposal for the period April 2005 to March 2006, "Your Safety our Priority" for consultation. There is no requirement or expectation for consultation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of IRMPs.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has been able to provide the information on the location of the South West Regional Control Centre and related property issues requested by the Head of Legal Services of the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [217791]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister responded to the request for information from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services of the Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Authority on 3 February 2005 in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. There was no request for information on the location of the South West Regional Control Centre.

Planning

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many appeals are awaiting resolution at the Planning Inspectorate. [218005]

Keith Hill: The information requested is tabled as follows. It gives the number of appeals awaiting resolution at the Planning Inspectorate as at 23 February 2005 by appeal type and procedure.

Appeal procedure	*Planning appeals*	*Enforcement appeals*	*Planning—Listed Building and Conservation Area appeals*	*Enforcement—Listed Building and Conservation Area appeals*
Written representation	10,189	907	401	78
Hearing	2,891	446	170	23
Inquiry	1,512	727	119	15
Procedure not as yet confirmed	136	125	3	7

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by his Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215802]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 21 February 2005 by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, *Official Report*, column 75W.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) who will manage education at asylum accommodation centres; [211215]

(2) who will be responsible for providing education facilities at asylum accommodation centres; and who will be responsible for making decisions on provision. [211211]

Mr. Browne: These will be matters for the contractors. The contract for the Bicester accommodation centre requires GSL to provide a number of services including the provision of on site education which mirrors that provided in mainstream education.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken to remove individuals after all appeals to stay in the UK have been exhausted is. [211599]

Mr. Browne: Information about the average time taken to remove individuals after appeals to stay in the UK have been exhausted is not available for all case types.

However, management information indicates that the average time taken to remove individuals who have exhausted all rights to appeal following an unsuccessful asylum claim is approximately 20 months. This figure relates to the period January to December 2004.

This information has not been treated as quality assured and should be treated as provisional management information only.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of supporting asylum seekers awaiting a decision on whether they have a right to remain in the UK was in the latest year for which figures are available; and how many asylum seekers who have been refused permission to remain in the UK have not been removed from the country *(a)* because they are awaiting removal and *(b)* because they cannot be traced. [213491]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* In 2003–04 the cost of providing asylum support was £1,008 million. This figure includes the costs of supporting:

those awaiting a decision on their claim for asylum;

asylum seeking families who have received a final negative decision on their claim but who are still eligible to receive support; and

other unsuccessful asylum seekers who are receiving support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

It is not possible to readily identify the costs of providing support to families and those receiving support under section 4 from the total costs.

Reliable information on the total number of asylum seekers who have been refused permission to remain in the UK and have not been removed, is not available, partly because some applicants may leave the United Kingdom without informing the Immigration Service.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers there are in North Durham. [214676]

Mr. Browne: Reliable information on the number of failed asylum seekers in North Durham is not available, partly because some applicants may leave the United Kingdom without informing the Immigration Service.

Biometric Data

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government's plans for the storage of biometric data on *(a)* passports and *(b)* associated databases exceed the requirements of (i) plans for the harmonisation of biometric storage on European passports recently agreed by the General Affairs Council of the European Union and (ii) plans agreed through the International Civil Aviation Organisation. [217617]

Mr. Browne: The current plan in respect of passports is that the new ePassport will store a facial image biometric contained in a chip. This will not exceed the requirements of the EU standards set out in the recently adopted Regulation on security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents (15152/04). The inclusion of a facial biometric is also in accordance with the International Civil Aviation Organisation standard.

The biometric data will be held in a database used by current UKPS business processes and will be consistent with the data to be held in the new ePassport.

Community Support Officers (Huddersfield)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, on the effects on Huddersfield of the Community Support Officer Scheme, with particular reference to *(a)* the number of officers and *(b)* their impact. [217462]

Ms Blears: I am informed by the Chief Constable, Mr. Colin Cramphorn, that on 1 February the Kirklees Area had 39 Community Support Officers. Of that number 26 are deployed to Huddersfield Division, which includes four Community Support Officers allocated to the District Antisocial Behaviour Unit that works across the Huddersfield and Dewsbury Divisions.

The West Yorkshire Police has not carried out any analysis of the impact of the introduction of Community Support Officers in Huddersfield. However, I am informed that across Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Community Support Officers are achieving 79 per cent. of their duty time on visible patrol duties. An independent analysis has been undertaken by the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Leeds, "Patrolling with a Purpose", in relation to the impact of the introduction of Community Support Officers in Leeds and Bradford and was published in July 2004.

Private Finance Initiative (Consultant Costs)

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total external spend by his Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200774]

Fiona Mactaggart: From the best information available, the tables provide the details requested.

2 Marsham street

	2002-04
Total external spend on consultants (£)	63,500
Number of full-time equivalent consultants employed	0
Number of billed consultancy days	[1]44.5
Implied average cost of each PFI consultant (£)	31,750
Number of consultancy firms used	2

[1] Based on 7.5 hrs a day.

Heat energy services in prisons

	2002-03	2003-04
Total external spend on consultants (£)	220,304.97	72,338.92
Number of full-time equivalent consultants employed	0.75	0.25
Number of billed consultancy days	700	261
Implied average cost of each PFI consultant (£)	19,550	7,713
Number of consultancy firms used	11	4

Quantum

	2002-03	2003-04
Total external spend on consultants (£)	61,650	9,412
Number of full-time equivalent consultants employed	0.1	0.0
Number of billed consultancy days	23.1	3.5
Implied average cost of each PFI consultant (£)	2,670/day	2,670/day
Number of consultancy firms used	1	1

Youth Justice Board

	2002-03	2003-04
Total external spend on consultants (£)	1,088,333	754,883
Number of full-time equivalent consultants employed	—	—
Number of billed consultancy days	—	—
Implied average cost of each PFI consultant (£)	—	—
Number of consultancy firms used	12	11

DCMF prisons

	2002-03	2003-04
Total external spend on consultants (£)	499,344	245,897
Number of full-time equivalent consultants employed	—	—
Number of billed consultancy days	—	—
Implied average cost of each PFI consultant (£)	—	—
Number of consultancy firms used	8	3

Departmental Policies

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Havant constituency, the effects on Havant of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216021]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Havant constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Hampshire police force increased by 328 from 3,452 to 3,780. Following the Government's introduction of Community Support

Officers (CSOs) in 2002, Hampshire has been allocated funds to recruit 25 CSOs in the first quarter of 2005 to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour on Hampshire streets. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Hampshire police force has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 19 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 25 per cent.

Hampshire Police will receive £197.7 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 3.75 per cent. (£7.2 million) over 2004–05. Hampshire benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the force would have received £4.9 million less. General grants funding to Hampshire has increased by 31.5 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Hampshire will also receive around £16 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Four CCTV projects in the Havant CDRP area received a total of £235,000 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £569,288 has been allocated to Havant CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.57 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the South East for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Havant set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Havant a total of 26 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 22 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and their policy is set out in the 10-year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Havant has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Hampshire Drug Action Team amounted to £5.48 million, rising to £6.47 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Havant constituency can be obtained from the Hampshire Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the futurebuilders fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

This year, 2005, is the year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org.

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Hull,

North constituency, the effects on Hull, North of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211803]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Hull, North constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Humberside police force increased by 186 from 2,045 to 2,231. Following the Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002, Humberside is in the process of recruiting 22 CSOs to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour on Humberside streets. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Humberside has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 27 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 18 per cent.

Humberside police force will receive £118.9 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 3.75 per cent. (£4.3 million) on 2004–05. Humberside benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the force would have received £0.7 million less. Humberside also gains around £0.2 million from the amending report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 3.95 per cent. General grants funding to Humberside has increased by 27 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Humberside will also receive around £8 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Three CCTV projects in the City of Kingston-upon-Hull CDRP area received a total of £5.75 million from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 crime and disorder reduction partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £2.2 million has been allocated to City of Kingston upon Hull CDRP under these initiatives. A further £1.8 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office regional director in Yorkshire and Humber for CDRP capacity building across the region.

The Government recognise the important part played by communities in addressing the wider issue of the underlying gun culture. The Government's Connected Fund, launched in May 2004, is a non-bureaucratic funding stream designed to assist small local community projects across England, working to tackle gun crime and related issues. £515,000 has been given nationally so far. In Hull, the fund has paid for a series of workshops for eight to 13-year-olds, including talks from police about the negative impact of guns.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Kingston upon Hull a total of 61 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of February 2005. Hull is also one of 50 communities across the country that have been designated as 'Together Action Areas' and are set to get extra help to tackle antisocial behaviour. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and their policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Kingston upon Hull has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Kingston upon Hull Drug Action Team amounted to £3.5 million, rising to £4.5 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Kingston upon Hull constituency can be obtained from the Kingston upon Hull Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local

people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

Through the Government's Time Limited Development Fund (TLDF), Willow—The North Hull Women's Centre, which covers one of the most deprived areas in Hull, has received £93,248. The Willow Centre works to increase women's self esteem, improve skills and employment prospects. The TLDF has helped to increase the numbers of volunteers recruited and improve the training and support given (both within Willow and for outside organisations). For the first two years of the grant, volunteers have numbered 110.

This year, 2005, is the year of the volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org.

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Stourbridge constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on Stourbridge constituency. [216851]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government has put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Stourbridge constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the West Midlands Police Force increased by 895 from 7,113 to 8,008. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 134 CSOs on West Midlands streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, West Midlands has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 35 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 28 per cent.

West Midlands Police Force is receiving £426.5 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 6.81 per cent. (£27.2 million) over this year. West Midlands also gains around £0.8 million from the Amending Report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 7.0 per cent. General grants funding to West Midlands has increased by 34 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, West Midlands will also receive around £29 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Four CCTV projects in the Dudley CDRP area (which includes Stourbridge) received a total of £286,459 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £1.6 million has been allocated to the Dudley CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.03 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the West Midlands for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Dudley set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Dudley CDRP a total of 29 antisocial behaviour orders are currently in force as of 9 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and its policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government has invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focussing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Dudley has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Dudley Drug Action Team amounted to £1.9 million, rising to £2.4 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Stourbridge constituency can be obtained from the Dudley Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. For 2003–04 to 2005–06 Dudley Race Equality council is receiving a £291,431 Connecting Communities Grant from the Home Office to improve the access of black and ethnic minority people to jobs and services.

Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk

This year, 2005, is the year of the volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Woodspring constituency, the effects on Woodspring of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215979]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Woodspring constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Avon and Somerset police force increased by 428 from 2,989 to 3,417. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 99 CSOs on Avon and Somerset streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Avon and Somerset has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 33 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 30 per cent.

Avon and Somerset police force will receive £170 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 4.8 per cent. (£7.8 million) over 2004–05. General grants funding to Avon and Somerset has increased by 26.1 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Avon and Somerset will also receive around £17.7 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. One CCTV project in the North Somerset CDRP area (which includes Woodspring constituency) received a total of £64,000 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £890,000 has been allocated to North Somerset CDRP under these initiatives. A further £1.98 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the South West for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in North Somerset set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In North Somerset a total of 20 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and their policy is set out in the 10-year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. North Somerset has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for North Somerset Drug Action Team amounted to £793,149 rising to £976,550 in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Woodspring constituency can be obtained from the North Somerset Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the futurebuilders fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

This year, 2005, is the year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org.

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207684]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the number and type of electronic devices owned by the Department is not held centrally and could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases have been brought against his Department under the Human Rights Act 1998; and what the cost has been in *(a)* legal fees to defend cases and *(b)* compensation payments. [200772]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to provide a detailed answer without incurring disproportionate expense. The Home Office deals with over 200 judicial review cases a month.

Many applicants rely on the Human Rights Act in addition to their other claims.

Our records do not distinguish cases where the Human Rights Act is invoked from cases where it is not. Consequently we are not able to attribute particular fees or costs to such cases.

International Student Visas

Mr. Plaskitt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average administration cost of granting an extension to an international student visa is. [218601]

Mr. Browne: The costs of processing student leave to remain applications are based on approved Treasury cost recovery guidelines.

This means taking the full cost of providing the leave to remain service, including overheads, and dividing it by the volume of applications in order to arrive at a fee per application.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate has been made of the effect on the number of civil service posts of the introduction of the National Offender Management Service. [201676]

Paul Goggins: 12 new posts have been created to manage the change programme and 10 new Regional Offender Managers have been appointed. The new National Offender Management Service (NOMS) headquarters is being redesigned by April 2005.

Although there may be temporary increases in civil service posts over the next two years, NOMS remains committed to reducing civil service posts by almost 900 to reach a target of 2,540 posts by March 2007. To date, 50 per cent. of this reduction has been achieved.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an independent Chair will be appointed for each regional offender management area in England and Wales. [204964]

Paul Goggins: There are no such plans.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how duplication in terms of the provision of services and policies will be avoided following the creation of two arrangements for the employment of staff for the Probation Service under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [204972]

Paul Goggins: No decision has yet been taken on the future employment status of offender managers or those providing interventions. In the fully developed National Offender Management Service model, it is expected that providers of services to offenders will be drawn from the public sector, private sector and the voluntary and community sector. Core policies and commissioning standards will be set centrally.

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultation on the role of the National Offender Management Service with trade unions he plans to undertake. [216371]

Paul Goggins: Consultation with trade unions on the role of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is taking place within the NOMS Joint Consultative Council (JCC). Three JCC meetings have taken place since November 2004 and a programme of meetings has been arranged for 2005.

Consultation is taking place separately with employee representative bodies through the established Her Majesty's Prison Service, Central Home Office and Probation Service consultative arrangements.

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the National Offender Management Service Programme Board last met; and what plans it has to meet. [216408]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Programme Board met on 15 February 2005 and is scheduled to meet every fortnight.

Northamptonshire Police

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers, *(b)* community support officers and *(c)* wardens were employed by Northamptonshire police in (i) 1997–98 and (ii) 2003–04. [211283]

Ms Blears: There were 1,169 police officers in Northamptonshire police at the end of March 1998 and 1,239 at the end of March 2004.

Community Support Officers (CSOs) were introduced by the Police Reform Act 2002 and were not recruited by Northamptonshire police before March 2003. At the end of March 2004 there were 12 CSOs in the force.

Wardens are generally employed by local authorities and not by police authorities. I am told that the Northamptonshire police authority is currently providing funding towards the employment of two wardens in Northampton as part of the Crime and Antisocial Partnerships Initiative.

People Trafficking

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 4 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1153W, on people trafficking, what administrative procedures would need to be put in place to collect this information; and if he will take the necessary steps to collect it. [216456]

Mr. Browne: In order to provide the requested information, we would need to set in place administrative and staffing arrangements to enable us to conduct a review of all relevant individual case files for the period. This would represent a disproportionate cost. I regret therefore that I will not be able to put these procedures in place.

Pieter Minnard

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what investigations have been conducted into the decision to transfer Pieter Minnard to Leyhill open prison. [216571]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service has looked into the circumstances surrounding Mr. Minnard's transfer to Leyhill open prison. Mr. Minnard received an appropriate risk assessment and was found to meet the criteria for open conditions before his transfer to Leyhill prison.

Police

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the chief constable of the Essex constabulary about plans to merge the Southend and Rayleigh police divisions; and if he will make a statement. [217155]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 21 February 2005]*: Deployment of police resources and the structural configuration to support policing issues is an operational matter and therefore falls firmly within the remit of the chief constable. This is not therefore an issue which the Secretary of State would normally involve himself.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much total Government grant per capita was given to each police force in England in each year since 1997. [207337]

Ms Blears: The information is set out in the table.

Government funding for police authorities is chiefly allocated using a funding formula that distribute resources on the basis of relative policing need. The formula is currently being reviewed to ensure it reflects modern policing needs. Funding is not, and never has been, distributed on a per capita basis.

Government grant funding[1] per head of population[2]

£

Force	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Avon and Somerset	94.52	96.85	97.60	101.29	112.31	110.22	117.39	120.77
Bedfordshire[3]	95.82	96.93	95.42	99.91	107.94	115.13	117.69	120.44
Cambridgeshire	84.24	87.30	89.35	92.80	103.72	100.60	111.81	116.00
Cheshire	88.91	91.34	95.57	100.23	106.51	108.87	120.31	120.39
Cleveland	122.58	132.06	134.19	140.03	149.03	158.15	168.44	175.11
Cumbria	105.43	106.94	108.60	113.77	123.88	125.25	130.76	135.46
Derbyshire	88.59	91.52	94.26	95.21	106.24	105.08	112.59	116.26
Devon and Cornwall	88.03	94.04	96.17	100.10	109.74	109.40	113.28	116.67
Dorset	81.70	85.94	88.70	87.33	94.50	93.65	98.53	100.74
Durham	108.52	117.57	123.08	129.27	137.27	138.87	149.86	154.87
Dyfed-Powys	89.53	91.34	91.32	96.95	110.74	111.64	114.57	118.27
Essex[3]	90.59	88.26	90.52	92.21	98.03	101.92	106.25	108.17
Gloucestershire	93.57	94.74	94.35	97.93	107.57	107.25	112 38	115.68
Greater Manchester	125.21	129.03	132.87	137.74	153.33	152.00	170.22	173.81
Gwent	102.95	106.10	111.61	115.73	126.18	129.56	138.57	142.41
Hampshire[3]	87.91	92.20	94.15	97.52	104.24	107.44	117.24	116.75
Hertfordshire3	90.49	91.73	97.52	94.07	101.20	101.12	106.09	109.56
Humberside	108.87	114.29	114.32	120.40	129.41	128.70	139.33	143.30
Kent[3]	96.07	99.44	100.23	105.36	114.39	115.83	127.30	126.86
Lancashire	104.63	109.53	110.95	118.32	130.73	127.88	137.07	141.25
Leicestershire	92.34	93.20	97.15	100.26	110.95	109.14	117.60	120.66
Lincolnshire	88.35	84.49	88.14	94.19	97.01	103.85	103.26	105.18
Merseyside	150.14	152.59	154.54	160.78	170.52	180.66	195.25	201.12
Metropolitan[3]	211.79	212.42	213.96	227.70	243.70	261.46	282.32	286.29
Norfolk	91.37	91.84	90.65	95.41	103.19	106.33	115.66	115.34
Northamptonshire	87.97	90.37	91.62	96.41	102.33	102.91	113.48	112.38
Northumbria	126.11	134.98	138.05	140.95	155.45	153.22	166.88	174.22
North Wales	95.01	96.33	98.35	102.77	112.54	119.44	123.90	126.40
North Yorkshire	85.44	90.25	89.77	90.97	101.44	98.66	103.85	106.81
Nottinghamshire	106.07	108.74	114.03	116.53	120.55	127.38	133.93	138.00
South Wales	115.87	117.36	119.86	123.00	132.89	135.82	141.69	151.08
South Yorkshire	111.96	115.56	120.09	124.84	131.32	136.97	151.74	153.79
Staffordshire	95.05	94.50	94.51	96.45	102.10	104.48	114.46	115.22
Suffolk	81.66	84.42	89.14	91.93	102.94	100.07	107.25	109.52
Surrey[3]	101.66	89.09	98.45	89.29	86.54	85.61	93.18	94.02
Sussex[3]	90.44	93.48	95.87	96.93	102.97	107.57	113.67	116.26
Thames Valley[3]	85.97	89.94	90.48	93.06	103.42	104.22	109.72	113.04
Warwickshire	86.87	86.31	87.33	96.42	115.96	101.02	110.78	108.99
West Mercia	82.23	82.82	86.62	91.42	108.57	97.88	101.72	103.67
West Midlands	122.96	129.04	132.80	138.23	146.43	151.75	171.37	171.89
West Yorkshire	115.77	119.90	122.66	129.50	136.76	142.78	152.91	157.36
Wiltshire	90.79	91.08	91.08	95.26	103.05	102.92	106.93	109.35

[1] Government funding includes general grant (Home Office police grant, ODPM/Welsh Assembly Government Revenue Support Grant and National Non-Domestic Rates). It also includes specific grants: Crime Fighting Fund, Rural Policing Fund, Basic Command Unit funding, Community Support Officer funding (including, for 2004–05, funding from Round 1 of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund), Airwave, DNA Expansion Programme, Counter Terrorism funding (MPS only), Street Crime Initiative, Special Priority Payments and capital grants.

[2] Source for resident population figures: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Welsh Assembly Government as used in the calculation of the police funding settlements.

[3] The Home Office also funds 75 per cent. of the cost of the London and south-east allowances for all qualifying officers. These figures are not included within the totals.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total number of police force staff based in Milton Keynes was in each year since 1997. [217693]

Ms Blears: Information on police personnel strength at Basic Command Unit (BCD) level is collected annually and reflects the position at the end of March. Information on BCU strength for police (support) staff has only been available from March 2003 and is set out in the table. The deployment of police staff to BCUs is a matter for the Chief Constable (Mr. Peter Neyroud QPM).

Milton Keynes (D) Division

As at 31 March	Number of police officers
2003	98
2004	105

Source:
Home Office Research, Development & Statistics Directorate

Prisons

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women gave birth in prison in each year since 1997. [206289]

Paul Goggins: Full information is not available for the whole period, but the available data show that in 2004,114 women gave birth while serving a prison sentence. Further information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* actions and *(b)* adjustments have been made by the Prison Service Headquarters to reduce the Prison Service overspend in the current financial year; and what (i) efficiencies and (ii) savings have resulted. [214840]

Paul Goggins: In December 2004 the Director General of the Prison Service wrote to all senior managers requesting that any discretionary spending be avoided, and that recruitment be restricted to whatever is essential to maintain a safe and secure operation of prisons or the basic operation of the Service. This was done with the intention of reducing expenditure in order to ensure that the Prison Service did not exceed its delegated budget in the current financial year.

Each subsequent forecast of the spend for the year has indicated a lower overspend and the Service believes that final outturn will be close to budget.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of prisoners who declared themselves as Muslims in each of the last five years were *(a)* British nationals and *(b)* foreign nationals. [214999]

Paul Goggins: The nationality of Muslim prisoners received into prison establishments in each of the last five years, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system, is provided in the table.

First receptions of Muslims to prison establishments, by nationality—England and Wales 2000–04

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004[1]
All	7,775	9,137	9,258	9,633	9,603
British nationals	4,617	5,038	5,549	5,411	5,269
Foreign nationals	2,992	3,866	3,481	3,954	4,155
Not recorded	166	233	228	268	179

[1] Information for 2004 is to 30 November only

Towards the end of 2004 the information on the religious affiliation of prisoners held on the central Prison Service IT system was comprehensively refreshed with updated information contained within the local IT systems in each prison establishment. This update had little impact on the overall population figures by religious group for most groups. However, it is estimated that the population of prisoners whose recorded religion was Buddhism or Muslim increased by around 1 per cent. each because of this data cleansing exercise.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners declared themselves to be of a particular religion when they entered prison in each of the last five years, broken down by religion. [215000]

Paul Goggins: The religious affiliation recorded on the prison establishments IT system for prisoners first received into prison establishments in each of the last five years are shown in the table.

First receptions to prison establishments, by religion England and Wales, 2000–04

	2000	2001	2002	2003	[1]2004
All first receptions	128,866	130,934	135,820	135,042	123,849
All Christian	70,971	70,620	73,471	72,636	62,606
Anglican	46,553	45,237	47,313	45,718	38,328
Free Church	1,427	1,746	1,685	1,599	1,312
Roman Catholic	21,035	21,136	22,066	22,182	19,953
Other Christian	1,956	2,501	2,407	3,137	3,013
Buddhist	310	332	418	492	534
Hindu	567	710	669	675	593
Jewish	235	196	223	222	188
Muslim	7,775	9,137	9,258	9,633	9,603
Sikh	913	940	909	913	879
Other non-Christian	290	283	364	418	515
Non-recognised	205	259	307	313	321
No religion	47,600	48,457	50,201	49,740	48,610

[1] information for 2004 is to 30 November only

Note:
Towards the end of 2004 the information on the religious affiliation of prisoners held on the central Prison Service IT system was comprehensively refreshed with updated information contained within the local IT systems in each prison establishment.
This update had little impact on the overall population figures by religious group for most groups. However, it is estimated that the population of prisoners whose recorded religion was Buddhism or Muslim increased by around one per cent each because of this data cleansing exercise.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what expenditure was made by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible on research projects by companies with headquarters in (i) the UK, (ii) other EU member states and (iii) non-EU states in each year since 2001–02. [206990]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to provide the information requested in respect of the core Home Office and its agencies. While it is possible to provide total expenditure on third party suppliers an analysis by

supplier or category of supplier cannot be provided without additional investigation and at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office currently sponsors the following agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau
Probation Service
Prison Service
United Kingdom Passport Service

Only the Core Home Office and Passport Service have recorded expenditure on Research and Development within the period covered by the question and these figures have been provided in response to separate questions.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what expenditure *(a)* his Department and *(b)* agencies for which his Department is responsible have made on research and development by private sector companies in each financial year since 2001–02. [206993]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to provide the information requested in respect of the core Home Office and its agencies. While it is possible to provide total expenditure on third party suppliers an analysis by supplier or category of supplier cannot be provided without additional investigation and at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office currently sponsors the following agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau
Probation Service
Prison Service
United Kingdom Passport Service

Only the Core Home Office and Passport Service have recorded expenditure on Research and Development within the period covered by the question and these figures have been provided in response to separate questions.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency for which his Department is responsible spent on research and development with overseas Government laboratories or research establishments, including collaborative Government funded laboratories and research establishments, in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [207002]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to provide the information requested in respect of the core Home Office and its agencies. While it is possible to provide total expenditure on third party suppliers an analysis by supplier or category of supplier cannot be provided without additional investigation and at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office currently sponsors the following agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau
Probation Service
Prison Service
United Kingdom Passport Service

Only the Core Home Office and Passport Service have recorded expenditure on Research and Development within the period covered by the question and these figures have been provided in response to separate questions.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what expenditure was made by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* agencies for which the Department is responsible on research and development projects undertaken by organisations other than university departments, Government-funded research establishments and private sector companies in each year since 2001–02. [207014]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office currently sponsors the following agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau
Probation Service
Prison Service
United Kingdom Passport Service

Only the Core Home Office and Passport Service have recorded expenditure on Research and Development within the period covered by the question and these figures have been provided in response to separate questions.

Sex Abuse (Interview Equipment)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the merits of using the video-link equipment available in prisons to record interviews between police and imprisoned witnesses in historical sex abuse cases. [207331]

Ms Blears: No assessment has been made of video-link equipment available in prisons for recording interviews between police and imprisoned witnesses in historical sex abuse cases. The Association of Chief Police Officers working group currently reviewing guidance to police officers conducting such investigations advise that any equipment meeting the 'Evidence Gathering By Camera Standards' set out in Home Office 'Achieving Best Evidence' can be used for interviews. In practice, where it is decided that an interview will be recorded, the police are likely to use accredited portable equipment or to take the prisoner to a dedicated site.

Visitor Numbers

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of bringing in a system of counting in and out visitors to the UK; and if he will make a statement. [215005]

Mr. Browne: The five-year immigration strategy that we announced on 7 February contained details of our plans through e-Borders to introduce an electronic system of counting in and out visitors to UK. The costs of this system, which we have not yet procured, are commercial in confidence.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Harcourt Developments

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions have taken place between Northern Ireland government departments and agencies and Mr. Phil Flynn since 1998. [218007]

Mr. Paul Murphy: No records exist of discussions between Mr. Phil Flynn of Harcourt Developments and the Northern Ireland Office or the Northern Ireland departments and agencies.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions have taken place between Northern Ireland government departments and agencies and Harcourt Developments since 1998. [218008]

Mr. Paul Murphy: A number of Northern Ireland departments and agencies have had discussions with Harcourt Developments in relation to the development of sites at a number of locations. Records indicate that the Northern Ireland Office has had no discussions with the company.

Housing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding the Housing Executive has provided in each year since 2001 to assist local communities and residents groups in each Northern Ireland constituency; and what criteria are used to determine the allocation of funding. [217504]

Mr. Spellar: The amount of funding for each financial year from 2001 is as follows:

	Financial year			
Constituency	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*1 April 2004 to 31 January 2005*
West Belfast	47,457	63,067	83,953	85,229
North Belfast	10,000	20,952	40,091	22,255
South Belfast	—	5,500	15,900	10,600
East Belfast	—	—	10,000	2,397
Foyle	—	8,291	23,000	23,800
Strangford	—	—	—	10,000
Newry and Armagh	16,000	27,000	19,000	—

The constituency designation is based on the name of the group and/or the known area where it operates and compared with the names of the wards in that constituency.

The criteria are as follows:

i. The Community Group is properly constituted,

ii. The need for community involvement is established,

iii. The project is strategically relevant,

iv. The project has clear and measurable objectives,

v. A monitoring and review policy is in place,

vi. Matched funding has been sought but not obtained or where funding is in place double funding does not occur,

vii. The project offers additional benefits to community other than services currently offered by the local Council, Housing Executive (Estate Wardens) and Northern Ireland Tenants Action Project.

Knives

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in how many crimes in Northern Ireland knives were used in each year since 1997; and how many were committed by teenagers in each year. [218802]

Mr. Pearson: The statistics are not available in the format requested. Figures for the period from 1 April 2001 are set out in the following table. Statistics regarding the number of teenage perpetrators are not readily available. To provide this information would require a manual trawl of records and would incur disproportionate cost.

Notifiable offences recorded where a knife was involved in the incident[1]

Offence class	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*1 April 2004 to 21 February 2005*
Offences against the person	350	369	367	326
Sexual Offences	8	4	7	3
Burglary	25	31	39	20
Robbery	365	431	324	229
Theft	33	12	21	18
Criminal damage	148	67	129	141
Offences against the State	85	71	91	120
Other notifiable offences	2	2	7	0
Total	1,016	987	985	857

[1] The figures relate to offences where a knife was involved in the incident—it is not known how the knife was actually used.

Media Grants

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the newspaper and broadcasting companies in Northern Ireland that have received grants from public funds or from Invest Northern Ireland since May 1997, stating in each case the Department or other body responsible for the grant, the purpose for which the grant was made and the sum of money involved. [208675]

Mr. Gardiner: Information for the period 1 April 1999 to 31 December 2004 has been prepared and placed in the Library. Information prior to 1 April 1999 is not readily available.

Paramilitary Organisations

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to tackle criminal activities by paramilitary organisations. [217330]

Mr. Pearson: In respect of organised criminality by paramilitary organisations, the Government's response is led through the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF). It produces an annual Threat Assessment which informs the strategic priority setting of the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA). Expert Groups, involving both the LEAs and the Private Sector, work to develop measures and techniques to reduce the opportunities for organised criminality.

In 2004, the first Cross Border Organised Crime Assessment was launched by both An Garda Siochana and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. This and the level of joint operational activity are tangible evidence of the effective co-operation occurring across the border.

Vehicle Recovery Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many vehicles have been recovered in each police district command unit as part of the Managed Vehicle Recovery and Storage Scheme in each year since its introduction. [218242]

Mr. Pearson: The Managed Vehicle Recovery and Storage Scheme was launched on 1 October 2004.

The scheme uses a mapping system which is based upon deploying the nearest available recovery contractor to any given location and does not take account of District Command Unit boundaries therefore the figures are not available in the format requested.

Between 1 October 2004 and 22 February 2005, 2,670 vehicles were recovered under this scheme across Northern Ireland.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 1 March 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether years spent in the Civil Service Pension Scheme up to 2013 will continue to attract pension rights based on the final salary of the employee on their retirement at age 65 years following the proposed changes to the scheme; and if he will make a statement. [218185]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office's consultation document, "Building a sustainable future", proposes that pension rights earned before April 2013 by staff in post on 5 April 2006 will continue to be calculated by reference to a pension age of 60 and their final salary whenever they choose to retire or leave service.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the effect that the changes to the Civil Service Pension Scheme retirement age will have on serving prison officers who may become unable to carry out their prison work beyond the age of 60 years due to physical incapacity; and if he will make a statement. [218186]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office's consultation document, "Building a sustainable future", proposes that the new pension arrangements will, as now, include provisions for members who have to retire before pension age because of ill health or physical incapacity. The document also recognises that the physically-demanding nature of some members' jobs may not be compatible with a pension age of 65. Officials are discussing with employers of civil servants in physically-demanding occupations (including the prison services) the most appropriate way to handle these groups.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what estimate he has made of the number of people who transferred pension rights from the armed forces to the Prison Service who will work for a number of years at the end of their careers without building up any further pension rights; and if he will make a statement. [218188]

Mr. Miliband: No assessment of the number of people who transferred pension rights from the armed forces to the Prison Service has been made. The Cabinet Office's consultation document, "Building a sustainable future", addresses the issue of restrictions on benefits and asks whether we should allow members to build up their pension without limiting them to 40 years' service.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many serving *(a)* prison officers and *(b)* other civil servants will be affected by the changes to the Civil Service Pension Scheme. [218189]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office's consultation document, "Building a sustainable future", proposes that the main changes to the Civil Service Pension arrangements should apply to existing staff from 1 April 2013, but that some changes might apply before then. As at 31 March 2004, there were 617,000 members of the scheme, of which some 27,000 are prison officers. The Scheme Actuary estimates that, of those members who are likely to be in post on 5 April 2006, 420,000 will still be in service in April 2013.

Statutory Regulatory Bodies

Denzil Davies: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many statutory regulatory bodies have been established since 1997. [217999]

Mr. Miliband: This information is not collected centrally.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list his official engagements for 11 February 2005. [218885]

The Prime Minister: I had no official engagements on 11 February 2005.

Lord Levy

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will publish a list of all the individuals or organisations who have met Lord Levy in 2004 to discuss public policy; if he will list the representatives of the gaming industry who have met Lord Levy to discuss the Government's proposals for gaming; how many meetings in 2004 have been attended by Lord Levy on official premises or in the presence of officials; what subjects were discussed; and which countries have been visited in 2004 by Lord Levy as his personal envoy. [218907]

The Prime Minister: The information is not held in the format requested. However, in his capacity as Prime Minister's envoy, Lord Levy undertakes meetings to exchange views on a range of issues, including the Middle East Peace Process, Latin America and Kazakhstan. Lord Levy's diary for 1999–2004 is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website under the Freedom of Information Act.

Parliamentary Questions

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Prime Minister when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Mid-Dorset and North Poole on 24 January, reference 211247. [218836]

The Prime Minister: I replied on 28 February.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Prime Minister (1) on how many occasions he has used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years; [213444]

(2) how much money his Office spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213687]

The Prime Minister: Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, and the Civil Service Management Code.

TRANSPORT

Aircraft Charters

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213690]

Charlotte Atkins: The department was formed in May 2002.

Travel by Ministers makes it clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

In addition, the Department has spent the following on chartering aircraft since its formation:

	£
2002–03	0
2003–04	2,893.54
2004–05	5,720.00

Departmental Communication

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's policy is on informing hon. Members of key decisions affecting their constituency transport infrastructure. [208219]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department's policy is to keep the House of Commons and individual Members informed as appropriate.

Driving Instruction

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidelines on the Pass Plus course are issued to driving instructors and others involved in driving tuition; and if he will make a statement. [218563]

Mr. Jamieson: The Pass Plus Scheme is a voluntary scheme undertaken by Approved Driving Instructors (ADI). On registering as a Pass Plus instructor the ADI receives a Pass Plus starter pack which includes a comprehensive 34 page instructor guide. The guide explains the scheme and sets out the instructors role and the syllabus to be followed.

The starter pack also contains several copies of a 39 page pupils guide, which explains the scheme and syllabus from the pupil's perspective, training report forms, and copies of a list containing the names of the participating insurance companies. A copy of this information is supplied to the pupil upon entry to the scheme.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what statistics his Department collects for *(a)* motorway accidents and *(b)* motorway accidents involving newly qualified drivers; and if he will make a statement. [218565]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport collects detailed statistics on road accidents involving personal injury, including motorway accidents. These are reported in the annual publication "Road Casualties Great Britain: Annual Report", which can be found on the Department's website. There were 8,746 motorway accidents involving personal injury in 2003. Information on whether drivers in motorway accidents are newly qualified is not collected in this system.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what statistics his Department collects for *(a)* all road traffic accidents and *(b)* road traffic accidents involving newly qualified drivers; and if he will make a statement. [218772]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport collects detailed statistics on road accidents involving personal injury. These are reported in the annual publication "Road Casualties Great Britain: Annual Report", which can be found on the Department's website. There were 214,030 road accidents involving personal injury in 2003. Information on whether drivers are newly qualified is not collected in this system. However, we know from research we have undertaken that one in five new drivers has some sort of accident within one year of passing their driving test. A cohort study of new drivers currently under way will refresh this information.

East Coast Main Line

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce the awarding of the East Coast Mainline Franchise. [218636]

Mr. Darling: An announcement is likely to be made in the next few weeks.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on Aids to Transport by Rail, Road and Inland Waterway met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217812]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee for the Application of Legislation on the Development of the Community Railways met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217813]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee for the (i) application of uniform principles on costing for railway undertakings and (ii) harmonisation and comparability of the accounting and annual accounts of railway undertakings met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218263]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee (i) on the system of charging for the use of transport infrastructure, (ii) on the development of trans-European transport networks and (iii) for granting Community financial aid in the field of trans-European energy networks met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218364]

Mr. McNulty: (i) There were no meetings of this Committee during the period in question.

(ii) This Committee met three times during the course of the three presidencies, on 20 October 2003, 11 May 2004 and 17 November 2004. The meetings took place in Brussels and on each occasion the United Kingdom was represented by an official from the Europe Division of the Department for Transport.

(iii) Responsibility for representation on this Committee rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

European Aviation Safety Agency

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the activity of the European Aviation Safety Agency in the UK in the last 12 months; and if he will list its publications and newsletters published over that period. [215202]

Charlotte Atkins: Regulation (EC) No. 1592/2002 on common rules in the field of civil aviation safety and establishing a European Aviation Safety Agency makes a clear distinction between the safety responsibilities of the Agency and those remaining with member states' aviation authorities, such as the UK Civil Aviation Authority. However, the Regulation also allows the Agency to use the national authorities to carry out on its behalf tasks that need to be performed to meet its own responsibilities.

The Agency does not have a physical presence in the United Kingdom. While it has been recruiting staff to its offices in Cologne and establishing necessary procedures, all the necessary technical work to meet its responsibilities in the UK have been carried out on its behalf by the UK Civil Aviation Authority.

In 2004, the European Aviation Safety Agency approved the following airworthiness-related items for United Kingdom companies and UK-registered aircraft on the basis of investigations and recommendations made by the UK Civil Aviation Authority:

	Number
Modifications to aircraft	2,201
Repairs to aircraft	1,910
Airworthiness Directives and related items	60
Approval of organisations that design aircraft	27
Total	4,198

For some aircraft types operating on the UK register the Agency has assigned the airworthiness-related tasks in the categories above to other national aviation authorities, or to multi-national teams that include personnel from the EU national aviation authorities and, in some cases, employees of the Agency. As these tasks were undertaken in other countries, accurate information on the number and nature of approvals granted is not held in the UK.

The Agency does not have a publications service. During the last 12 months, the Agency has issued a considerable number of documents, including detailed consultations, information leaflets and the minutes of its Management Board's meetings, all of which can be accessed on the Agency's website at www.easa.eu.int.

Highway Schemes

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which highway schemes provisionally approved by his Department in the local Transport Capital Settlements announced in *(a)* December 2000, *(b)* December 2001, *(c)* December 2002 and *(d)* December 2003 have since been rejected. [218685]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* No local major highway schemes that were provisionally approved between December 2000 and 2003 have since been rejected. However, the Bridgefoot Environmental Bypass provisionally approved in 2000 has subsequently been withdrawn by Warrington borough council.

Motor Cycles

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will announce the public consultation process for his Department's plans for a register for post-test motorcycle trainers; and if he will make a statement. [218533]

Mr. Jamieson: The consultation paper on developmental training for qualified motorcyclists is due to be published by the Driving Standards Agency in the early spring of this year.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make provision for Safety Camera Partnerships to fund the Bikesafe scheme when the Motor Cycle Industry Association's grant-aid finishes; and if he will make a statement. [218534]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department welcomes the police's initiative in developing the Bikesafe initiative. "The Government's Motorcycling Strategy", published on 22 February, recognised that Bikesafe is a legitimate component of roads policing promoting road safety, and police forces have the freedom to devote resources to the scheme.

The Safety Camera Programme has a specific purpose, provided for in the Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001, section 38 "Unified power for the Secretary of State to fund speed cameras etc.". The programme provides police forces and highway authorities with extra resources to support the deployment and operation of safety cameras, from the fines for speeding and red light offences detected, over and above their main funding. The resources provided through the programme cannot be used for other purposes, not provided for in the Act.

Motorways

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many new motorway service areas were opened in each of the last eight years. [218651]

Mr. Jamieson: Since February 1997 16 motorway service areas have opened:

	Service areas
1997	
M20	Maidstone
1998	
M40	Oxford
M56	Chester
1999	
M1	Tibshelf
M1	Donnington Park
M5	Cullompton (north bound)
M6	Stafford (south bound)
M42	Hopwood Park
M5	Bridgewater
2000	
A1(M)	Doncaster North
2001	
A1(M)	Peterborough
A14	Cambridge
A1(M)	Baldock
M3	Winchester
2003	
M54	Castle Farm (Telford)
2004	
M6 (toll)	Norton Canes

Rail Safety

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Network Rail plan to take to promote rail safety in the forthcoming 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [218143]

Mr. McNulty: The actions the Department will take include the simplification of the regulatory structure, the coming into operation of the Rail Accident Investigation Branch and the making of regulations to transpose the European rail safety directive.

Network Rail will continue its systematic improvement of the control of key risks, reduction of business loss, compliance with new legislation (including European directives) and work with industry partners to improve the safety and performance of Britain's railway.

Road Safety

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many traffic accidents took place in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend in each year since 1997. [218278]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Accidents in Essex: 1997–2003

	Essex	*Southend-on-Sea*
1997	6,886	692
1998	6,821	698
1999	6,843	717
2000	6,985	745
2001	6,773	686
2002	6,408	656
2003	6,182	612

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to extend the provision of road safety cameras. [218957]

Mr. Jamieson: Road safety cameras are operated by local partnerships of police forces and highway authorities, which are provided with additional resources from fine receipts, through the national safety camera programme. Two further partnerships are to join the programme for 2005–06, Surrey and Merseyside. Following the issue of the "Handbook of Rules and Guidance for the National Safety Camera Programme for England and Wales for 2005–06" in

November 2004, partnerships have submitted their bids for the 2005–06 programme. Partnerships' bids are now being assessed, and I shall announce the results when the assessment is completed. Copies of the Handbook are in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many "Tiredness Kills" signs there are on motorways in England; and where they are located. [217713]

Mr. Jamieson: The number of "Tiredness Kills" signs on motorways in England and their locations are:

MSA	*Carriageway*	*Number of Signs*
A1(M) Blyth	(Southbound only)	1
M1 Leicester Forest East		2
M1 Toddington	(Northbound only)	1
M1 Trowell		2
M1 Woodall		2
M1 Wooley Edge		2
M2 Medway		2
M4 Reading		2
M4 Chieveley		2
M5 Cullompton	(Northbound only)	1
M5 Exeter		2
M5 Sedgemoor Services		2
M5 Frankley		2
M6 Burton		2
M6 Hilton Park		2
M6 Knutsford		2
M6 Sandbach		2
M6 Southwaite		2
M6 Stafford		2
M6 Tebay		2
M6 Killington		2
M6 Forton		2
M18 Doncaster North		2
M20 Maidstone	(Eastbound only)	1
M23 Pease Pottage		2
M25 Thurrock	(Southbound only)	1
M40 Cherwell Valley		2
M42 Tamworth		2
M62 Ferrybridge		2
M62 Hartshead Moor		2
M69 Leicester Forest East	(Southbound only)	1
M180 Doncaster North	(Westbound only)	1
Total number of Signs at MSAs		57

These signs, which are usually worded "Tiredness Can Kill, Take a Break", are generally provided on the approaches to Motorway Service Areas.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215094]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002.

In DfT's London Headquarters in 2004–05 to date we have replaced some 76 passes but this also includes replacing damaged passes as well as those lost or stolen. Information from earlier years is not available. The cost of replacing each pass is £13.52.

For elsewhere on the DfT estate we do not have comprehensive information to be able to provide a definitive standard cost of producing staff identity pass because of the large number of buildings and various access arrangements. From the information available the estimated average cost is between a £1–£15.30 depending on what the pass is used for and its method of production. The figures we have available about the numbers of passes lost or stolen indicates that there were 233 in 2002–03 and 228 in 2003–04.

A303 (Stonehenge)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact on *(a)* the Stonehenge visitor centre and *(b)* the A303(T) Stonehenge tunnel project and Winterbourne Stoke bypass of his decision to delegate the funding decisions to south-west regional bodies. [214174]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 4 February 2005]*: The Secretary of State for Transport, jointly with the First Secretary of State, is currently considering the Inspector's report of the inquiry into the A303 Stonehenge Improvement scheme.

There are no plans to delegate decisions on transport schemes or their funding to regional bodies. Under the proposals in the consultation document "Devolving decision making: a consultation on regional funding allocations" the region would be invited to advise Ministers on the relative priority of transport investment proposals on the basis of long-term regional funding guidelines. Copies of the consultation document are available in the House Libraries.

Tyre Pressure Gauges

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who the responsible authority for inspecting the calibration and accuracy of tyre pressure gauges on garage forecourts is; and if he will make a statement. [218624]

Mr. Jamieson: The calibration and accuracy of tyre pressure gauges is not routinely checked by local authorities or departmental agencies. The National Weights and Measures Laboratory have responsibility for issuing type approvals to new types of mechanical tyre pressure gauges in accordance with European Directive 86/217/EEC. If EEC-verified mechanical gauges are placed on a UK garage forecourt they can be inspected by a local authority Trading Standards Officer and can be disqualified if found to be inaccurate or not in compliance with the approval.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Aquariums

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the animal welfare implications arising from the operation of aquaria, with particular reference to *(a)* the showing of abnormal and stereotypic behaviour, *(b)* the incidence of deformities and *(c)* the incidence of infections. [216349]

Mr. Morley: All zoos including aquaria are regulated under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981, under which they are subject to a comprehensive licensing and inspection regime. The aims of the regime include maintaining appropriate standards of animal welfare and a suitable environment for the animals, as set out in the Secretary of State's Standards for Modern Zoo Practice.

In addition, the Zoos Forum, the Government's advisers on zoo matters, have set up a working group which will be looking at developing possible research proposals in all aspects of the keeping of animals in zoos, including aquaria.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will review her Department's policy on the issue of licences to farmers and other landowners for the destruction of badgers associated with outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis. [214120]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are currently no plans to review the existing policy for issuing licences for culling badgers in order to prevent the spread of TB.

However, we are prepared to consider a badger culling policy if evidence from the Randomised Badger Culling Trial, or from other research, suggests that it would be successful in reducing bovine TB in cattle, and that a cost-effective and acceptable policy could be developed and implemented.

We are aware of the recently published results of badger culling research carried out in Ireland and have sought the advice of independent scientists on the relevance of the findings to the disease situation in Great Britain.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons her Department no longer publishes data on bovine tuberculosis infection rates in badgers. [214135]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data on bovine tuberculosis infection rates in badgers culled in the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) are being assessed by the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) and will be published at the end of the Trial. This decision follows advice from the RBCT independent statistical auditor who supported the ISG policy of withholding such data from immediate publication as it could compromise the future statistical integrity of the RBCT. The ISG is currently analysing data on the prevalence and pathology of TB in badgers collected as part of the RBCT and the RTA survey and will present these analyses in the peer-reviewed press when complete.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has conducted on public perception of the costs of the bovine tuberculosis control programme. [214136]

Mr. Bradshaw: We sought views on cost sharing for the future as part of last year's consultation 'Preparing for a new GB Strategy on bovine TB'. In addition Defra has funded a survey, carried out by the University of Reading, into the monetary value society places on changes in the size of the badger population.

The views submitted in response to the consultation exercise have been taken into account in developing the new bovine TB strategy. We aim to publish the new strategic framework very shortly.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what account she takes of public perception of badgers in determining her policy on badger culling for the purpose of controlling bovine tuberculosis; and what measures she plans to inform the public of the *(a)* economic effects, *(b)* potential public health risks of bovine tuberculosis infection in badgers and *(c)* welfare implications for badgers. [214139]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra strives to ensure that its policies are based on the best available scientific evidence, and that they are cost-effective and sustainable. Any future decision on badger culling will need to take account of the way the general public perceives badgers and the acceptability of culling them to control TB in cattle. Views on wildlife management, including badger culling, were sought as part of Defra's consultation on a new long-term bovine tuberculosis (TB) strategy for Great Britain, during 2004. In addition Defra has funded a survey, carried out by the University of Reading, into the monetary value society places on changes in the size of the badger population. This will be available on the Defra website in due course.

Defra aims to publish the new bovine TB Strategy framework shortly. This will set out a clear framework for decision making on bovine TB for the future, including decisions on matters such as badger culling. Disseminating information to the public will form part of the TB Strategy Implementation/Communications Plan.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her policy to support *(a)* a significant reduction in numbers of red deer in the Dulverton area and *(b)* the targeted culling of sick deer to reduce the spread of *M. bovis* infection. [214132]

Mr. Bradshaw: Following wide consultation the Government recently produced an action plan for achieving the sustainable management of wild deer in England. Under this plan the management of local deer remains the responsibility of local deer managers, provided they meet the requirements of the Deer Act 1991 and the relevant welfare legislation.

Through the Deer Initiative, Defra is funding a deer liaison officer to work with landowners on deer management issues in the South-West and to assist with disease surveillance in deer, including bovine tuberculosis (TB).

Defra is currently considering the research required to increase our understanding of the role of deer in relation to bovine TB infection in cattle.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications of pockets of *M. bovis* infection in deer for the health of *(a)* cattle and *(b)* other wildlife in the area. [214133]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are aware that TB is present in wild deer in parts of Exmoor. This was a factor, together with the disease history of cattle herds and other wildlife, in the decision to test cattle herds for TB over most of Exmoor on an annual basis.

BSE

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress her Department has made in identifying a BSE test capable of supporting British beef producers who plan to export to *(a)* Europe and *(b)* third countries. [218475]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* There are currently 11 tests for BSE approved by the EU. These tests are applied post-mortem to a brainstem sample.

Carbon Trust

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will publish on its website the annual accounts of the Carbon Trust since its inception, including *(a)* incoming revenue from all sources and *(b)* expenditure on specific programmes; [217214]

(2) what the expenditure of the Carbon Trust on external consultants was in the last year for which figures are available; [217217]

(3) what assessment has been made of the impact of the Carbon Trust in terms of annual carbon savings. [217218]

Margaret Beckett: The Carbon Trust is an independent company grant funded by Government. The trust publishes annual accounts on its website www.thecarbontrust.co.uk. As a private company expenditure on contracts held with external consultants is a matter for the Carbon Trust Board.

The Carbon Trust's assessment of the impact of its programmes, including annual carbon savings, is published in its annual report, available on its website. All current climate change policies are being evaluated under the Climate Change Programme Review.

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimates the Government has made of the change in global temperatures between 2004 and *(a)* 2014, *(b)* 2024 and *(c)* 2054. [216363]

Mr. Morley: Hadley Centre research for the Defra funded UK Climate Prediction Programme forecasts an increase in global temperature of between 0.17–0.53°C in the coming decade. The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Third Assessment Report, stated that temperatures are predicted to increase by 0.4–1.1°C compared with 1990 levels by 2025, and 0.8–2.6°C compared with 1990 levels by 2050. Global temperatures have increased by just over 0.2°C since 1990.

Computers (Recycling/Disposal)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what strategies her Department has put in place to aid the reuse and recycling of old computers. [216352]

Mr. Morley: Defra has been closely involved in developing implementation proposals for the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, which requires producers of electrical equipment, including computers, to reuse or treat and recycle their products to target levels.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of how many computers were disposed of in landfill in each of the last five years. [216353]

Mr. Morley: No estimate has been made of the numbers of computers disposed of in landfill in each of the last five years. However, industry figures suggest that 1,022,000 computers, 960,000 monitors and 627,000 laptops were disposed of by householders in 2003.

Co-operatives

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she is considering to encourage the formation of co-operatives for the purposes of tier-two payments. [217793]

Alun Michael: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme that is due to be introduced shortly.

Under the second tier of the scheme, known as higher level stewardship, we will be offering a supplementary payment for group applications. This recognises the extra costs involved in facilitating communal agreements, for example on areas of common land or shared grazing, or on areas under more than one ownership that need to be managed collectively for resource protection, inter-tidal flood management or wetland management.

Full details of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme will be published later this week.

Date-based Export Scheme

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the Date Based Export Scheme to be lifted. [218367]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* Before beef export restrictions can be eased, there will need to be a further inspection visit from the EU's Food and Veterinary Office to check our BSE controls and our testing arrangements, a proposal from the European Commission to amend EU legislation, and agreement by other EU member states. Changes in export restrictions for beef from cattle born on or after 1 August 1996 are not expected before late 2005.

Energy Saving Trust

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will publish on its website the annual accounts of the Energy

Saving Trust since its inception, including *(a)* incoming revenue from all sources and *(b)* expenditure on specific programmes; [217215]

(2) what the expenditure of the Energy Saving Trust on external consultants was in the last year for which figures are available; [217216]

(3) what assessment has been made of the impact of the Energy Saving Trust in terms of annual carbon savings. [217219]

Margaret Beckett: The Energy Saving Trust is an independent company grant funded by Government. The trust publishes an annual report on its website www.est.org.uk. As a private company expenditure on contracts held with external consultants is a matter for the Energy Saving Trust Board.

The Energy Saving Trust's assessment of the impact of its programmes, including annual carbon savings, is published in its annual report, available on its website. All current climate change policies are being evaluated under the Climate Change Programme Review.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Milk and Milk Products met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217849]

Alun Michael: The Management Committee of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Milk and Milk Products met:

(a) 10 times during the Italian presidency, on 10 July, 24 July, 28 August, 11 September, 25 September, 16 October, 30 October, 13 November, 27 November, and 11 December 2003.

(b) 12 times during the Irish presidency, on 15 January, 28 and 29 January, 12 February, 26 February, 11 March, 25 March, 15 April, 29 April, 13 May, 27 May, 10 June, and 24 June 2004.

(c) 10 times during the Dutch presidency, on 15 July, 29 July, 26 August, 16 September, 30 September, 14 October, 28 October, 11 November, 25 November, and 16 December 2004.

All but one of the meetings were held in Brussels. The meeting of 14 October 2004 held during the Dutch presidency took place in The Hague.

The UK was represented by officials from Defra's Milk Branch, with representatives from the Department of Agriculture in Northern Ireland and the Rural Payments Agency attending occasionally when subjects of particular interest were discussed.

At the meetings the UK has supported the measures taken by the Commission to balance Community milk and milk product markets while taking budgetary considerations into account.

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies, are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Beef and Veal met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217850]

Alun Michael: The Management Committee of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Beef and Veal met:

(a) 10 times during the Italian presidency, on 11 July (1 DEFRA representative attended), 25 July (1), 29 August (1), 12 September (2), 26 September (1), 17 October (1), 31 October (1), 14 November (2), 28 November (2), and 12 December (2).

(b) 10 times during the Irish presidency, on 16 January (2), 13 February (2), 27 February (2), 12 March (2), 25 March (2), 15 April (3), 29 April (1), 28 May (1), 11 June (1), and 22 June (2).

(c) 7 times during the Dutch presidency, on 16 July (1), 30 July (2), 17 September (1), 27 September (1), 15 October (2), 26 November (1), and 17 December (1).

All of the meetings were held in Brussels. The UK were represented by officials from the appropriate division of Defra. The number of representatives for each meeting is shown in brackets above.

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies, are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Sheep and Goats met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217851]

Alun Michael: The Management Committee of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Sheep and Goats met:

(a) Twice during the Italian presidency, on 21 November (1 Defra representative attended) and on 12 December (2).

(b) Once during the Irish presidency, on 13 February (2).

(c) Twice during the Dutch presidency, on 16 July (1) and on 26 November (1).

All meetings were held in Brussels. The UK were represented by officials from the appropriate division of Defra. The number of representatives for each meeting is shown in brackets above.

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies, are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for

Pigmeat met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217852]

Alun Michael: The Management Committee of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Pigmeat met:

(a) 5 times during the Italian presidency, on 15 July (2 Defra representatives attended, plus 1 expert), 17 September (1, plus 1 expert), 15 October (1), 18 November (1), and 15 December (1) 2003.

(b) 6 times during the Irish presidency, on 23 January (2, plus 1 expert), 16 February (3), 15 March (2), 21 April (2), 19 May (2), and 22 June (2) 2004.

(c) 5 times during the Dutch presidency, on 13 July (1), 14 September (2), 19 October (2), 16 November (1), and 14 December (1) 2004.

All meetings were held in Brussels. The UK was represented by officials from Defra's Livestock Products Division (Pigs branch), and experts were from the Meat and Livestock Commission. The number of representatives for each meeting is outlined above.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Meetings of Management and/or regulatory Committees in the field of agriculture—promotion of agricultural products met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217870]

Alun Michael: The Joint Management Committee for the Promotion of Agricultural Products met on the following dates:

(a) During the Italian presidency:

16 July 2003

9 September 2003

8 October 2003

17 December 2003

All meetings took place in Brussels and officials from Defra attended.

(b) During the Irish presidency:

4 February 2004

24 March 2004

12 May 2004*

14 June 2004*

All meetings took place in Brussels and officials from Defra attended. An official from the Rural Payments Agency also attended the meetings marked with an asterisk.

(c) During the Dutch presidency:

12 July 2004*

15 September 2004*

13 October 2004

18 November 2004

17 December 2004

All meetings took place in Brussels and officials from Defra attended. An official from the Rural Payments Agency also attended the meetings marked with an asterisk.

The Joint Committee for the Promotion of Agricultural Products was established in September 2000 following the introduction of Council Regulation (EC) 2702/1999 for the promotion of agricultural products in third countries. Council Regulation (EC) 2826/2000 which covers the promotion of agricultural products in the internal markets was introduced shortly afterwards. The regulations provide a framework for promoting Community agricultural produce through activities such as trade fairs, market research, advertising, information campaigns and fact finding visits.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee (i) for the adaptation to scientific and technical progress and implementation of the Directives on waste, (ii) on the Directive on packaging and packaging waste and (iii) for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress of the Directive on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [218313]

Mr. Morley: The Technical Adaptation Committee (TAC) for the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and Restriction of Hazardous Substances (ROHS) Directives met on the following 12 occasions: During the Italian presidency (from July to December 2003) 11 July, 16 September, 26 November, 17 December, during the Irish presidency (from January to June 2004) 27 January, 3 March, 17 March, 10 June, 28 June and during the Dutch presidency (from July to December 2004) 20 July, 22 October, 10 December. UK experts from Defra and DTI were present and a detailed summary of these discussions, including unofficial meeting notes, may be found on the internet at the following website: http://www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/weee/index.htm

TAC meetings for Packaging and Packaging Waste took place in Brussels during the Italian presidency on 30 October 2003 and included two UK experts, both from DTI. On 16 April 2004 a second meeting was held which included UK experts from both of DTI and Defra.

There were no TAC meetings held in relation to End of Life Vehicles (ELVs) during the Italian presidency. During the Irish presidency two meetings were held on 14 January and 10 June 2004. During the Dutch presidency there was a single meeting held on 2 December 2004. In these instances a DTI official represented the UK.

There were no meetings of the TAC on the sewage sludge Directive during the Italian, Irish or Dutch presidencies.

Flood Defence Committees

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the allocation of seats for regional flood defence committees. [217066]

Mr. Morley: Section 15 of the Environment Act 1995 provides that each English regional flood defence committee (RFDC) shall consist of:

(a) a chairman and a number of other members appointed by the Secretary of State;

(b) two members appointed by the Environment Agency;

(c) a number of members appointed by or on behalf of the constituent councils to form a bare majority on the RFDC.

In making her appointments, my right hon. Friend seeks to ensure that the profile of committee members forms a broad coverage of interests from the area including land drainage, planning, social, environmental and coastal issues; and also attempts where possible to achieve a balance on the committee in terms of geographical representation.

Local authority representation is set by statutory instrument and we seek to allocate seats—whole or shared—to the constituent councils based upon council tax data (band D equivalent properties).

Constituent councils are defined in section 15(6) of the Environment Act 1995 as, 'the councils of every county, county borough, metropolitan district, or London borough any part of which is in the area of a regional flood defence committee shall be the constituent councils for the regional flood defence committee for that area'. This therefore means that upper tier and unitary authorities are eligible for the local authority seats but not lower tier authorities such as district councils nor other bodies such as the Government office for the region concerned.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the shared seat for City of York and North Yorkshire on the Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee will be occupied by a representative from *(a)* City of York and *(b)* North Yorkshire county council. [217067]

Mr. Morley: Section 16(8) of the Environment Act 1995 provides for the sharing of seats of constituent councils. Seat sharing is commonplace on regional flood defence committees (RFDCs) throughout the country and councils normally decide between themselves how this will be managed, for example operating an annual rota system. If councils are unable to agree, the appointments are made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. Non-voting members can attend meetings.

I understand that the allocation of the seat shared between City of York and North Yorkshire on the Yorkshire RFDC has not yet been decided.

Flood Defence Projects

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will make a statement on the priority scoring system for flood defence funding; [217064]

(2) what criteria are used to score flood defence projects to determine whether they are eligible for funding; and what criteria must be met for such funding to be received. [217068]

Mr. Morley: Despite large increases in Government funding—up from £312 million in 1997–98 to £570 million in 2005–06—there is still not enough to fund all worthwhile proposals from the flood and coastal defence operating authorities (the Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards). Defra therefore operates an objective and published priority scoring system which is intended to direct our finite funds to best effect nationally, to maximise the benefit obtained from the programme as a whole.

The current scoring system was introduced in 2003 after extensive consultation following a pilot introduced in 1997. In summary, proposed projects are scored on three elements—their estimated economic benefits, the number of people they are likely to protect and protection and enhancement of environmental and/or heritage assets. All three are compared to cost so that projects are treated fairly regardless of size. The higher the score, the higher the priority.

In order to be eligible for funding from Defra, projects must achieve Defra's published threshold score for the year in which they start. The threshold scores were last revised in November 2004 to take account of changes in operating authorities' investment plans. Because of an increased demand for grant nationally, the thresholds had to rise and are now 19 for projects to start in 2005–06 or 2006–07 and 15 in 2007 08.

The scoring system has no effect on the overall sum available for grant aid. It does not attempt to allocate funding to projects in an absolute sense but simply to rank proposals in a relative priority order. Defra is then able to allocate its funding to projects in priority order. The actual threshold score which a project must achieve will depend on available funding compared to need nationally. The thresholds are set by analysis of forward plans provided to Defra by operating authorities each year—proposals for funding are compared with available funds and I set the lowest threshold that can be afforded for the following financial year, together with indicative estimates of the likely thresholds for the following two years. The latter are reviewed a year later in the light of updated authorities' plans.

The threshold is the same for all projects and is applied broadly equally to all operating authorities. There can be exceptions such as for the very few projects required to protect environmental sites of international importance under the Habitats Directive but the amount of funding spent on these projects is low.

Flooding

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which body is responsible in the event of flooding in a watercourse for which an internal drainage board is responsible *(a)* before 2006 and *(b)* after 2006; and if she will make a statement. [216008]

Mr. Morley: All watercourses effectively fall into one of two categories: *(a)* main rivers which are the responsibility of the Environment Agency and *(b)* ordinary watercourses which are the responsibility of local authorities or, where they exist, internal drainage boards.

Recognising that some ordinary watercourses create significant flood risk, in March 2003 the Government announced that all the so called "critical" ordinary watercourses (COWs) would become the responsibility of the Environment Agency (EA). This transfer of responsibility is in progress and will be completed by April 2006.

Once a COW has been transferred, it becomes a main river and the EA assumes full responsibility for all associated flood risk management and for dealing with any flooding from it. However, all other ordinary watercourses will remain the responsibility of the local authority or internal drainage board.

While the EA will retain the overall responsibility for the transferred COWs, they may decide to contract back maintenance and other work to the appropriate local authority or IDB where these bodies are willing to take this on and have a good track record.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department has taken to reduce flood risk in Chorley constituency. [216191]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk in England. We fund most of the Environment Agency (EA)'s flood risk activities and provide grant aid on a project by project basis to the other flood and coastal defence operating authorities (local authorities and internal drainage boards) to support their investment in improvement works. Defra does not build defences, nor direct the authorities on what specific projects to do. The works programme to manage risk is driven by the operating authorities.

I understand from the EA that they have undertaken or are undertaking the following in connection with the reduction of flood risk in Chorley:

Capital Works

Croston Flood Wall—works to improve unstable sections of the existing flood defence walls along the River Yarrow, through the village of Croston, were completed in May 2004 (out-turn cost £680,000).

Revenue Works

Heavy Maintenance—works are programmed in March/April 2005 to replace and improve a critical debris screen at the entrance to a long culverted reach of the River Chor at Water Street, Chorley (estimated cost £30,000).

Routine Maintenance for example: at pumping stations, flood embankment mowing, channel-desilting, screen clearance, channel debris removal and general upkeep of existing flood defences (estimated cost £80,000).

Strategic Studies and Investigations

A strategic study into flood risk management covering the River Douglas catchment area is nearing completion. This takes in the major tributaries of the Rivers Yarrow and Lostock and their Critical Ordinary Watercourse tributaries, which cover part of the Chorley constituency. The strategy study is an important stage in determining flood risk and how to manage it. It also helps the EA to decide on future, sustainable flood protection measures. The expected completion date for the study is July 2005 (estimated cost £135,000).

This study has already highlighted that flood risk to Croston Village should be examined further. An investigation is now under way, the outcome of which will be a viability report for a Croston Village Flood Alleviation Scheme. The report should be completed by April 2005. Subject to the findings, a detailed feasibility study will be planned in the EA's medium/long-term programme, and improved flood risk management scheme options for the village will be considered.

Investigations into extending the current Flood Warning service within the Chorley constituency are planned within the next three to five years, subject to detailed feasibility studies.

Fly-tipping

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much rubbish was dumped by fly-tipping in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each of the last three years. [216189]

Mr. Morley: No national data are currently available however, Flycapture, the national database for fly-tipping incidents was launched in April 2004. Flycapture data are currently being validated and will be made available once this process is complete.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the recent National Audit Office report on foot and mouth procedures; and what action she will take to impose more robust financial controls on compensation payments. [217086]

Mr. Bradshaw: I welcome this Report and its recommendations and am pleased to see it reflects the progress the Department has made since 2001, particularly on contingency planning, improved dialogue with stakeholders, and improving the Department's capacity and preparedness for combating another major disease outbreak. Overall the NAO consider that the Department has implemented most of the actions promised to the Committee and has made good progress on the others since 2001. I understand there are some areas requiring further work, but the Department is aware of them and working to resolve them as soon as is practicable.

We have already taken steps to control future costs of compensation for stock taken to control an outbreak of foot and mouth. These include the appointment of a new panel of valuers and four monitor valuers to ensure consistency, all of whom will be paid on a daily, rather than commission basis. Farmers will no longer appoint their own valuers.

In the long-term it is our aim to rationalise compensation arrangements for all notifiable animal diseases. As a first stage, we aim to rationalise the compensation arrangements for four cattle diseases, namely bovine TB, brucellosis, enzootic bovine leukosis

and BSE, later this year. FMD compensation will be examined in the second round as this will require changes to primary legislation

Gangmaster (Licensing) Act

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with gangmasters on the implications of the Gangmaster (Licensing) Act 2004 for their supply chains. [217085]

Alun Michael: Both I and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Food and Farming have met representatives of the Association of Labour Providers and individual labour providers on several occasions to discuss the implications of the Gangmaster (Licensing) Act 2004. We have also attended meetings of the Gangmaster Licensing Authority Consultative Committee, which includes representatives of the Association of Labour Providers and the Recruitment and Employment Confederation. A wide range of matters connected with the implementation of the Gangmaster (Licensing) Act and the establishment of the Licensing Authority was discussed at these meetings.

The Government welcomes the constructive role that labour providers and other stakeholder organisations have played in relation to the introduction of the new licensing arrangements. We look forward to maintaining this close relationship as the detail of the licensing scheme is developed and will ensure labour providers will continue to be consulted fully before the arrangements are finalised. We remain on course to establish the Gangmaster (Licensing) Authority in April and hope to be able to start processing licence applications before the end of the year.

Land Degradation

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to reverse long-term land degradation. [215892]

Mr. Morley: A wide range of measures address land condition. Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 was brought into force in April 2000 to address in particular the legacy of historic contamination, where this poses unacceptable risk to human health or the environment. Local authorities are now identifying contaminated land in their area, and ensuring that appropriate remedial action is taken.

Such remediation also takes place as part and parcel of the development of land, and is secured through the planning system, which aims to encourage the redevelopment and beneficial re-use of previously developed land. Last autumn, new planning guidance (PPS23—"Planning and Pollution Control") was issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which aims to assist in the remediation of contaminated land through the process of development. A new Land Restoration Trust has been set up.

We have published a Soil Action Plan to help tackle the various risks and threats to soil. The plan is informed by key European initiatives such as the Water Framework Directive and work towards a European Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection. The EU Thematic Strategy identifies contamination, erosion and organic matter as three priority issues for soils and is also developing overarching plans for soil monitoring and R and D.

Under the Single Payment Scheme land managers are required to demonstrate that they are keeping the land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC). GAEC standards, set specifically for England, apply to soil management and protection and to the maintenance of habitats and landscape features.

In the built environment soil degradation and erosion caused by construction activities can be a serious issue, particularly in terms of pollution of water resources. Defra is working with the construction industry to identify and address gaps in knowledge.

Within the suite of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), notified for their conservation importance in England, degraded habitats will be addressed by our PSA target to have 95 per cent. of the SSSI area in favourable condition by 2010.

Defra will shortly be launching the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme which will replace the existing Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Schemes. The new scheme will focus on natural resource protection, in addition to the primary objectives of the existing schemes, namely wildlife conservation; maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character; protection of the historic environment; and the promotion of access of the countryside. This will include measures to help protect watercourses and sensitive habitats by reducing diffuse pollution and soil erosion.

Recycling

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the responsibility of Chorley council to provide recycling facilities. [216190]

Mr. Morley: Government have set each local authority in England Statutory Performance Standards for recycling and composting of household waste for 2003–04 and 2005–06. In addition, the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 requires waste collection authorities—subject to certain exemptions—to provide a kerbside collection service of at least two recyclable materials by 2010. It is local authorities' responsibility to decide the type of recycling facilities that should be provided, taking into account local circumstances, to help them meet the Standards and the requirements of the Act.

Rural Bus Services

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was given in grants to rural bus services by the Countryside Agency in each year since 1997; and what plans she has to continue such grants. [201604]

Margaret Beckett: The Countryside Agency has undertaken a variety of time-linked pilot programmes on behalf of Government and has contributed to rural bus services on our behalf through the Rural Transport

Partnership and Parish Transport schemes. The Agency's database does not record information to distinguish funding for rural bus services from other grants to support other local transport needs within those schemes. Information about grants made in 1997–98, made by the Countryside Agency's predecessor, the Countryside Commission, is no longer available.

In 2004–05, the Department for Transport is making £51 million available for rural bus services through Rural Bus Subsidy Grant to bus companies and local authorities to maintain services which would otherwise be uneconomic. This is an increase from £48.5 million in 2003–04. The Department for Transport's annual Rural Bus Challenge competitions have also made a total of 301 awards amounting to £110 million over the last six years.

Since 1999 grants given each year to local transport initiatives in rural areas through the Rural Transport Partnership and Parish Transport Grant schemes are as follows:

£ million

	Rural transport partnership scheme[1]	Parish transport scheme[1]	Total
1998–99	[1]0.3	[1]1.6	[1]1.9
1999–2000	[1]1.3	[1]2.0	[1]3.3
2000–01	[1]2.8	[1]2.0	[1]4.8
2001–02	7.1	0.3	7.4
2002–03	13.1	0.9	14.0
2003–04	12.5	1.0	13.5
2004–05	[2]—	[2]—	[3]11.3
Total	—	—	[3]56.2

[1] Funding until 2001 from the Countryside Commission's Rural Transport Partnership scheme and Rural Transport Development Fund.
[2] Figure not yet available.
[3] To date.

On 1 April 2004, the Countryside Agency closed the Rural Transport Partnership and Parish Transport schemes to new grant applications although existing commitments will continue to be met.

From 1 April 2005, Defra will devolve delivery of economic and social regeneration policies to the Regional Development Agencies. This includes areas of activity such as those formerly covered by the Countryside Agency's transport schemes. We have also charged the Regional Development Agencies with contributing to the delivery of our Public Service Agreement target to improve the accessibility of services for people in rural England. In recognition of their larger role in the delivery of Defra's policies, Defra has given the Regional Development Agencies an additional £21.3 million per annum for the years 2005–06 to 2007–08.

We are discussing with the Regional Development Agencies what they will deliver and how it will be measured, to be included in their Tasking Framework. Defra expects them, in partnership with local government and others, to ensure that the needs of people in rural communities are addressed, through regional level strategies and delivery. But it will be for each Development Agency to determine the priorities for its region and, through their corporate plans, how they will achieve their agreed outcomes.

Salt Marshes (Lymington)

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects a specific defence option to protect the salt marshes of Lymington from erosion to be approved; and if she will make a statement. [216079]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. Defra funds most of the Environment Agency's flood management activities in England and provides grant aid on a project by project basis to the other flood and coastal defence operating authorities (local authorities and internal drainage boards) to support their investment in improvement projects to manage flood and coastal erosion risk. To qualify for Defra funding proposals must satisfy essential technical, economic and environmental criteria and achieve the relevant "priority score" for the year in which work is programmed to start.

The Government encourages operating authorities to take a strategic approach to the provision of flood and coastal defences and they are required to consider a range of defence options. New Forest district council (NFDC), the local coast protection authority, is currently undertaking the West Solent Strategy Study and the area covered extends from Hurst Spit to Calshot Spit including the Lymington salt marsh. NFDC is, I understand, carrying out a public consultation exercise that will inform the options to be evaluated in the study.

NFDC's medium term plan includes work planned in Lymington where the council propose to reduce the rate of salt marsh erosion but I hope you understand that, until the West Solent Strategy Study is complete and until the council has submitted proposals for coast protection work in Lymington, I cannot comment on options for work.

Timber

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the US based Sustainable Forest Initiative has been endorsed by the Central Point of Expertise on Timber. [216575]

Mr. Morley: The Sustainable Forest Initiative was assessed in October 2004 to determine if its certification scheme provides assurance of legal and sustainable timber as defined in the Government's model contract terms and conditions.

The Government has concluded that SFI's forest management standards and chain of custody system do meet the Government's contract criteria for assurance of legal harvesting but do not provide the required assurance of Sustainable forest management. The issue for the Government is not with SFI's forest management standards, which were found to be adequate, but with the chain of custody system which does not enable the consumer to determine the percentage of certified timber in the finished product. The Government could accept a combination of an SFI certificate and additional verification of the certified timber element but, as matters stand, a certificate alone would not suffice. Action to Implement this assessment will be effective from May 2005.

The full report on the five main certification schemes assessed can be found on the sustainable development in Government website at: http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/pdf/f-cpet.pdf

Waste Tips

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what powers the Environment Agency has to close tips which cause a nuisance for local residents. [216192]

Mr. Morley: Landfill sites can be closed in the following circumstances:

(i) When the conditions specified in the landfill permit are satisfied (eg the site is full);

(ii) When the Environment Agency approves the initiation of the closure procedures following a request from the operator; or

(iii) By a reasoned decision of the Environment Agency to initiate closure procedures (eg because the requirements of the landfill permit are not being met).

In circumstances where the Environment Agency has taken a reasoned decision in accordance with (iii) above, the agency shall serve a closure notice on the operator of the landfill setting out its reasons for requiring closure. Clearly, adverse impact on the local environment/ residents may constitute one of those reasons.

Yorkshire Flood Defence Committee

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the City of York will receive an individual seat on the Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee. [217062]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 9W. The local authority representation on the Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee remains as stated.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many rural flood defence projects are funded by the priority scoring system. [217065]

Mr. Morley: Defra's priority is to maximise the protection of people and assets in relation to the funding available. While there is no bias in the priority score system against rural projects, it is however true that projects are less likely to go ahead in sparsely populated areas as these will tend to score less highly than projects which protect larger numbers of people or higher asset values for a given cost. Most of the components making up the priority score of a given project are compared to cost so the crucial measurement is on benefits per unit cost and not on the absolute benefits of proposals. This ensures smaller projects are considered on an equal footing to larger ones.

We do not classify projects by urban or rural location and often the distinction will not be clear. We could not seek to gather this information without incurring disproportionate cost. As explained in my letter of 11 February to the hon. Member, I have placed in the House Library a list of improvement projects in England approved since May 1997, or which were approved earlier but received funding after that date.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Zimbabwe

14. **Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the forthcoming elections in Zimbabwe. [218407]

Mr. Mullin: We have made it clear that we look to Zimbabwe to comply in full with the South African Development Council electoral principles. We are concerned that the environment still falls woefully short of meeting this. Media, opposition and civil society in Zimbabwe need to be able to operate without fear of violence and intimidation. The intimidation of media and the break-up of an MDC training session earlier this month suggests otherwise.

Sri Lanka

15. **Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met representatives of the Government of Sri Lanka to discuss the current political situation. [218408]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed the political situation in Sri Lanka with the President and Foreign Minister in the course of last year. He is looking looking forward to meeting the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister again in London this month.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development also visited Sri Lanka in January this year.

Cyprus

16. **Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Cyprus. [218409]

Mr. MacShane: The Government's objective remains the reunification of Cyprus, and we continue to support all efforts to achieve this aim in a manner that is fair, viable and lasting for the benefit of all Cypriots. It is in this context that we welcome the continued strong support for settlement and re-unification among Turkish Cypriots as reflected in the outcome of their elections on 20 February.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Turkish Cypriot elections on 20 February. [217721]

Mr. Rammell: We believe this outcome reflects the Turkish Cypriot Community's on-going desire to work for a comprehensive settlement on the basis of the Annan Plan and to realise in full the benefits of EU membership.

Kashmir

17. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in Pakistan concerning the situation in Kashmir. [218410]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed the issue of Kashmir with his Pakistani and Indian counterparts during his visit to both countries earlier this month. More broadly, they discussed progress in the on-going composite dialogue between India and Pakistan. The Foreign Secretary particularly welcomed the announcement that was made on 16 February of a bus link between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar.

China

18. **Mr. David Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions on human rights he has had with the Government of China. [218411]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised human rights issues in his meetings with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing in Beijing on 21 January. He encouraged China to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), called for progress in the reform of China's re-education through Labour system and lobbied on behalf of several individual cases of concern.

European Constitution

19. **Angela Watkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of ratification of the proposed Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [218412]

Mr. MacShane: Each member state will ratify the Treaty according to their own constitutional procedures. Three member states, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovenia, have already ratified the proposed Constitutional Treaty. Spain approved the Treaty in its referendum on 20 February. A referendum will be held in the Netherlands on 1 June. In the UK, the EU Bill was introduced on 25 January and had its Second Reading on 9 February.

Sudan

20. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on UK relations with Sudan. [218413]

Mr. Mullin: The UK has full diplomatic relations with Sudan. The Government regularly meets leaders of the major political parties and was heavily involved in negotiations of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed on 9 January 2005. We are committed to helping the parties implement the agreement. We continue to press strongly the Government of Sudan and the rebels to resolve the conflict in Darfur peacefully, within the framework of the CPA.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* European Union and *(b)* African Union counterparts on how to ensure the safety of aid workers in Sudan. [205907]

Mr. Mullin: I would like to apologise for the delay in replying.

We are greatly concerned about the deteriorating security situation in Darfur and deplore the recent deaths of the Save the Children UK and Médecins Sans Frontières aid workers.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary spoke to the African Union (AU) Chairman, President Obasanjo on 22 December. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development and I met, separately, with AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Said Djinnet, in London on 21 December. We are working with the AU, both bilaterally and through the EU, to improve security in Darfur for aid workers and the civilian population.

We also regularly raise the issue of security, and the resultant effects on the delivery of humanitarian assistance, with EU partners. The Foreign Secretary last discussed this issue with EU counterparts at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 13 December.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Sudanese Government on clemency in the case of Nagune Idin Abdallah, who is sentenced to death. [219335]

Mr. Mullin: We regularly press the Sudanese Government to abolish the death penalty. We discussed Mr. Abdallah's case at the joint Sudan-EU human rights dialogue meeting on 24 February 2005, during which the Government agreed to provide further information on his case. We will continue to pursue this and other such cases in Sudan through our embassy in Khartoum.

Iraq

21. **Ms Munn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the establishment and growth of local women's organisations in Iraq. [218414]

Mr. Rammell: Since the fall of Saddam regime, more than 1,500 non-governmental organisations including women's groups have registered with the Iraqi Government. Following a Department for International Development study in 2004, DFID has supported projects encouraging Iraqi women to vote, and to increase their awareness of the political process as well as fostering partnerships between international women's organisations and national women's groups.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on investigations being undertaken by OLAF concerning illegal exports to Iraq indicating *(a)* what types of material are subject to investigation, *(b)* what the country of origin was of each type of material, *(c)* what the nationality is of those persons under investigation and *(d)* what the dates were of the alleged incidents; what the nature is of UK participation in the inquiries; and what involvement Communities staff have had in the inquiries. [216065]

Mr. MacShane: We are not aware of any investigations currently being undertaken by OLAF concerning illegal exports to Iraq.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what investigations were held following the loss of nuclear material held by Iraq after the first Gulf War; and if he will make a statement. [217706]

Mr. MacShane: Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conducted thorough investigations into Iraq's nuclear weapons programme and made a full inventory of Iraq's known holdings of nuclear material in the 1990s. They reported to the UN regularly on their activities.

Following reports of looting in the aftermath of the recent conflict, IAEA inspectors conducted an inventory check in June 2003, and reported that, although some uranium compounds could have been dispersed, they were not of a quantity or type sensitive from a proliferation point of view.

Subsequently, as part of their regular inspections under Iraq's nuclear safeguards agreement, IAEA inspectors visited the al-Tuwaitha site in August 2004, on which occasion they confirmed that no nuclear materials subject to IAEA safeguards were unaccounted for.

Reports received in October 2004 concerning the disappearance of large amounts of high explosives and other dual-use materials are being investigated by the Iraq Survey Group. No nuclear material is reported as missing. We expect them to publish a report on their findings shortly as an addendum to their October 2004 comprehensive report.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what grounds the Government have refused to publish the letters of Dr. Rod Barton of the Iraq Survey Group concerning weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. [218175]

Mr. MacShane: The Government have not received any formal request to publish Dr. Barton's letters.

United States

22. **Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last discussed nuclear proliferation with his US counterparts. [218415]

Mr. MacShane: Nuclear proliferation is an issue that is always on the agenda for discussions with my US counterparts, and was last discussed during the visit of Dr. Condoleeza Rice on 4 February.

Libya

23. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations with Libya. [218416]

Mr. Rammell: Libya's decisions to formally accept responsibility for the Lockerbie bombing, renounce terrorism and take action to dismantle its Weapons of Mass Destruction development programmes have been important and welcome developments.

We are developing further our political, cultural and commercial ties, while continuing to seek progress on the issues of difference that remain between us.

China (Military Technology)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assurances he gave to US Senator Lugar regarding EU restrictions on arms sales to prevent sensitive US technologies being diverted to China. [218387]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met Senator Lugar, in his capacity as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, during his visit to Washington on 24 January. They briefly discussed the EU's controls on arms exports to China.

With regard to the ongoing review of the EU's arms embargo on China, the Foreign Secretary noted the conclusion reached at the European Council in December 2004 That

> "the result of any decision should not be an increase of arms exports from EU Member States to China, either in quantative nor in qualitative terms".

As the Foreign Secretary told the Committee on Strategic Export Controls on 12 January, the US has a legitimate and understandable interest both in the effectiveness of the EU's system of arms control and in the stability of the East Asian region. The review of the EU Arms Embargo, and any decisions arising from it are, of course, for the EU alone. But the EU will take all relevant factors into account.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205616]

Mr. Rammell: The Department has spent the following amount on new furniture, including freight costs and domestic equipment, since 1997:

	£ million
1997–98	17.7
1998–99	14.9
1999–2000	17.7
2000–01	16.0
2001–02	15.0
2002–03	13.0
2003–04	10.0

The Department does not normally hire furniture for permanent use.

The costs of hiring furniture for temporary use cannot be separately identified.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Council (EEC—Countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217920]

Mr. Rammell: During this period, the EU-GCC Joint Council met on 17 May 2004 in Brussels. The UK was represented by a Foreign and Commonwealth Office official.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EEC—Yemen) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217921]

Mr. Rammell: During this period, the EC-Yemen Joint Co-operation Committee met on 6–7 October 2003 in Sana'a. The UK was represented by a Foreign and Commonwealth Office official.

EU Presidency

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what dates have been agreed for meetings of *(a)* the European Council and *(b)* configurations of the Council of the European Union during the UK presidency of the European Union. [218052]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* During the UK Presidency of the EU the following provisional dates have been agreed for:

(a) European Council:

27–28 October 2005 and 15–16 December 2005.

(b) Councils of the European Union:

General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC)

18–19 July
24–25 October
21–22 November
12–13 December

ECOFIN

12–13 July
11 October
8 November
24 November
6 December

Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)

26 July
13–14 October
1–2 December

Agriculture and Fisheries

18–19 July
19–20 September
24–25 October
22–24 November
19–21 December

Transport, Telecom and Energy

6–7 October
1–2 December

Competitiveness

11 October
28–29 November

Education, Youth and Culture

14–15 November

Environment

17 October
5 December

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs

3–4 November
8–9 December

A copy of the official calendar of the UK Presidency of the EU has been placed in the Library of the House.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress of the recent discussions between the UK and Spain concerning Gibraltar. [216076]

Mr. Rammell: Following my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's joint statement on Gibraltar with his Spanish counterpart on 27 October 2004, representatives of the UK, Gibraltar and Spanish Governments met on 8–9 December 2004 to agree modalities for a new, trilateral forum. A first meeting of the new forum was held on 11 February 2005. These talks covered a range of issues including telecoms, the airport, nuclear submarines and delays at the border crossing with Spain.

Religious Organisations (EC Funding)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those religious organisations that are in receipt of financial support from the European Communities. [216064]

Mr. MacShane: The Commission does not provide core funding for any religious organisations. Some cross-faith bodies and religious linked NGOs have received EU grants to carry out specific projects.

The Commission does not maintain a list of religious organisations to which grants have been made, but selected projects for 2003 and 2004 can be found at the following URLs:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/ong/sele2004.pdf

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/ong/sele2003.pdf

http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/subvention/doc/subv-sg-accordees_2003_en.pdf

Russia

Mr. O'Hara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what funds his Department has allocated for programmes to help the sharing of information and experience to support the institutional framework for civil society in Russia. [218403]

Mr. Rammell: This financial year the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has spent over £900,000 on projects that cover human rights, governance and democracy issues in Russia. The aim is to have a positive impact on the development of civil society in Russia.

One of the larger projects is being implemented with the help of the Novosibirsk School of Civic Society and aims to improve the interaction between local government and local media.

Another, co-funded with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, is contributing to the process of reform of regional-level public administration, intended to improve standards in public life.

Funding for financial year 2005–06 is currently under discussion. The focus in Russia will be on increasing respect for the rule of law and freedom of expression, both of which are critical to developing civil society.

Somalia

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the Government are providing to the exiled Somali Government to enable it to return to Mogadishu. [218182]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Moray (Angus Robertson) on 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 664W.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between the Government and international partners regarding the prospects for *(a)* stabilisation and *(b)* the establishment of an effective government in Somalia. [218184]

Mr. Mullin: We are working closely with the international community in Nairobi and with our EU partners to support the Somalia National Reconciliation process, which created new Transitional Federal institutions. We continue to support the early return of the Transitional Federal Government to Somalia, and to assist it with internal reconciliation and the restoration of good governance, stability and the rule of law.

South Africa

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what investigations there have been into the loss of decommissioned nuclear weapons and related material and equipment following South Africa's abandonment of its nuclear weapons programme; and if he will make a statement. [217710]

Mr. MacShane: Upon accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1991, South Africa submitted an initial report providing a full inventory of its nuclear materials. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conducted a number of inspections to verify the completeness of South Africa's report. They concluded that there was no evidence that the inventory was incomplete.

In 1993, however, the then South African Prime Minister F. W. de Klerk revealed that South Africa had been pursuing a nuclear weapons programme in the 1970s and 1980s, but that this programme had been abandoned in 1989. A team of IAEA technical experts travelled to South Africa in April 1993 to assess whether South Africa had indeed abandoned its programme. They found nothing that was inconsistent with South Africa's declaration.

Subsequently, under South Africa's nuclear safeguards agreement with the IAEA, inspectors have carried out regular checks to ensure that there has been no diversion of nuclear materials. They have not reported any discrepancy to the IAEA Board of Governors. A further reassurance is provided by the adoption by South Africa of an Additional Protocol to its safeguards agreement.

Togo

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment his Department has made of the political situation in Togo; and if he will make a statement. [217988]

Mr. Rammell: We are concerned about the events following the death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema. We have urged the Togolese authorities to hold early credible and democratic presidential elections. We support the stance taken by the African Union and Economic Community of West African States, who are pressing the Togolese authorities to adhere to their constitution.

Tsunami

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many bodies of British victims of the tsunami have been *(a)* identified and *(b)* repatriated. [216224]

Mr. Mullin: As at 16.00 on 23 February, we have confirmed that 65 British nationals died in the tsunami. Of those, 35 have been repatriated to the UK. The discrepancy is explained by the fact that some bodies await repatriation, others were either buried or cremated locally, and some were resident in third countries, to where they have been repatriated.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the time taken to identify the British victims of the tsunami; and what assessment he has made of the merits of using fingerprinting instead of DNA testing. [216225]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware that delays in identifying victims adds to the distress of the families concerned. But there can be no short cuts in the Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) process and, even when bodies are found, the process of formally identifying them can be difficult and lengthy. More details of the process can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website, www.fco.gov.uk/tsunami.

The police have considered the merits of the three main ways in which bodies may be identified. Dental records, fingerprints and DNA may each be of value, either separately or in conjunction. The approach is decided on a case-by-case basis, because the precise value of each method depends on factors such as the condition of the body and the availability of ante mortem data. Most matches so far have been based on dental records.

Uganda

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK was represented at the recent launch of the opposition Forum for Democratic Change in Uganda. [218266]

Mr. Mullin: The UK was represented at the launch of the Forum for Democratic Change's (FDC) new headquarters and its party platform by officials from our High Commission in Kampala.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials in London and Kampala are in regular contact with the FDC leadership and have a productive working relationship.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the level of support by President Museveni for Robert Mugabe's land policies. [218269]

Mr. Mullin: Our High Commissioner in Uganda met with President Museveni on 16 November and made clear the Government's views on land reform in Zimbabwe. He also expressed our disappointment at the comments made by the Ugandan President while on his visit to Zimbabwe.

TREASURY

Babies (Mortality Rate)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the mortality rate was for babies born prematurely with a birth weight of *(a)* less than 1500g and *(b)* less than 2500g in each year since 1975. [218112]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Andrew Lansley, dated 1 March 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the mortality rate was for babies born prematurely with a birth weight of *(a)* less than 1,500g and *(b)* less than 2,500g in each year since 1975. (218112)

The Office for National Statistics does not collect information on gestation at birth registration. Information on mortality rates of babies born prematurely is therefore not available.

The attached table shows numbers and rates of infant deaths for babies weighing *(a)* under 1,500g and *(b)* under 2,500g for the years 1978 to 2003. Data prior to 1978 are not readily available.

Infant deaths by birthweight (a) less than 1,500g and (b) less than 2,500g in England and Wales, numbers and rates: 1978 to 2003

	(a) Under 1,500 grams		(b) Under 2,500 grams	
	Number	[1]Rate	Number	[1]Rate
1978	2,106	474.0	3,689	94.5
1979	2,226	485.9	3,875	95.0
1980	2,075	427.3	3,639	85.8
1981	1,633	345.7	2,850	72.1
1982	1,581	331.3	2,691	67.4
1983	1,763	332.3	2,919	69.4
1984	1,752	315.4	2,847	66.8
1985	1,783	302.2	2,899	64.9
1986	1,839	302.4	2,988	65.3
1987	1,900	292.1	2,944	63.3
1988	1,967	302.1	3,046	66.7
1989	1,744	266.4	2,650	58.9
1990	1,673	257.4	2,476	53.8
1991	1,608	248.4	2,378	51.3
1992	1,593	239.8	2,237	49.9
1993	1,590	236.9	2,191	49.3
1994	1,605	220.3	2,155	47.7
1995	1,680	221.5	2,277	48.1
1996	1,800	227.3	2,380	50.4
1997	1,787	227.0	2,368	49.6
1998	1,698	219.4	2,231	47.0
1999	1,714	214.7	2,212	46.9
2000	1,595	211.7	2,092	45.7
2001	1,517	202.9	2,004	44.4
2002	1,494	200.4	1,963	42.7
2003	1,580	199.3	2,073	43.6

[1] Rates per 1,000 live births

Source:

Monitor Series DH3 'Infant, childhood and perinatal mortality' (1978–1985) Series DH3 'Mortality statistics: Childhood, infant and perinatal' (1986–2002) Health Statistics Quarterly, No. 24, Winter 2004, pages 66–70 (2003)

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218672]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury has in place formal policies for managing sickness absence, and has a positive policy on disability, which also applies to staff suffering from cancer. The Treasury provides for a wide range of alternative working patterns, temporary reduced working hours and amendment to working patterns, part-time working as a result of sickness, home working and other rehabilitation support including workload and role adjustments for staff with health problems.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Inland Revenue will compel investment in an investment of the Revenue's choice in the event that an Islamic parent cannot find an investment vehicle for the child trust fund that complies with Islamic beliefs. [218226]

Mr. Timms: Parents have 12 months from the date of the issue of their Child Trust Fund vouchers in which to open an account for their child.

The Government are concerned that all children should have the opportunity to have a Child Trust Fund account so, if an account is not opened within 12 months, the Inland Revenue will open a Stakeholder Child Trust Fund account for the child. The Stakeholder Child Trust Fund is a low-cost, risk-controlled, equities-based account, from which parents can transfer at any time to a provider of their own choice.

The Government very much hopes that parents will be able to find Shari'a compliant investments either by choosing appropriate funds through an approved

stockbroker or through a specially-designed Shari'a compliant account as the market develops over the coming months.

The CTF regulations were specifically designed to ensure Shari'a accounts could be developed to give market operators flexibility to meet a full range of investment requirements.

Deaths (Civil Registration)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to make available to the financial sector details on deaths known to civil registration authorities. [218450]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the Registrar General for England and Wales. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. John Pugh, dated 1 March 2005:

As Registrar General for England and Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on plans to make available death registration information to the financial sector. (218450)

The Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 is quite specific as to the means of access to records of deaths held by the Registrar General and by registration officers. The Act gives persons the right to search the indexes in order to identify the entries they are looking for and to obtain certified copies (certificates) on payment of the statutory fee. Neither the Registrar General nor registration officers have any powers to disclose or share information in any other way.

Proposals in the form of the draft Regulatory Reform (Registration of Births and Deaths) (England and Wales) Order 2004, presented to Parliament on 22 July 2004, contained a draft provision that would have enabled the Registrar General to provide list cleaning services to financial sector companies in relation to death registrations. The House of Commons' Regulatory Reform Committee and House of Lords' Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee, whose first scrutiny reports were published in December 2004, decided that the draft Order should not proceed to its second stage of scrutiny as it was an inappropriate use of the order-making powers in the Regulatory Reform Act 2001. The Government is now considering its next steps for modernisation of the civil registration service.

We continue to meet and discuss with representative Private Sector Bodies how this issue can be addressed.

Economic Growth

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on trends in economic growth in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK since 1997. [218253]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Stephen Hepburn, dated 1 March 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about economic growth in the Jarrow, South Tyneside, the North East and the UK. I am replying in his absence. (218253)

Jarrow constituency is in Tyneside (NUTS3 area), which is currently the lowest geographic level at which regional Gross Value Added[1] (GVA) is published.

The GVA estimates in table A and GVA growth rates in table B are based on regional GVA published in December 2004. Regional GVA data are at current prices and therefore do not take inflation into account. GVA for the United Kingdom and North East (NUTS1 area) have been published up to 2003. GVA for Tyneside (NUTS3 area) has been published up to 2002. These data are available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=7359

[1] Information presented here is Gross Value Added (GVA) which is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) less taxes (plus subsidies) on products.

Table A: Gross Value Added (£ million) 1997–2003

Area	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Tyneside	8,680	9,181	9,568	9,982	10,625	11,211	n/a
North East	25,253	26,219	26,959	27,910	29,287	30,655	32,340
United Kingdom	719,565	761,539	797,116	838,490	881,163	926,275	976,148

Table B: Percentage year on year growth of Gross Value Added 1998–2003

Area	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Tyneside	5.8	4.2	4.3	6.4	5.5	n/a
North East	3.8	2.8	3.5	4.9	4.7	5.5
United Kingdom	5.8	4.7	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.4

Employment Statistics

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the average age of women employed within the *(a)* manufacturing and *(b)* service sector was in (i) Jarrow constituency, (ii) South Tyneside, (iii) the North East and (iv) the UK in each year since 1997; [218249]

(2) what the average age of people employed within the *(a)* manufacturing industry and *(b)* service sector was in (i) Jarrow constituency, (ii) South Tyneside, (iii) the North East and (iv) the UK in each year since 1997; [218250]

(3) how many women have been employed within the *(a)* manufacturing industry and *(b)* service sector in (i) Jarrow constituency, (ii) South Tyneside, (iii) the North East and (iv) the UK in each year since 1997. [218251]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen Hepburn, dated 1 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about employment. (218249, 218250, 218251)

Tables 1 to 3 provide the available information. In the cases of the tables for average ages of women and of all employees, figures are available for the years 1999 to 2004 but not for 1997 and 1998.

As with any sample survey, estimates from the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling variability.

Table 1: Women employees in the manufacturing and service sectors in selected areas thousands

Thousand

12 months ending February	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Manufacturing sector[1]								
Jarrow Constituency	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	1
South Tyneside	4	4	4	3	2	3	3	2
North East	55	55	52	47	41	46	44	37
United Kingdom	1,253	1,277	1,271	1,162	1,115	1,119	1,046	950
Service sector[1]								
Jarrow Constituency	12	13	13	14	13	14	15	14
South Tyneside	23	22	22	23	23	23	25	25
North East	393	391	389	398	411	418	421	431
United Kingdom	8,979	9,389	9,599	9,601	9,924	10,209	10,380	10,547

[1] Manufacturing and service sectors are based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 1992

Note:

Some of these estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should therefore be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: Average age of women employees in the manufacturing and service sectors in selected areas

Years[2]

12 months ending February	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Manufacturing sector[1]						
Jarrow Constituency	35	41	38	37	39	39
South Tyneside	35	39	37	39	39	42
North East	36	37	37	38	38	40
United Kingdom	38	38	38	39	39	40
Service sector[1]						
Jarrow Constituency	36	37	39	39	39	39
South Tyneside	38	38	39	38	38	39
North East	38	38	39	38	39	39
United Kingdom	38	38	38	39	39	39

[1] Manufacturing and service sectors.

[2] Ages are given in completed years are based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 1992.

Note:

Some of these estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should therefore be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 3: Average age of all employees in the manufacturing and service sectors in selected areas

Years[2]

12 months ending February	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Manufacturing sector[1]						
Jarrow Constituency	37	37	37	38	40	42
South Tyneside	37	37	38	39	40	43
North East	38	37	39	39	39	40
United Kingdom	39	39	39	40	40	40
Service sector[1]						
Jarrow Constituency	36	38	39	39	39	38
South Tyneside	38	38	38	38	38	38
North East	38	38	38	38	38	39
United Kingdom	38	38	38	38	39	39

[1] Manufacturing and service sectors are based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 1992.

[2] Ages are given in completed years.

Note:

Some of these estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should therefore be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

EU Budget

Kate Hoey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the EC draft budget for 2005 to be completed. [218737]

Mr. Timms: The 2005 EC budget was adopted by the European Parliament, following conciliation with the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, on 16 December 2004.

EU Communications

Kate Hoey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what budget was allocated for EU Communications in each of the past five financial years; and what is budgeted for the next financial year. [218782]

Mr. Timms: The annual budget of the European Communities details the resources allocated to EU Communications each calendar year. Copies of the EC budgets for 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 are available in the Library of the House. The 2005 EC budget will be deposited following its publication which is expected in March.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Sub-committee (i) EEC-Korea, (ii) EEC-United States of America and (iii) EEC-Israel met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [218436]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Committee—EEC-Andorra met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218460]

Dawn Primarolo: The committees are the responsibility of the European Commission. Member states are not involved.

European Constitution

Kate Hoey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 701W, on the European Constitution, when the Foreign and Commonwealth Office budget for informing the public about the EU and the EU constitutional treaty was agreed with the Treasury; and what methodology was used to calculate the budget. [218783]

Mr. Timms: For the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the 2002 spending review set an overall resource budget of £1,503 million and an overall capital budget of £136 million for 2004–05. Decisions on allocations from within these totals are for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list budgets the Treasury has agreed with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for financial year 2004–05 which could be used to fund the provision of public information on the EU constitution. [218784]

Mr. Timms: The 2002 Spending Review set the Foreign and Commonwealth Office an overall resource budget of £1,503 million and an overall capital budget of £136 million for 2004–05. Decisions on allocations from within these totals are a matter for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Health Expenditure

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the UK's GDP was spent on health in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* public and *(b)* private expenditure; and what estimate he has made of the current EU average health expenditure as a proportion of GDP. [218125]

Mr. Boateng: The information about UK health spending is in the following table.

According to the latest figures from the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), average total health expenditure in the EU in 2002 was 8.5 per cent. of GDP.

UK Health expenditure as a percentage of GDP

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Public Expenditure	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.6	6.0	6.3	6.7	6.9
Private expenditure	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4
Total UK expenditure	6.7	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.3	7.7	8.1	8.3

Notes:

1. The public expenditure figures are taken from the National Statistics release of 2 December 2004.
2. Private spending is calculated in a similar way as for ONS Health Accounts. From 2003–04, it is assumed to carry forward as a constant share of GDP.
3. The EU figure is a simple average of the then 15 EU countries; it is not weighted by country population.

Malaria Vaccines

Tom Brake: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what agreements with the private sector he has reached since his announcement on 24 November 2004 on the advance purchases of malaria vaccines; and what deadline he has set for these agreements to be reached. [218144]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor announced last November that the UK Government, working with other Governments, was ready to enter into legally binding advance purchase contracts in order to speed up the development of malaria vaccines. The UK intends to take this forward during the course of its Presidency of the G7/8 and as a first step, at their meeting in London in February, G7 Finance Ministers agreed to explore the use of advance purchase commitments. The UK Government will also continue to consult stakeholders, including the pharmaceutical industry, on the parameters of these contracts.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to visit the London borough of Havering this year. [209493]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Treasury Ministers make many visits across the UK and will continue to do so this year.

Mr. Nelson Mandela

Llew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last met Mr. Nelson Mandela; and what matters were discussed. [215264]

Mr. Gordon Brown: President Mandela spoke to the G7 Finance Ministers' meeting ahead of their meeting on Friday 4 February to urge them to take action on 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief, trade justice and additional aid to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Near Cash

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what definition he uses of near cash. [218781]

Mr. Boateng: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Mid-Norfolk (Mr. Simpson) on 5 July 2004, *Official Report*, columns 600–01W.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply substantively to the question tabled by the right hon. Member for Birkenhead on 7 February, reference 215780. [218694]

Dawn Primarolo: I did so on 23 February.

Revenue and Customs

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consultations he plans to hold with trade unions on the move to strategic zones within Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. [217137]

Dawn Primarolo: The concept of strategic zones for the Department's compliance work has been widely discussed with staff and trade unions, and is now receiving additional focus in ongoing departmental planning. The Union of Senior Revenue Officials (USRO) recently described the consultation on the subject as 'exemplary'. The planning work will also define the boundaries of the zones and identify the scope to move work into them and the implications for departmental presence elsewhere. This work will then be discussed by the Department's board and with Ministers for further consideration.

Savings

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of the Savings Gateway in each of the first five years after its launch. [218254]

Mr. Timms: In the pre-Budget report the Chancellor announced the launch of the larger Saving Gateway pilot for 2005. Evidence gathered through this pilot will be used to evaluate the future role matching could play in Government support for savings, both for those on low incomes and more generally. The new pilot will cost £15 million and all accounts opened will last for 18 months.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 4 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1186W, on savings plans, what methodology was used to calculate *(a)* that the estimated current cost of tax-exempt savings plans with an annual premium limit of £300 is around £70 million per year and *(b)* that increasing the limit to £600 per annum would cost an extra £30 million; and if he will make a statement. [218047]

Mr. Timms: The estimated £70 million annual cost of TESPs is based on assets under management data provided by the Association of Friendly Societies combined with assumptions on average returns and the rate of tax that would have been paid on them in an alternative taxed savings vehicle. The estimated £30 million cost of increasing the limit to £600 is based upon assumptions about the additional number of TESPs that would be opened and additional contributions made to take advantage of the higher limit.

Tax Credits

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* working and *(b)* child tax credit award notices issued to couples in 2003–04 omitted the earnings of one of the partners resulting in an overpayment which the Revenue is now seeking to recover; and if he will make a statement. [218542]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available. The Inland Revenue is aware of a small number of occasions in 2003–04 when a tax credit award notice omitted the earnings of one partner. No separate records are available of precisely how many cases were involved.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the Stroud constituency have been required to pay back overpayments of *(a)* working tax credit, *(b)* child tax credit and *(c)* both working and child tax credit. [218643]

Dawn Primarolo: Details of how overpayments are recovered are provided in the Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit." Wherever practical overpayments are recovered out of future tax credit payments. Where entitlement has ended and there remains an overpayment to be recovered, the Inland Revenue issues claimants with a 'Notice to Pay'. Within the guidelines of Code of Practice 26 the claimant has the option to choose to pay back an overpayment over 12 months.

Information on the number of households in Stroud sent notices to pay is not available.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cambodia

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what development aid has

been provided by the UK to Cambodia in each year since 1997; and whether the aid programme has been tied to (*a*) democratic and (*b*) economic reforms. [218183]

Hilary Benn: UK Government development assistance to Cambodia since 1997 can be broken down as follows:

	UK Government (£ million financial year)	*UK share of EC assistance (£ million calendar year)*
1997–98	4.8	2.9
1998–99	5.5	3.0
1999–2000	7.0	2.2
2000–01	7.5	3.9
2001–02	6.4	2.8
2002–03	9.8	2.2
2003–04	8.5	—

DFID's assistance is focused on Public Financial Management, HIV and AIDS, delivering health services to poor people and strengthening local government systems to enable poor people to have a say in decisions that affect them.

We do not make our aid conditional on specific policy decisions by partner governments, or attempt to impose policy choices on them. Instead we agree with partners on the purpose for which aid is being given, and agree benchmarks to assess progress.

In Cambodia, the Government sets benchmarks to monitor progress with implementing its poverty reduction strategy in discussion with donors at an annual meeting and these are monitored together throughout the year. These include benchmarks relating to governance, the economy and democratic processes. These benchmarks facilitate a dialogue between Government and donors on progress but our assistance is not tied to these benchmarks.

Iran Earthquake

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment has been made of the extent of the damage caused by the Zarand earthquake in South Eastern Iran; and if he will make a statement; [218992]

(2) what assistance the UK has offered Iran following the Zarand earthquake in South Eastern Iran. [218993]

Hilary Benn: The Earthquake struck near the town of Zarand on 22 February at 05.55 am local time registering at 6.4 on the Richter scale. The Government of Iran report 490 deaths and 900 people injured. 59 villages and around 35,000 people have been affected.

The Iranian Government has not requested international assistance and no humanitarian agency is planning to launch an appeal for assistance. The Government of Iran and the Iranian Red Crescent Society are responding to the needs.

Following the news of the tragedy, DFID's Emergency Response Team was immediately activated and put on standby to provide assistance should the Iranian Government requested it. The Iranian officials informed the UK embassy in Tehran that international search and rescue teams were not required and other forms of international assistance are not needed at present. DFID officials remain in close contact with partners on the ground and continue to monitor the situation.

Low Income Countries (Expenditure)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much each low income country has spent on (*a*) health, (*b*) education and (*c*) debt repayment in each year since 2001. [218158]

Hilary Benn: The latest World Bank 'World Development Indicators' report (2004) shows health expenditure per capita and health expenditure as a percentage of GDP for each country in the world where data is available (Table 2.14). The most recent data are for 2001. I have arranged for a document entitled 'Tables for Parliamentary Question UIN 218158' to be deposited in the Libraries of the House. This contains a table on health spend taken from the World Development Indicators online database to which DFID subscribes. Data can also be accessed on line at http://www.worldbank.org/data/databytopic/health.html. Select 'Go to Health Topic Indicators' and then the countries or country groupings of interest.

The hard copy of the World Development Indicators report (2004) also has in Table 2.10, data on education inputs. This table can be downloaded from http://www.worldbank.org/data/databytopic/education.html This shows the percentage of total government expenditure on education (2001–02) and public expenditure per primary, secondary and tertiary student (1990–91 and 2001–02). A copy of the table will be deposited in the Library in the document mentioned previously; 'Tables for Parliamentary Question UIN 218158'.

Information on debt repayment is available in another World Bank publication 'Global Development Finance'. The latest edition is from 2004. 'Net flows and transfers on debt' are shown in Table 5 of Volume II of this report, which gives 'country tables'. This table shows average data for the period 1997–2001 and data for 2002. It will also be deposited in the Library of the House in the document 'Tables for Parliamentary Question UIN 218158'. It is available online from: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/RESEARCH/EXTPROSPECTS/GDFEXT/GDFEXT2004/0,,contentMDK:20177059≥menuPK:335441≥pagePK:64097019≥piPK:64096667≥theSitePK:335432.00.html

An IMF publication 'Government Finance Statistics' provides more data which should allow direct comparison of government expenditure on health and education. This document is available in the House of Commons Library.

Hard copies of all the reports mentioned above are available in the House of Commons Library.

Malaria Vaccines

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has spent on the development of malaria vaccines in each year since 2001. [218145]

Hilary Benn: To date DFID has not directly funded any research into the development of malaria vaccines. However, the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, recently announced that the Government are ready to work with other governments to enter into agreements to purchase malaria vaccine in advance in order to ensure a secure market. This funding mechanism, known as the Advanced Purchase Commitment (APC), will aim to attract private investment into vaccine development and production. The Treasury estimates that an APC for malaria would cost the UK £48 million per year giving a total of £288 million over the next six years.

Ministry of Defence

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been paid by his Department to the Ministry of Defence in each year since 2001, broken down by project. [218151]

Hilary Benn: Since 2001, there have been three occasions, including the current Indian Ocean disaster, that DFID has requested the Ministry of Defence's assistance to provide relief to countries affected by disasters. In 2001 following the Gujarat earthquake, DFID refunded £98,000 to the MOD for the transportation of UK search and rescue teams to the disaster site. In 2004, following hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne, DFID refunded £13,000 to the MOD for the replacement of relief items held on the naval task force that were provided, at DFID's request, to the affected countries. The marginal costs of MOD assistance in support of the humanitarian relief effort in response to the Indian Ocean earthquake-Tsunami is estimated at about £2.5 million.

Tsunami (Military Assistance)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Ministry of Defence concerning charges for services relating to the relief operation following the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. [218152]

Hilary Benn: I have not had discussions with the MOD concerning charges for services relating to the relief operation following the Indian Ocean disaster. I am content that the costs which were agreed in advance, are competitive with commercial rates and are based on marginal costing.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost to his Department is of hiring *(a)* a UK military helicopter and *(b)* an equivalent private helicopter for a period of (i) one day, (ii) one week and (iii) one month to provide relief support in the Indian Ocean region. [218153]

Hilary Benn: Ministry of Defence (MOD) helicopters were not used to provide direct relief support on behalf of DFID in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean disaster, but Lynx helicopters were used to transport naval personnel from HMS Chatham to Sri Lanka. The chartering of helicopters is usually quoted in a rate per flying hour. The Super Puma helicopters chartered by DFID for use by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) do not have an exact UK military equivalent; however the MOD quote a figure of approximately £732 per flying hour for a Puma while the civilian charter quote a figure of approximately £1,981 per flying hour for a Super Puma. The carrying capacity of a Puma is 5,510 lbs, while the carrying capacity of a Super Puma is 9,920 lbs.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost to his Department is of hiring *(a)* a UK military plane and *(b)* an equivalent commercial plane to deliver an equivalent consignment of aid from London to (i) Indonesia, (ii) Sri Lanka and (iii) Thailand; and if he will make a statement. [218154]

Hilary Benn: To date, no single route has been served by both a military and a civilian plane on DFID's behalf. Calculations of costs per task are based upon the flying time between the two locations. There are other variables such as airport handling charges but these would be common to both military and civilian charter or repositioning costs. In comparing costs of military and civilian aircraft carrying out similar tasks with the same payload, the best comparator is the rate charged per flying hour. For the C-17, tasked by DFID to transport relief items to countries affected by the Indian Ocean disaster, the MOD quoted an hourly flying rate of approximately £1,975.

There are no direct civilian equivalents of military aircraft and payloads are different, but the approximate rate for the civilian aircraft Antonov 124 is £4,225, £795 for the Ilyushin-76 and £483 for the Antonov 12. The C-17 has a payload of 75 tonnes; the Antonov 124 has a payload of 120 tonnes, the Ilyushin-76, 40 tonnes and the Antonov 12,15 tonnes.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education Spending

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will break down by project the activities to support all objectives in Annex B of the Resource Budget of the 2004 Annual Report; if she will provide a similar breakdown for the 2003 Annual Report; and if she will estimate the corresponding expenditure for each year until 2007–08. [218680]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to Chapter 2 of the same document which provides a more detailed breakdown of how the money is to be spent and to the subsequent chapters which describe the plans in detail. The 2004 Annual report includes earlier years and plans to 2005–06. Detailed plans beyond that date have not yet been finalised. Annex B and Chapter 2 present figures on slightly different bases as Annex B includes expenditure with the Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) and Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) whereas Chapter 2 refers only to DEL. Within the figures in Annex B the Teachers' Pension Scheme is totally in AME as is the Educational Maintenance Allowance scheme from 2003–04 onwards. The small balancing

activity to reconcile to the AME total shown in Annex B is in Further Education, Adult Learning and Skills and Lifelong Learning 'Other'.

The Department does not account on a project basis, the majority of programmes are delivered through partners such as LEAs, NDPBs and other grant recipients and it is their responsibility to control delivery.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Socrates Committee and Erasmus and Comenius subcommittees and (ii) Tempus Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [218312]

Dr. Howells: (i) The Socrates Committee met once during the Italian presidency, twice during the Irish presidency, and once during the Dutch presidency. The meetings took place on 6–7 November 2003, 12–13 February 2004, 17–18 June and 11–12 November 2004 and all were held in Brussels. The meetings were attended by officials of the Joint International Unit (JIU) of my Department and the Department of Work and Pensions. The Socrates schools sub-committee did not meet during the Italian presidency, and met once during each of the Irish and Dutch presidencies. The meetings took place on 4 June 2004 and 8 November 2004 in Brussels and were attended by officials from JIU, and a representative of the British Council in its role as UK National Agency for part of the programme. The Socrates Higher Education sub-committee met on 23–24 October 2003, 1–2 June 2004 and 29 October 2004. The meetings were attended by officials from JIU, and a representative from UK Socrates-Erasmus Council as the UK National Agency for Erasmus.

(ii) The Tempus Committee did not meet under the Italian presidency, and met once during each of the Irish and Dutch presidencies on 3 February 2004 and 13 July 2004 in Brussels. The meetings were attended by officials from my Department and, on 3 February 2004, by a representative from the UK Socrates-Erasmus Council.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on the prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the EC-United States of America Joint Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214311]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

The EU-US Task Force met on 18 July 2003 in Rome, 27 October 2003 in Washington, 14 January 2004 in Dublin, 2 March 2004 in Washington, 23 March 2004 in Brussels, 6 May 2004 in Brussels, 26 May 2004 in Brussels, 14 July 2004 in Brussels and 26 October 2004 in Brussels. The Senior Level Group met on 25 September 2003 in Brussels, 12 November 2003 in Washington, 10 February 2004 in Brussels, 3 June 2004 in Brussels, 25 June 2004 in Dromoland 28 September 2004 in Washington and 6 December 2004 in Brussels. The presidency of the day represents other member states at these meetings and as such there were no British officials present at these meetings. Further information may be found at www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Home Start

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on Home Start in Chorley; and what funding can be accessed by Home Start in Chorley. [216561]

Margaret Hodge: Home Start Chorley was established in 1996. In 2003–04 the scheme supported 270 families and a total of 421 children.

The scheme is mainly funded through a national lottery grant with additional funding from the local primary care trust and social services department. The Department for Education and Skills funds Home Start UK at a national level but does not fund individual local schemes. Home Start UK's regional consultants coordinate "Funding, Strategic Planning and Financial" workshops and an annual regional forum to update schemes on current practice and available funding opportunities. Additionally, funding updates are provided at quarterly regional and six monthly chair's meetings.

Marriage Support Services

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions her Department has had with the Local Government Association on local authority support for marriage and relationship support services; and if she will make a statement. [216441]

Margaret Hodge: To our knowledge, no discussions have been held between the Local Government Association and the Department on local authority support for marriage and relationship support services.

Child Care Morecambe and Lunesdale

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places have been created in Morecambe and Lunesdale since 1997. [216785]

Margaret Hodge: The Department is unable to provide details of child care places for Morecambe and Lunesdale. However, from April 1999 to March 2004 Lancashire local authority increased the number of child care places in Lancashire by 9,826 registered and unregistered places. The registered child care places in Lancashire in March 2004 was 26,391 places.

School Adjudicator

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for each of the last five years, if she will list the cases referred to the school adjudicator in each of the last five years in respect of *(a)* admissions,

(b) school closures, (c) proposals to open new schools and (d) proposals to expand existing schools; and what the outcome of each case was. [218480]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 28 February 2005]*: This information is published each year by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator in their annual report. Copies, for each year since the office was created in April 1999, have been placed in the House Library.

School Attendance

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the percentage rate of school attendance in (a) Hartlepool and (b) England and Wales was in the last period for which figures are available. [218502]

Derek Twigg: The school attendance rate for Hartlepool for 2003–04 was 93.5 per cent. compared with 93.4 per cent. for England.

School Meals

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the average cost of the food content of school meals; and if she will make a statement. [218424]

Derek Twigg: Local education authorities publish details in their annual budget statements of sums delegated to schools for school meal provision, but this information does not include a breakdown detailing the sum allocated in respect of school meal ingredient costs. We cannot, therefore, provide the information requested. However, we are considering whether any changes are needed in the context of our future plans for improving the quality of school meals, which include stricter nutritional standards from 2006 and a school food trust.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what initiatives her Department is taking to reduce the numbers of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216642]

Derek Twigg: My Department is committed to managing sickness absence effectively and is working towards meeting the recommendations of the recently published report, "Managing Attendance in the Public Sector".

Managers are responsible for day to day sickness absence management. Absence data for each employee are recorded centrally and monitoring arrangements are in place that trigger when formal action must be taken. The Department's HR Business Partners work closely with managers to identify trends and problem areas and deliver tailored support and solutions. A pilot scheme is running bringing occupational health nurse advisers to headquarters buildings on a regular basis to provide advice and support on sickness absence. Sickness absence statistics are reported annually to Cabinet Office.

Other action taken to improve sickness absence rates include: introducing health awareness programmes, with screening for cholesterol and high blood pressure, to promote and encourage healthy lifestyle options; and a variety of fitness programmes available to staff. On National No Smoking Day, we will announce a package of support for smokers who want to quit as part of our commitment to become a smoke free workplace by 2006. Systems and practices are being developed, in line with HSE guidance, to help prevent work-related stress occurring.

Sure Start

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total expenditure on the Sure Start Strengthening Families Grant has been in each year that it has been in operation; and what the projected spending on this scheme is for the next three years. [217207]

Margaret Hodge: The Strengthening Families Grant represents the coming-together, in July 2004, of the Family Support Grant (FSG, originating in the Home Office) and the Marriage and Relationship Support Grant (MARS, originating in Department of Constitutional Affairs). Awards for this grant programme will become effective for financial year 2005–06. The fund allocation for this programme totals £11 million. The same spend is projected for the next three years. This will include committed funds for ongoing MARS and FSG grants and newly allocated SF grants.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on (a) the operation of the Sure Start programme in Gloucestershire, and (b) planned further schemes. [217221]

Margaret Hodge: Gloucestershire has two Sure Start local programmes.

Sure Start Barton, Tredworth and White City was approved in October 2000 and supports around 900 young children and their families living in these areas. Sure Start Cheltenham was approved in February 2003 and supports around 740 young children and their families living in the Hester's Way and Oakley, Whaddon, Lynmouth and Priors area of the district. Barton, Tredworth and White City Sure Start Local Programme have spent £1,214,000 on their capital projects and Cheltenham Sure Start Local Programme have had approximately half of their £1,075,000 capital allocation approved for specific projects in the area.

Both programmes deliver a wide range of child, family health and parental support services. Recent Sure Start Unit monitoring reports for the month September 2004 show that Sure Start Barton, Tredworth and White City saw around 35 per cent. of children that month and has visited all of families with newborn babies within the first two months of their child's life. Sure Start Cheltenham has visited around 70 per cent. of families with newborn babies within the first two months of their child's life. Evidence of impact from local evaluation of the Sure Start Barton, Tredworth and White City programme also shows that from a baseline of 51 per cent. of mothers breastfeeding at birth, the rate is now

57 per cent. The programme has also reported that activities associated with the 'Improving and Learning' objective has resulted in a 30 per cent. increase in the use of library services.

There is one mini Sure Start local programme (Dursley and Cam) in Stroud which was approved in December 2002. The programme received a revenue grant in 2004–05 of £100,000 to support the delivery of outreach and health services, family support and adult education. This programme is linked to a 50 place neighbourhood nursery (Treetops Nursery) in Dursley with additional outreach and family support being delivered from Rednock Community Centre in Dursley and from GL11 Community Project in Cam. Sure Start has contributed £256,000 in capital funding towards the nursery's integrated education and care facilities. We are also providing start up revenue grant funds of £270,000, available over three years to help ensure the Nursery is firmly established. This is being developed into a children's centre and is expected to be designated by March 2006. The children's centre will reach children and families in Dursley, Cam East and Cam West wards.

Gloucestershire has five neighbourhood nurseries delivering 190 new early education and childcare places. Gardners Lane Early Excellence Centre in Cheltenham was approved in 2002. It has received a revenue grant of £242,150 in 2004–05 and will continue to receive this level in 2005–06. It has had a one-off capital grant of £376,100. This centre is also being developed into a children's centre.

Gloucestershire county council is planning to create eight children's centres by April 2006. The locations of these children's centres are as follows: Treetops children's centre in Dursley ward; Hesters Way children's centre building on existing provision from the Cheltenham Sure Start local programme and the neighbourhood nursery in Hesters Way ward; Bartongate children's centre building on existing provision from Barton, Tredworth and White City Sure Start Local programme and the Neighbourhood Nursery in the Eastgate ward in Gloucester; Finlay children's centre building from the Gloucester Sure Start Local Programme on a school site and covering the Barton and Tredworth ward; Gardners Lane children's centre building on the Early Excellence centre and reaching those in the wards of St. Peter's, St. Paul's, Lower High Street and Swindon Village; Robinswood children's centre building from the Early Years centre in the Matson ward; Rowanfield children's centre building on Rowanfield Infants School in St. Mark's ward and Linden children's centre building on Linden Primary School covering Moreland and Westgate wards.

These centres will reach 4,731 children under five resident in the areas. 176 new child care places will mean that 469 full-time child care places are available within the eight areas. Gloucestershire have been given indicative allocations of £1 million for capital development and £355,000 of revenue funding for the development of these children's centres.

Schools (Surplus Places)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the projects to reduce surplus places funded through the Targeted Capital Fund in each of the last three years; what the cost of each project was; and how many places were lost under each project. [218478]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* In accordance with the Targeted Capital Fund programme, projects were accepted from local education authorities that included reductions in surplus places. Information on these projects, and the places lost per project, is not recorded centrally.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times she has used the powers under schedule 7 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 to require local education authorities to bring forward plans to reduce the number of surplus places. [218479]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* Local education authorities are responsible for balancing the supply of places in their area, to ensure schools serve the needs of their local communities and provide good quality education in the most cost effective way.

The Secretary of State's powers under schedule 7 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 are reserve powers, which have not yet had to be used.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Iraq

Mr. Cash: To ask the Solicitor-General what involvement *(a)* the Lord Chancellor and *(b)* Baroness Morgan had in preparation of the reply to the parliamentary question tabled by the hon. Member for Stone to the Prime Minister on 11 March 2003 on the legal basis for military intervention in Iraq to which the Attorney-General referred in evidence to the Butler Inquiry on 5 May 2004; and if she will make a statement. [218964]

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Solicitor-General where and in what buildings, the written statement made to Parliament on 17 March 2003 setting out the legal basis for the war in Iraq was prepared; and by whom. [219422]

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Solicitor-General (1) what discussions the Attorney-General had with respect to drafting the written answer of 17 March 2003, *Official Report, House of Lords*, column WA2; [219444]

(2) what advice the Attorney-General received, and from whom, prior to the writing of the written answer of 17 March 2003, *Official Report, House of Lords*, column WA2; [219445]

(3) whether the Attorney-General's written answer of 17 March 2003, *Official Report, House of Lords*, column WA2, was written by the Attorney-General. [219446]

The Solicitor-General: The Attorney-General's written answer of 17 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 515W, which I relayed to the House, was drawn

up in the office of the Attorney-General. Those involved were the Attorney-General and myself, two officials in our office, three officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Christopher Greenwood QC. The draft was also discussed with the then Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg. The Attorney-General was fully involved throughout the drafting process and personally finalised and approved the answer.

No other Minister or official was involved. In particular, neither Baroness Morgan of Huyton nor Lord Falconer of Thoroton, nor any official in the Prime Minister's office had any involvement whatever in the drafting of the answer. The Attorney-General has never said that they did so. As the Attorney-General has always made clear, he set out in the answer his own genuinely held, independent view that military action was lawful under the existing Security Council resolutions.

Parliamentary Questions

Lynne Jones: To ask the Solicitor-General how many officials were involved in drafting the parliamentary answer to Baroness Ramsey (HL2172); and from which Department each came. [218541]

The Solicitor-General: Five officials were involved: two from the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers and three from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

HEALTH

Agenda for Change

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will guarantee that all Whitley conditions of employment are protected during the implementation of Agenda for Change. [217715]

Mr. Hutton: The protection arrangements which apply under Agenda for Change to staff employed by national health service organisations have been agreed by the NHS Staff Council. These arrangements are set out in Section 46 of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook, a copy of which is in the Library.

Asthma

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will exempt asthma medication from prescription charges. [217447]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have no plans to extend the existing list of medical conditions that give exemption from prescription charges. The list has been reviewed on a number of occasions but no clear cut case for extending it has emerged. There is no consensus on what additional conditions might be included in any revised list of medical exemptions, or how distinctions could be drawn between one condition and another.

Government policy is to help those who may have difficulty paying charges. The current exemption and charge remission arrangements are intended to ensure that no one need be deterred from obtaining any necessary medication on financial grounds. Consequently, 86 per cent., of prescriptions are dispensed free of charge.

Consultants

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed in the NHS on the latest date for which figures are available; how many were employed in 1997; and if he will make a statement. [217773]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* The latest data available is at June 2004.

The information requested is shown in the table.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): medical and dental consultants

England[1]	*Whole time equivalents*
September 1997	19,661
June 2004	27,640

[1] Data as at 30 September 1997 and 30 June 2004.
Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

The number of whole-time equivalent consultants working in the National Health Service increased by 7,979 or 41 per cent., between September 1997 and June 2004. The number of specialist registrars has also increased significantly over recent years and these doctors will become the consultants of the future.

Continuing Care

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much has been paid to date by his Department to individuals or their families where it has been found that they were inappropriately charged for NHS continuing care since 1996; [211696]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 24 January to the hon. Member for West Chelmsford to question reference 210193, if he will list by each strategic health authority (SHA) the number of complaints each SHA has investigated on allegations of individuals being inappropriately denied funding for continuing care at *(a)* December 2003, *(b)* March 2004 and *(c)* July 2004; and if he will list in each case (i) the number and percentage of completed investigations and (ii) the number of cases eligible for payment as of July 2004. [211832]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The exact amount of restitution paid to date is not known centrally. However, we estimate the figure to reach £180 million by the end of the process.

With regard to the number of complaints investigated, I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made to the House on 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 175WS. That statement provides the latest available statistics, including the most up to date information on the numbers of cases eligible for payment. Further to this information, the table shows details of the number of requests for retrospective funding investigations received between 31 March and 31 July 2004 and the total number of retrospective cases completed by the 31 July 2004:

Strategic health authority name	Number of requests for retrospective funding investigations between 31 March and 31 July	Total number of retrospective funding investigations completed by 31 July
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	110	608
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	30	132
Essex	20	209
North West London	17	209
North Central London	46	101
North East London	23	169
South East London	36	246
South West London	25	182
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	35	202
County Durham and Tees Valley	23	223
North and East Yorkshire and North Lincs	46	302
West Yorkshire	42	177
Cumbria and Lancashire	75	419
Greater Manchester	66	285
Cheshire and Merseyside	103	651
Thames Valley	39	195
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	74	544
Kent and Medway	65	280
Surrey and Sussex	137	555
Avon, Gloucestershire And Wiltshire	109	857
South West Peninsula	49	533
Dorset And Somerset	76	429
South Yorkshire	26	197
Trent	81	395
Leics, Northants and Rutland	31	245
Shropshire and Staffordshire	37	432
Birmingham and The Black Country	37	278
West Midlands South	41	275

Cossham Hospital

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effects on communities served by Cossham hospital arising from the transfer of services from Cossham hospital to community health facilities in Kingswood town centre. [217681]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* I have made no assessment. It is for strategic health authorities, as the local headquarters of the national health service, to oversee service improvements in their local areas because with their knowledge of the local community they are best placed to do so.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional services will be available to the community hitherto served by Cossham hospital as a result of the transfer of services from Cossham hospital to community health facilities in Kingswood. [217682]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The public consultation undertaken by the local national health service in Bristol relating to Cossham hospital has been extended to 1 March 2005. No final decisions, therefore, have been taken on this matter.

I understand it is proposed that the community health facilities in Kingswood, Orchard Medical Centre and the Kingswood Health Centre be extended so that services such as outpatient clinics, X-ray and physiotherapy would be placed alongside general practitioner practices.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the objectives were of the transfer of services from Cossham Hospital to community health facilities in Kingswood town centre. [217683]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* It is for primary care trusts in partnership with the local health community to work to improve services for their local population.

I understand the local national health service in Bristol's proposals are to provide modern, appropriate services and facilities for the local population.

Dentists

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists' surgeries in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough were accepting new NHS patients in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [217543]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This data is not available by Greater London or by London boroughs. Information on the number of dental practices accepting new national health service patients in London as at 15 February 2005 broken down by strategic health authority and primary care trust has been placed in the Library. Data is not available for the last five years.

Departmental Policies (Rochdale)

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the Rochdale constituency, the effect on Rochdale of his Department's policies and actions since 1997. [217371]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government has put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Rochdale constituency.

For example in March 1997[1], there were 431 patients waiting more than 12 months for in-patient treatment and 2,283 waiting nine to 11 months. Latest figures show 1,202 waiting six to eight months and nobody waiting more than nine months.

In March 1997[1], there were 3,587 patients waiting more than 13 weeks for out-patient treatment. Latest figures show 1,183 waiting more than 13 weeks.

The latest published figures show that 94.9 per cent. of patients spend less than four hours in the accident and emergency department. In September 2002, the figure was 78.3 per cent. and in September 2003, the figure was 92.3 per cent.

99.8 per cent. of urgent referrals for suspected cancer were seen by a specialist within two weeks.

A total of 811,000 has been provided from the cancer plan central capital allocation for a scanner, as part of the 50 extra scanners across England. This magnetic resonance imaging scanner will become operational for patients in summer 2005 at the Rochdale Infirmary and is expected to increase the annual number of scans from 7,800 to 11,000.

A new mobile catheter laboratory funded by the New Opportunity Fund will be based at Rochdale Infirmary from March 2005. The laboratory will expand the facilities available at the cardiology unit enabling an additional 1,800 angiograms to be carried out in a full year.

Work is commencing to convert a ward at Rochdale Infirmary to a 500,000 16-station renal dialysis unit which is due to open in May 2005.

[1] Figures from 1997 are the sum of the figures for the preceding NHS trusts (Oldham NHS trust, Rochdale healthcare NHS trust, North Manchester healthcare NHS trust and Bury healthcare NHS trust) to their merger in 2002 to form the Pennine acute hospitals NHS trust.

General Practitioners

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average remuneration for a general practitioner was in each of the past 15 years. [218828]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* Figures based on information for Great Britain are shown in the table.

	Intended average net remuneration/income (£)
1989–90	31,105
1990–91	33,630
1991–92	37,512
1992–93	40,010
1993–94	40,610
1994–95	41,890
1995–96	43,165
1996–97	44,483
1997–98	46,031
1998–99	48,037
1999–2000	52,606
2000–01	54,219
2001–02	56,510
2002–03	61,618
2003–04	67,040

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the arrangements for sick pay provision for general practitioners are. [218829]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The rights of general practitioners (GPs) partners in partnership agreements to paid sickness leave is a matter for their partnership agreement. For GPs who are salaried, employed either by general medical service contractors or primary care trusts, their entitlement to sick pay should reflect that available to hospital doctors. Under other forms of primary medical contracts, e.g. personal medical services or alternative provider medical services this will be a matter for locally agreed contracts.

Health Tourism (Cost)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the amount health tourism cost the NHS in England in each year between 1997 and 2004. [217439]

Mr. Hutton: *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* Successive Governments have not required the national health service to provide statistics on the number of overseas visitors treated under the provisions of the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989, as amended. It is therefore not possible to give a definitive assessment of the scale of health tourism.

Influenza

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many doses of *(a)* amantadine and *(b)* other flu vaccines or antivirals his Department has stockpiled in preparation for an influenza pandemic; [214756]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of the number of doses of *(a)* flu vaccine and *(b)* antivirals which need to be stockpiled in preparation for an influenza pandemic. [214757]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The UK Health Departments' UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan is being published today, together with our procurement of antivirals. This puts the United Kingdom in the forefront of international preparedness for a possible flu pandemic. The document is on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu.

We are working closely with other governments and the World Health Organisation to ensure the international community is as well prepared as it can be to spot and address the early signs of a pandemic as quickly as possible.

However, it makes sense to ensure we in the UK are as prepared as we can be and have drugs for use against an influenza pandemic here. That is why 14.6 million courses of oseltamivir have been ordered for delivery over the next two financial years. This will enable us to treat one in four of the UK population—the proportion which the WHO recommends we plan for.

Mixed Sex Accommodation

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of inpatients accommodated in mixed sex accommodation. [216158]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have made no estimate of the number of in-patients accommodated in mixed or single-sex wards. We collect information on the total number of hospital admissions each year. This does not identify into which type of accommodation those patients are admitted.

The provision of single-sex accommodation is measured as compliance with three objectives we have set, requiring national health service trusts to provide single-sex sleeping areas, separate bathroom and toilet facilities for men and women, and where appropriate, safe facilities for the mentally ill. Compliance is measured annually at trust level and information at ward level is therefore not available.

Nationally, 97 per cent., of NHS trusts are fully compliant with our standards.

MRI Scans

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1337W, on MRI scans, what funding has been identified to cover additional diagnostic services; and what progress has been made towards the plans for phase two of the independent sector procurement programme. [217202]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* £135 billion of investment in the national health service will be allocated to English primary care trusts for 2006–07 and 2007–08 to ensure the NHS continues to deliver improvements in patient care. This includes a £1 billion independent sector procurement programme to ensure that NHS patients will get speedier access to high quality diagnostic tests, including magnetic resonance imaging scans. The Department will issue an advertisement inviting expressions of interest soon.

MRSA

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA have been found in each hospital of the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust since 2002. [217982]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not collected at a national level to show numbers for individual hospitals within national health service trusts.

The numbers of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemias reported for the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust is shown in the table.

	Number of MRSA bacteraemias reported
2002–02	163
2002–03	144
2003–04	132

National Burn Care Review

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will consult on the recommendations of the national burn care review. [218169]

Mr. Hutton: There will be a national consultation on the recommendations made in the report after it has been seen and accepted by the National Burn Care Group. This consultation is not expected to take place before the summer of 2005.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the recommendations of the national burn care review. [218170]

Mr. Hutton: The National Burn Care Group has asked the sub-group to carry out further work since the draft report was circulated to its members. A final report is not expected to be completed until the summer of 2005.

NHS Estate

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the full results of the last annual condition surveys for *(a)* 2000–01, *(b)* 2001–02, *(c)* 2002–03 and *(d)* 2003–04; and if he will publish future surveys within a set timeframe from the financial year end. [217583]

Mr. Hutton: Annual condition surveys are not collected centrally. It is for individual national health service trusts to determine whether to publish them.

NHS Reference Costs

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of NHS reference costs are the costs for *(a)* all treatments, *(b)* elective and day care and *(c)* critical care services were for the Surrey and Sussex healthcare NHS trust in the latest financial year for which figures are available. [217679]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The following data is available from the Reference Costs 2003 data, relating to the financial year 2002–03 and is the most current available.

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare National Health Service Trust

	£	*Percentage of total cost reported in Reference Costs 2003*
Total cost reported in Reference Costs 2003 ['All treatments']	111,447,007	0.38
Total elective and day case cost reported in Reference Costs 2003	16,655,187	0.06
Total critical care services cost reported in Reference Costs 2003	4,669,228	0.02

Notes:

1. Data exclude activity and costs reported using HRG codes with a 'T' prefix. These were never ratified by the respective Royal Colleges.
2. Data represent total costs of treatment provided to NHS patients from NHS resources. They include the cost to the NHS of providing services in-house, and the cost of sub-contracting activity to non-NHS providers.
3. 'All treatments' reflect the total cost reported by Surrey and Sussex healthcare NHS trust, with the exception of those detailed in note one above.
4. The definition of day care activity is too broad to be recognised by Reference Costs. Where applicable, day case activity has been provided.
5. Elective and day case costs specifically exclude elective in-patient excess bed days.

6. Percentage figures are calculated on total cost as reported in Reference Costs 2003, for all providers, approximately £33 billion.

NHS Staff

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of NHS staff are *(a)* medical, *(b)* nursing, *(c)* technical, *(d)* administrative (managerial and clerical) and *(e)* auxiliary and support; and what proportion of each category are covered by nationally negotiated wage rates and contract of employment conditions. [213746]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The proportion of staff working within groupings used to illustrate their role in the national health service is shown in the table. Information about the proportion of staff working in these groupings covered by nationally negotiated wage rates could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

NHS staff numbers[1] by group, and estimated[2] proportion of each group on national[3] (as opposed to local) pay scales: England

	Number (headcount) as at 30 September 2003	Percentage of total staff as at 30 September 2003	Percentage on national pay scales[3] as at August 2002
Total employed staff (HCHS only)	1,144,697	100.0	71
HCHS medical and dental staff (excl locums)	80,851	7.1	4
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	364,692	31.9	[4]
Total qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	122,066	10.7	[4]
Qualified Ambulance staff	15,957	1.4	[4]
Support to clinical staff	360,666	31.5	[4]
NHS infrastructure support:	199,808	17.5	[4]
Central functions	92,257	8.1	[4]
Hotel, property and estates	72,230	6.3	[4]
Manager and senior manager	35,321	3.1	[4]
Other non-medical staff or those with unknown classification	657	0.1	[4]

[1] Excluding general practitioners (see note 2).
[2] The NHS earnings survey is based on the payroll of a sample of approximately 50 per cent. of NHS trusts in August.
[3] National pay scales include clones; these are local pay scales, which mirror national pay scales.
[4] This data cannot be provided.
Sources:
Department of Health non-medical workforce census (30 September 2003).
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census (30 September 2003).
Department of Health NHS Earnings Survey (August 2002).

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the numbers of NHS staff referred to in his answer of 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1171W are *(a)* headcount and *(b)* whole-time equivalent; and whether they cover (i) England, (ii) England and Wales and (iii) the UK. [217429]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* The figures are in headcount and are for England only.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS *(a)* hospital, *(b)* public health medicine and *(c)* community health service (i) doctors and (ii) nurses in training were employed in the Newcastle primary care trust area in (A) 1996, (B) 2001 and (C) 2004. [216490]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not available in the format requested. Student nurses receive bursaries or grants and are not employed by national health service organisations. As a result of changes to the way that nurse training is commissioned, it is not possible to provide comparable data for the Newcastle primary care trust (PCT) area. Data for the number of doctors in training within the Northumberland Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority, broken down by organisation, are shown in the table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health service (HCHS): medical and dental staff of which doctors in training within Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority by organisation—as at 30 September each year

Number (headcount)

		1996		2001		2003	
		All staff	of which: Doctors in training	All staff	of which: Doctors in training	All staff	of which: Doctors in training
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear		2,231	1,106	2,622	1,282	2,861	1,413
of which:							
Cheviot and Wansbeck NHS Trust	RLK	121	46	0	0	0	0
Gateshead and South Tyneside HA	QDG	4	0	6	2	0	0
Gateshead Health NHS Trust	RR7	0	0	213	101	241	132
Gateshead Healthcare NHS Trust	RM7	31	5	0	0	0	0
Gateshead Hospitals NHS Trust	RE2	152	72	0	0	0	0
Gateshead PCT	5KF	0	0	0	0	13	0
Newcastle and North Tyneside HA	QDM	9	3	21	12	0	0

Hospital, public health medicine and community health service (HCHS): medical and dental staff of which doctors in training within Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority by organisation—as at 30 September each year

Number (headcount)

		1996		2001		2003	
		All staff	*of which: Doctors in training*	*All staff*	*of which: Doctors in training*	*All staff*	*of which: Doctors in training*
Newcastle City Health NHS Trust	RNM	228	120	0	0	0	0
Newcastle PCT	5D7	0	0	28	3	31	2
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust	RTD	0	0	1,136	546	1,190	597
Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health Services NHS Trust	RNP	0	0	150	111	189	91
North Tyneside Health Care NHS Trust	RLC	151	73	0	0	0	0
North Tyneside PCT	5D8	0	0	0	0	13	0
Northgate and Prudhoe NHS Trust	RM6	20	8	17	4	23	2
Northumberland Care Trust	TAC	0	0	0	0	30	4
Northumberland Community Health NHS Trust	RLM	35	2	0	0	0	0
Northumberland HA	QDM	9	5	4	0	0	0
Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust	RE8	34	12	0	0	0	0
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear StHA	Q09	0	0	0	0	20	12
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust	RTF	0	0	380	146	408	184
South of Tyne and Wearside Mental Health NHS Trust	RW9	0	0	0	0	57	15
South Tyneside Health Care NHS Trust	RE9	94	23	248	161	221	164
South Tyneside PCT	5KG	0	0	0	0	10	0
Sunderland City Hospitals NHS Trust	RLN	340	165	366	181	406	210
Sunderland HA	QDN	7	3	10	6	0	0
Sunderland Teaching PCT	5KL	0	0	0	0	9	0
The Freeman Group of Hospitals	RAB	360	204	0	0	0	0
The Royal Victoria Infirmary and associated Hospitals NHS Trust	RCK	609	356	0	0	0	0
Wearside Priority Health Care NHS Trust	RLH	27	9	43	9	0	0

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

Nurses

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses, *(b)* health visitors, *(c)* practice nurses and *(d)* school nurses were employed (i) in England and (ii) in Huddersfield constituency in (A) 1997 and (B) 2004. [216876]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It is not possible to provide information for Huddersfield constituency because the previous and existing national health service trusts served an area significantly wider than Huddersfield constituency. The primary care trust (PCT) boundaries in the area are not coterminous with the Huddersfield constituency boundaries.

Information on the number of nurses, health visitors and practice nurses employed in England and in West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) in 1997 and 2003 (the latest year for which data is available) is shown in the table.

The Government collected information on the school nursing workforce in the September 2003 non-medical workforce census, but this information was incomplete. Information on the number of school nurses employed in the NHS will be available from the September 2004 non-medical workforce census, expected to be published in March 2005.

All NHS qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff, including practice nurses employed in England, West Yorkshire SHA and Huddersfield areas as at 30 September[1] in each year

headcount

England	*1997*	*2003*
All qualified nurses (including practice nurses)	318,856	386,629
of which:		
Health visitor	12,410	12,984
Practice nurse	18,389	21,667
West Yorkshire SHA		
All qualified nurses (including practice nurses)	14,787	18,829
of which:		
Health visitor	595	609
Practice nurse	736	903

[1] Practice nurse figures as at 1 October for 1997.

Source:
Department of Health non-medical workforce census.
Department of Health general and personal medical services statistics.

Patients (Leicestershire)

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* in-patients and *(b)* out-patients were treated in Leicestershire in each year between 1992–93 and the last year for which figures are available. [216934]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the tables.

1. Count of finished in-patient admission episodes for selected providers national health service hospitals, 1993–94 to 2003–04

	Leicester General Hospital	*Leicester Royal Infirmary*	*Glenfield Hospital*	*NHS Trust University Hospitals of Leicester*	*Leicestershire Mental Health*	*Fosse Health, Leicestershire Community*	*Leicestershire and Rutland Healthcare*	*Leicestershire Partnership*
1993–94	44,956	83,442	19,078	—	—	—	—	—
1994–95	28,141	80,748	18,424	—	11,332	—	—	—
1995–96	42,039	85,973	22,489	—	3,519	11,070	—	—
1996–97	43,357	100,931	24,008	—	3,793	11,707	—	—
1997–98	45,875	103,626	22,338	—	2,239	9,683	—	—

1. Count of finished in-patient admission episodes for selected providers national health service hospitals, 1993–94 to 2003–04

	Leicester General Hospital	Leicester Royal Infirmary	Glenfield Hospital	NHS Trust University Hospitals of Leicester	Leicestershire Mental Health	Fosse Health, Leicestershire Community	Leicestershire and Rutland Healthcare	Leicestershire Partnership
1998–99	49,313	111,885	25,914	—	4,212	9,658	—	—
1999–2000	51,315	114,423	27,686	—	—	—	15,142	—
2000–01	—	—	—	182,101	—	—	8,046	—
2001–02	—	—	—	199,980	—	—	9,571	—
2002–03	—	—	—	201,155	—	—	—	4,557
2003–04	—	—	—	209,656	—	—	—	4,404

Notes:
1. A finished admission episode is the "first" period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
3. University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust was formed on 1 April 2000 following the merger of Leicester General Hospital NHS Trust, Leicester Royal Infirmary NHS Trust, and Glenfield Hospital NHS Trust. Leicestershire Mental Health Service NHS Trust was established in 1993 and dissolved in April 1999. Fosse Health, Leicestershire Community NHS Trust was established in 1994 and dissolved in April 1999. Leicestershire and Rutland Healthcare NHS Trust was established 1 January 1999. The new trust replaced the Leicestershire Mental Health Service and the Fosse Health, Leicestershire Community NHS Trusts. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust was established in April 2002. The new trust came into being when it changed its name from Leicestershire and Rutland Healthcare NHS Trust to Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust.

Source:
Hospital episode statistics (HES), Department of Health.

2. Count of first out-patient attendances for selected providers NHS hospitals, 1993–94 to 2003–04 outlined in the HES extract for Leicestershire

	Leicester General Hospital	Leicester Royal Infirmary	Glenfield Hospital	NHS Trust University Hospitals of Leicester	Leicestershire Mental Health	Fosse Health, Leicestershire Community	Leicestershire and Rutland Healthcare	Leicestershire Partnership
1993–94	25,286	74,586	17,508	—	—	—	—	—
1994–95	27,753	80,022	19,253	—	3,742	—	—	—
1995–96	26,000	83,415	22,891	—	4,629	36,125	—	—
1996–97	25,950	87,905	26,528	—	5,503	39,187	—	—
1997–98	26,598	92,317	28,098	—	5,669	36,737	—	—
1998–99	26,591	96,116	30,204	—	6,728	35,413	—	—
1999–2000	27,757	101,379	26,480	—	—	—	36,611	—
2000–01	—	—	—	161,329	—	—	38,399	—
2001–02	—	—	—	177,380	—	—	16,257	—
2002–03	—	—	—	178,078	—	—	—	8,728
2003–04	—	—	—	173,849	—	—	—	10,901

Source:
Department of Health KH09 and QMOP monitoring returns.

Student Midwives

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many student midwives who entered training in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 were over the age of 25 years. [218736]

Mr. Hutton: The number of student midwives who entered diploma training in 2002–03 and 2003–04 is shown in the table. Data are not collected by the specific age band requested.

Age band	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Below 26	288	324
26 and above	321	276

Source:
Nursing and midwifery admissions service.

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many student midwives dropped out of training in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [218739]

Mr. Hutton: Information for England on the percentage of pre-registration midwifery students who have left their university course in 2002–03 and 2003–04 is not available. The attrition data for these academic years administered by the Higher Education Statistics Agency are in the process of being analysed.

Sunlight

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) on what published scientific evidence the Government's recommendations to the public concerning exposure to sunlight are based, with particular reference to *(a)* exposure at peak hours and *(b)* using sunscreen; [217040]

(2) whether the public health consequences of sunlight exposure have been recently reviewed; and whether new guidelines have been published; [217042]

(3) what steps the Government has taken to inform the public of the effects on vitamin D status of measures that may be taken to reduce the risk of skin cancer; [217043]

(4) what evidential sources the Chief Medical Officer based his Better Health advice on exposure to the sun; and what account he took of consequential effects on vitamin D levels; [217044]

(5) what research he has commissioned on whether those who follow the advice on avoiding exposure to the sun at peak hours and using sunscreen would obtain sufficient vitamin D; [217061]

(6) what steps the Department has taken over the last 10 years to inform the public that exposure of skin to sunlight is necessary to provide vitamin D; [217075]

(7) what research his Department has evaluated concerning whether casual exposure of the hands and face to sunlight at British latitudes provides sufficient vitamin D for optimum health. [217273]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Skin cancer is the second most common cancer in the United Kingdom, with about 40,500 cases annually. 6,000 of these cases are malignant melanomas. While rare, mortality rates are high and 50 per cent. of patients die within two years.

The Government has been active in providing information to the public to advise people on the best ways to avoid skin cancer.

We have with key stakeholders developed the "SunSmart" campaign. It is run by Cancer Research UK and funded by the UK health departments. Cancer Research UK has received funding of around 400,000 for three years from 2003–06.

The SunSmart advice is:

stay in the shade between 11 am to 3 pm,

make sure you never burn,

always cover up with a T-shirt, wide brimmed hat and sunglasses,

remember to take extra care with children,

then use factor 15 plus sunscreen.

Further work by Cancer Research UK is being undertaken on risks associated with sunbeds.

No new guidelines have been issued in the last three years while the SunSmart campaign has been in place, although there has been variation on the ways in which the messages are put across to the public so as to achieve maximum and continuing impact.

The messages in the SunSmart campaign have been approved by the members of the United Kingdom Skin Cancer Working Group, which is hosted by the British Association of Dermatologists and includes representatives of the National Radiological Protection Board, the Skin Care Campaign, UK health departments, the Health and Safety Executive and other experts in the subject.

The following international studies discuss the scientific evidence for sun protection behaviours and messages These studies include: Interventions to prevent skin cancer by reducing exposure to ultraviolet radiation, A systematic review, Saraiya, Glantz, Briss et al., Am J Prev Med 2004; 27 (5).

European Code Against Cancer and scientific justification: third version (2003), Boyle, Autier, Bartelink et al, Annals of Oncology 14:973–1005, 2003.

IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention, Volume 5, Sunscreens, International Agency for Research on Cancer, World Health Organization, 2001.

Copies of these studies have been placed in the Library.

The Chief Medical Officer's advice in his top 10 tips for better health on protection from the sun reiterates the advice in the SunSmart campaign.

Government also funds the ultra-violet (UV) index on the Meteorological Office website (linked to the Cancer Research UK SunSmart website). Met Office weather reports on television and radio draw attention to the UV index when danger from the sun is high.

The United Kingdom Skin Cancer Working Group recently established a sub-group to consider questions relating to exposure to sunlight and Vitamin D. This sub-group at its meeting in January 2005 concluded that on present evidence it would be inappropriate to alter the SunSmart messages. However, it noted that an international workshop on the subject of exposure to the sun and Vitamin D levels will take place in Munich in October 2005 involving the organisations Euroskin and the WHOINTERSUN groups. One of the objectives of this international workshop is to produce a peer-reviewed publication as soon as possible. The Government will consider any implications for policy from the evidence in this report when it is available.

Telephone Numbers (0870)

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will prohibit the use of national rate 0870 telephone numbers by general practices and other frontline primary care services; and if he will make a statement. [213505]

Mr. Hutton: Yes. From April, no national health service organisations providing local services will not be able to adopt national or premium rate numbers. General practitioner practices currently using national rate telephone lines will be expected to change these to "lo-call" numbers.

Waiting Times (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for surgery for patients in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley was in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2005. [216207]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested for available years is shown in the tables.

In-patient waiting list and timebands for Chorley and South Ribble National Health Service Trust, Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust 1996–97, 2000–01 and 2003–04

Month/year	Quarter	Unit code	Unit name	Total	Patients waiting for admissions by months waiting 0–2	3–5	6–8	9–11	12–14
March 1997									
1996–97	4	RJU	Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust	1,857	1,079	463	249	66	0
March 1997									
1996–97	4	RMF	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	8,970	4,137	2,352	1,445	1,000	18
March 2001									
2000–01	4	RMF	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	8,926	5,559	1,987	1,002	378	0
March 2004									
2003–04	4	RXN	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	8,275	5,527	2,123	625	0	0

Month/year	Quarter	Unit code	Unit name	Patients waiting for admissions by months waiting: 15–17	18–20	8 months +	12 months +	Estimated median waiting time (months)
March 1997 1996–97	4	RJU	Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust	0	0	66	0	2.58
March 1997 1996–97	4	RMF	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	15	3	1036	36	3.44
March 2001 2000–01	4	RMF	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	0	0	378	0	2.41
March 2004 2003–04	4	RXN	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	—	—	0	0	2.25

Month/year	Quarter	Organisation code	Name	Total	Patients waiting for admission by months waiting: <1	1-<2	2-<3	3-<4	4-<5	5-<6	6-<7
December 2004 2004–05	3	RXN	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	8,680	2,356	1,960	1,345	1,038	702	526	415

Month/year	Quarter	Organisation code	Name	Patients waiting for admission by months waiting: 7-<8	8-<9	9-<10	10-<11	11-<12	Sum of >12	Estimated median waiting time (months)
December 2004 2004–05	3	RXN	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	250	88	0	0	0	0	2.02

Note:
No data was returned for Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust for quarter 4, 2000–01.
Source:
Department of Health KH07.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what policies her Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218590]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture Media and Sport has a range of polices in place to support staff with medical conditions. These include occupational health advice on reasonable adjustments to allow staff to continue working where appropriate; support and advice from the DCMS Staff Counsellor; a range of flexible working provisions, including flexitime, part-time working, homeworking and paid/unpaid special leave; and six months fully paid sickness absence, followed by six months on half pay, up to a maximum of 12 months.

Digital Switchover

Syd Rapson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) when she expects to announce the areas of the United Kingdom in which digital switchover will first take place; [214544]

(2) what criteria will be used in determining the order in which digital switchover will be introduced in the regions; [214545]

(3) if she will make a statement on her plans to implement a regional roll out of digital switchover. [214546]

Estelle Morris: The Government will confirm the timetable once all the remaining issues relating to digital switchover are resolved and we are satisfied that the interests of consumers, especially the most vulnerable, are well protected.

The order in which regions will be switched off is not one for the Government: it will be based on technical criteria and agreed between broadcasters, multiplex operators and Ofcom.

We expect Ofcom to issue a statement on the indicative regional order shortly.

Ofcom have issued a statement on the indicative regional order. This is available from the Ofcom website at: www.ofcom.org.uk.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to announce the details of regional pilot schemes in preparation for digital switchover; what role regional pilot schemes will have in determining the date for digital switchover; and if she will make a statement. [218906]

Estelle Morris: The Government has no plans for regional pilot schemes. However, we are currently conducting a technical trial in South Wales to gauge the technical and consumer issues associated with the switchover process. This trial is not a blueprint for regional rollout but a vital part of the preparation for the national switchover.

The order in which regions will be switched off is not one for the Government: it will be based on technical criteria and agreed between broadcasters, multiplex operators and Ofcom.

Ofcom have issued a statement on the indicative regional order. This is available from the Ofcom website at: www.ofcom.org.uk.

The Government will confirm the timetable once all the remaining issues relating to digital switchover are resolved and we are satisfied that the interests of consumers, especially the most vulnerable, are well protected.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the training programme for professionals in the European audio-visual programme industry and of the programme to encourage the development, distribution and promotion of European audio-visual works MEDIA II met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217952]

Estelle Morris: Between 1 July 2003 and 31 December 2004, the MEDIA Committee met in Brussels on: 15 July 2003, 22 September 2003, 31 October 2003, 12 November 2003, 10 December 2003 (Italian presidency), 20 February 2004, 25 March 2004 (Irish presidency) 16 July 2004 and 22 October 2004 (Dutch presidency) and in Athens on 12 November 2004 (Dutch presidency). The UK was represented at all these meetings, either by DCMS officials or UK Film Council representative or both.

Government Art Collection

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Government Art Collection has spent on new works of art in each of the last 10 years; where each item purchased since 1997 is located; and whether each is accessible to the public. [217393]

Estelle Morris: The following figures represent how much the Government Art Collection (GAC) has spent on works of art in the last 10 financial years and the current financial year.

	£
1994–95	127,000
1995–96	83,000
1996–97	123,000
1997–98	137,000
1998–99	127,000
1999–2000	179,000
2000–01	135,000
2001–02	158,000
2002–03	253,600
2003–04	225,200
2004–05[1]	110,500

[1] includes purchases up to 15 February 2005

Some works of art have been purchased or commissioned by other Government Departments.

A list of the current locations of works of art purchased since 1997 (as of 17 February 2005), and listed by Government Department and GAC, is provided in a separate document. I am arranging for copies of this document to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Government Art Collection is part of DCMS; its acquisition policy is guided by the Advisory Committee on the GAC which is a non-departmental public body. Members are both independent and ex-officio, including the Directors of the National Galleries.

The GAC plays a unique role in the UK in displaying works of art from its holdings in major Government buildings at home and abroad, in order to promote British art, culture and history. Due to the nature of Government buildings and current security issues, it is not possible for the general public to gain open access to most of the works on a daily basis. However, the buildings in which works of art are displayed—in reception rooms, entrance halls, Ministers' and Ambassadors' offices—all receive many thousands of visitors per year, all over the world.

Members of the public may consult the GAC to see individual works of art. Additionally, many Government buildings in the UK (including the GAC's own premises) are accessible during the annual Open House Weekend. The GAC also gives regular tours throughout the year round its premises, lends works of art to public exhibitions, and operates a website www.gac.culture.gov.uk listing and illustrating all its original works of art. A growing number of historical and modern prints are being added to this.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1724W, on Government Art Collection, how much the Government Art Collection spent in total on purchasing works of art in each of the last 15 years. [218984]

Estelle Morris: The following figures represent how much the Government Art Collection (GAC) has spent on works of art in the last 15 financial years and the current financial year.

Financial year	£
1989–90	98,000
1990–91	96,000
1991–92	116,000
1992–93	137,000
1993–94	123,000
1994–95	127,000
1995–96	83,000
1996–97	123,000
1997–98	137,000
1998–99	127,000
1999–2000	179,000
2000–01	135,006
2001–02	158,000
2002–03	253,600
2003–04	225,200
2004–05[1]	110,500

[1] Includes purchases up to 15 February 2005.

Some works of art have been purchased or commissioned by other Government Departments.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the membership and political background of the members of *(a)* non-departmental public bodies of the (i) Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, (ii) Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, (iii) Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, (iv) Department of Education, (v) Department of Environment, (vi) Department of Employment and Learning, (vii) Department of Health and Social Services, (viii) Department of Regional Development, (ix) Department of Social Development and (x) Office of the First and Deputy First Minister and *(b)* health and personal social services bodies. [218064]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Those appointed to the boards of non-departmental public bodies and health and personal social services bodies are not required to declare their political background. However, they are asked to declare any significant political activity they may have undertaken in the five years prior to the date of their application.

Information on the membership and declared political activity of applicants and appointees to bodies sponsored by the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration can be found in the Public Appointments Annual Reports, the most recent of which was published in 2004.

The reports are available from the Library of the House and can be found on the Internet at www.ofmdfinni.gov.uk/publicappointments.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213612]

Mr. Lammy: My Department is not responsible for any official residences.

The Palace of Westminster is responsible for the maintenance of the Lord Chancellor's residence in the House of Lords and for any work that needs to be carried out. There are no permanent staff employed at the residence. The Lord Chancellor's Private Office is responsible for the administration of the residence in terms of organising tours of the residence and keeping the diary of charitable functions. The Department does not make any contributions to the running cost of the residence. No refurbishment work has been carried out in the last five years.

The cost of *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining and *(c)* food for the past five years is as follows:

(a) Flowers and Plants
2004—£609.23
2005—£27
(b) Wine and Entertaining
2005—£248.76
2004- £2,914.12
2003- £841.49
(c) Food
2005—£5,286.46
2004—£29,440.78
2003—£8,447.71
No figures are available centrally before 2003

Visa Appeals

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many visitor visa appeals were successful in 2004. [218324]

Mr. Lammy: The latest information taken from IRIS, the electronic database of the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA), indicates that 10,918 of the family visitor visa appeals promulgated by Immigration Adjudicators during 2004 were decided in favour of the appellant.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many of the successful visitor visa appeals in 2004 were *(a)* oral and *(b)* written. [218325]

Mr. Lammy: The latest information taken from IRIS, the electronic database of the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA), indicates that of the 10,918 family visitor visa appeals promulgated by Immigration Adjudicators in 2004, and decided in favour of the appellant, 6,863 were oral appeals, and 4,055 were appeals determined on the papers alone.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Anti-social Behaviour Act

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crack house closures have been secured under the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 in *(a)* Birmingham, *(b)* Bristol, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Liverpool, *(e)* Manchester, *(f)* Newcastle, *(g)* Nottingham and *(h)* Sheffield. [214041]

Caroline Flint: Data are not collected on a city basis. The latest available information is for closure orders by Government office region for the cities named for the period 20 January to end September 2004 is as follows.

	Number
(a) West Midlands	3
(b) South West	24
(c and h) Yorkshire and Humber	4
(d and e) North West	13
(f) North East	7
(g) East Midlands	10

Use of the "crack house" antisocial behaviour powers form a key part of Operation Crackdown, the national police enforcement three month campaign that is currently running until the end of March and has been signed up to by 33 police forces in England and Wales.

Armed Police

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many armed police officers are employed by the Metropolitan Police Force. [215142]

Caroline Flint: The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police tells me that his force had 2,209 firearms officers as at 7 February 2005.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he will reply to the letter dated 29 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. S. Bhakar; [208710]

(2) when he will reply to the letter dated 29 November from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. S Bhakar. [210144]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 18 January 2005.

Cycling

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the risk to pedestrians in Central London of cyclists ignoring red traffic signals; [216519]

(2) what advice he has given to police forces on identification and apprehension of cyclists who are observed ignoring red traffic signals; [216520]

(3) what steps he is taking to ensure active enforcement against cyclists ignoring red traffic signals. [216522]

Caroline Flint: It is an offence for a cyclist not to comply with light signals controlling traffic.

Chief officers of police are best placed to decide on the level of priority given to this offence in the light of its perceived seriousness, conflicting demands on police time and resources, and local circumstances.

As with other offending we would encourage members of the public to give evidence of specific problems and of particularly dangerous behaviour to the police. This will help ensure that the police target their responses effectively.

No assessment has been made of the risk to pedestrians in central London of cyclists failing to comply with light signals controlling traffic.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for the offence of cycling on a pavement since 1 August 1999. [216626]

Caroline Flint: Figures on fixed penalty notices for pedal cycle offences are not collected centrally. However results from a special exercise undertaken to monitor new fixed penalties introduced on 1 August 1999 showed that in England and Wales for the period 1 August 1999 to 31 December 1999 there were 665 fixed penalty notices issued for the offence of cycling on a footway. A second exercise undertaken for the calendar year 2000 showed 821 fixed penalty notices issued for the offence.

The exercise has not been repeated.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 895W, on cycling, how many cyclists involved in road accidents were reported as cycling without lights in the last period for which figures are available. [216394]

Caroline Flint: It is not possible from the information held on the Home Office Court Proceedings database to identify from the number of cyclists cautioned or proceeded against for "lighting and reflector" offences, what number were involved in road accidents, as the circumstances of the offence are not collected centrally.

Drugs

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were arrested for supplying class A drugs to children in each of the last six years. [204777]

Caroline Flint: Figures for the number of people arrested for supplying class A drugs to children are not collated centrally. However, we do have figures for the number of people arrested[1] for supplying main class A drugs in each of the last six years.

This information can found in the Home Office Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics Supplementary Tables 2001 and 2002 publication which can be accessed via the RDS website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb0804supp.pdf. Tables required within this publication are as follows:

Drug type	Location
Cocaine	Table S2.17
Crack	Table S2.17a
Heroin	Table S2.19
LSD	Table S2.21
Ecstasy-type	Table S2.23
Methadone	Table S2.25

[1] Found guilty, cautioned or dealt with by compounding.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what area surveys of illicit drug use have been conducted by his Department; and which age groups they covered. [216689]

Caroline Flint: The main survey of drug use commissioned by the Home Office is the British Crime Survey, which measures illicit drug use among the general household population aged 16 to 59 years in England and Wales. Comparable information on drug use from this survey is available from 1996 and it is now conducted on a continuous yearly basis. In addition, the Home Office co-funds (with the Department of Health) a regular survey of smoking, drinking and drug use among schoolchildren aged 11 to 15 years in England. This has been carried out since 1986 but has not always cover drug use. Another Home Office survey, the Crime and Justice Survey, obtained information on illicit drug use among the general population aged 10 to 65 in England in 2003 and will provide follow-up data on drug use for the 10 to 25-year-olds in 2004 and 2005.

Other Home Office surveys which cover illicit drug use among other population groups but do not provide time series at present are:

the Arrestee Survey, a survey of arresteees aged 17 and over in a sample of custody suites in England and Wales (conducted since October 2003);

the Prisoners Criminality Survey, a survey of criminality among male prisoners in England and Wales was conducted in 2000. This survey asked about their drug use in the 12 months prior to custody;

the Community Penalties Criminality Survey, a survey of males and females serving community sentences throughout England and Wales was conducted in 2002. This survey asked about their drug use in the 12 months prior to interview;

the Survey of Mandatory Drug Testing in Prisons carried out in a representative sample of prisons in England and Wales in 2001 included questions on prisoners' illicit drug use prior to and in custody;

the 2001 Resettlement Survey included questions on prisoners illicit drug use before custody. The survey was a representative sample, which included participants from 76 prisons in England and Wales, with booster samples of female and young offenders. The youngest offenders included in the survey were aged 15.

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders per head of population charged with trigger offences have tested positive for *(a)* opiates and *(b)* crack cocaine in (i) Birmingham, (ii) Bristol, (iii) Leeds, (iv) Liverpool, (v) Manchester, (vi) Newcastle, (vii) Nottingham and (viii) Sheffield in the last 12 months. [214016]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office does not collect drug test data based on offenders per head of population. Instead, data is collected on drug tests arising from offenders charged with specified offences in 47 DAT areas with the highest levels of acquisitive crime. The following table breaks down the positive drug test results recorded for opiates (heroin), cocaine/crack or both in relevant areas between January—December 2004.

DAT	*Both (cocaine/crack and heroin)*	*Cocaine/crack only*	*Heroin only*
Birmingham	719	452	525
Bristol	552	299	215
Leeds	782	491	729
Liverpool	926	363	227
Manchester	663	468	353
Newcastle	65	125	244
Nottingham	831	500	370
Sheffield	440	239	238

Source:
DIP Monthly Monitoring Reports

The data incorporate positive drug test results arising from trigger and non-trigger offences. Five per cent of the data can be attributed to positive drug test results resulting from non-trigger offences.

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the percentage of crime linked to drug misuse in *(a)* Birmingham, *(b)* Bristol, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Liverpool, *(e)* Manchester, *(f)* Newcastle, *(g)* Nottingham and *(h)* Sheffield in the last 12 months. [214017]

Caroline Flint: Recorded crime figures are used to measure the extent of crime in local areas. Although these include statistics on drugs offences—such as possession—and on property crimes—such as burglary—they do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible to estimate from these statistics the percentage of all crime which is linked to the need to support a drug habit.

However, since April 2003 offenders charged in certain areas with certain offences known to be commonly committed by drug users have been tested for opiates (heroin) and cocaine/crack as part of the Drug Interventions Programme. The following table summarises the total number of offenders tested, and the numbers and percentages of those testing positive for opiates or crack/cocaine between January and December 2004 in the 47 DATs that operate drug testing on charge as part of the Drug Interventions Programme. This gives some indication of the proportion of property crime that may be linked to drug use, although it should be noted that not all crime by drug users is necessarily committed to support their habit.

Summary table of drug testing results January—December 2004

Area	*Numbers tested*	*Numbers testing positive*	*Percentage testing positive*
Birmingham	3,808	1,696	45
Bristol	1,734	1,066	61
Leeds	4,309	2,002	46
Liverpool	2,634	1,516	58
Manchester	3,440	1,484	43
Newcastle	1,293	434	34
Nottingham	3,221	1,701	53
Sheffield	1,874	917	49

Source:
DIP Monthly Monitoring Reports

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what quantity of illegal drugs was seized in the United Kingdom in each of the last three years; and what the estimated street value was of these drugs. [215160]

Caroline Flint: Data on the quantity of the main illegal drugs seized in the United Kingdom is available in the "Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics, United

Kingdom, 2001 and 2002" Home Office statistical bulletin, for which figures are currently available. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

The data related to the estimated street value of drugs seized in 2000 (the last year for which the data was collated by the Home Office) is available in "Table A: Value at street prices of main drug types seized by police and Customs, United Kingdom 2000" (page 27) of the Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics, United Kingdom 2000 publication.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he will take to ensure that drug users and the wider public are made aware of *(a)* what drug treatment involves and *(b)* the potential benefits of drug treatment. [213354]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

The Government recognise the importance of making the public aware of drug treatment and its potential benefits. The Department has taken steps to increase awareness through the "Updated Drugs Strategy", published in 2002 and "Tackling Drugs—Changing Lives", which was published in December 2004 and details progress on all areas of the drugs strategy since its launch in 1998.

Both these documents describe what drug treatment involves including the benefits of drug treatment as well as the actions that the Government are taking to get more users into treatment.

An awareness and communications campaign called FRANK was launched by the Government in 2003. This £3 million a year campaign informs young people and their parents, carers and families about the effects and risks of taking illicit drugs, and gives advice, support and all details of drug treatment services.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy that drug treatment should be available on demand in the community. [213355]

Caroline Flint: Waiting times for drug treatment are at their lowest ever and 54 per cent. more people are in treatment than in 1998. Drug treatment is available to individuals based on their needs. Drug Action Teams (DATs) are responsible for assessing local needs and then commissioning services accordingly to meet the assessed needs of individuals, using the Drug Pooled Treatment Budget and other mainstream funds. In 2004, the Government announced significant year-on-year increases in the Pooled Treatment Budget from £253 million nationally in 2004–05 to £478 million nationally by 2007–08.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes he estimates were committed by drug users in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* Lancashire in the last period for which figures are available. [213904]

Caroline Flint: Recorded crime and other measures of crime currently available at regional and national level do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible at present to estimate the number of crimes committed by drug users in England, the North West and Lancashire.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for drug-related crime there were in the Easington constituency in the last year for which figures are available. [215518]

Caroline Flint: Official conviction figures include statistics on convictions for drugs offences, such as possession, supply, and on property crimes such as burglary, but do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible to estimate the volume of convictions which are linked to the use of drugs or to the operation of drug markets.

Information on the number of known drug offenders found guilty or cautioned for drugs offences is available for police force areas only and it is not possible therefore to give an estimate for Easington alone. For the Durham police force area, there were 1,180 convictions for drugs offences in 2001. The equivalent estimate for 2002 is 1,200. This information is available in the Area Tables of the 'Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics, UK, 2001 and 2002' filed in the House Library.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the change in the price of *(a)* heroin, *(b)* cocaine, *(c)* crack, *(d)* cannabis, *(e)* ecstasy and *(f)* magic mushrooms has been in each of the last five years. [211234]

Caroline Flint: UK average prices per gram or unit cost for heroin, cocaine, crack, cannabis resin, herbal cannabis and ecstasy for the past five years are shown in the following table. We do not hold any information on magic mushrooms.

The figures in the table are worked out on the basis of information provided by all UK law enforcement. However our current picture is limited. For example, no consideration is currently taken of purity or weighting for size of local markets in producing this figure. NCIS is currently reviewing this.

UK average drug prices 1999 to 2004

As at December each year	*Herbal Cannabis (£ per ounce)*	*Cannabis Resin (£ per ounce)*	*Cocaine (£ per gram)*	*Crack (£ per 0.2g rock)*	*Heroin (£ per gram)*	*Ecstasy (£ per dose)*
1999	89	100	63	20	65	11
2000	82	85	65	23	70	9
2001	80	77	60	21	63	7
2002	83	81	56	20	61	6
2003	72	66	55	19	62	5
2004	72	61	51	18	55	4

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list organisations and individuals consulted in the formulation of the Drugs Bill. [211230]

Caroline Flint: The information requested by my hon. Friend is included within the regulatory impact assessment, at paragraphs 1.8, 2.9, 3.9 and 4.2.8. The regulatory impact assessment is available on the Home Office website and in the Library.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of people in Greater London who took *(a)* heroin, *(b)* marijuana, *(c)* cocaine and *(d)* ecstasy in each of the last 10 years. [217552]

Caroline Flint: The British Crime Survey (BCS) in England and Wales provides estimates of the proportion of people living in private households who used drugs in the year before interview. In recent years, the sample size has been increased and reliable estimates of drug use by region are possible. A regional analysis was carried out for the 2001/02 BCS, and provided estimates of the proportion of people using different types of drugs for the Government Office Region (GOR) of London which are shown in the table.

Table: Proportion of people aged 16 to 59 in the London GOR who used (a) heroin (b) marijuana (c) cocaine and (d) ecstasy in 2001–02 according to the British Crime Survey

	Percentage
Heroin	0.1
Marijuana	14.0
Cocaine	4.2
Ecstasy	3.5

Estimates of the number of drug users by region have not been made. There are also no directly comparable estimates for drug use by region published for earlier years. However, comparable figures for the prevalence of drug use in London will be included in a report of the drug use findings from the 2003–04 BCS to be published shortly.

It should be noted that, as a household survey, the British Crime Survey inevitably excludes people resident in institutions such as prisons, the army, student halls of residence, residential drug treatment centres and the homeless. The exclusion of these groups may result in an underestimation of drug taking prevalence.

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for selling drugs where there was evidence of drug selling near schools there were in *(a)* Birmingham, *(b)* Bristol, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Liverpool, *(e)* Manchester, *(f)* Newcastle, *(g)* Nottingham and *(h)* Sheffield in the last year for which figures are available. [214040]

Caroline Flint: It is not possible from the information held on the Home Office Court Proceedings database to identify whether a person was proceeded against for selling drugs outside a school, as the circumstances of the offence are not collected centrally.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for *(a)* dealing in and *(b)* being in possession of (i) cocaine and (ii) LSD (A) Essex police and (B) Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997. [211438]

Caroline Flint: Data for cocaine and LSD drug possession and dealing prosecutions are currently not collated in the format requested.

Data on the number of known drug offenders found guilty or cautioned for cocaine and LSD drug offences, and the number of possession and dealing offences in the Essex police force area, are available in the appropriate sections in the Area tables of the "Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics, United Kingdom, 2001 and 2002", (the most recent year for which figures are currently available). Copies are available in the Library.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for *(a)* dealing in and *(b)* being in possession of (i) ecstasy and (ii) heroin (A) Essex police and (B) Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997. [211439]

Caroline Flint: Data for ecstasy and heroin drug possession and dealing prosecutions is currently not collated in the format requested.

Information on the number of known drug offenders found guilty or cautioned for ecstasy and heroin drug offences and the number of possession and dealing offences in the Essex police force area are available in the appropriate sections in the Area tables of the "Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics, United Kingdom, 2001 and 2002", (the most recent year for which figures are currently available). Copies are available in the Library.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for *(a)* dealing in and *(b)* being in possession of (i) amphetamines and (ii) cannabis (A) Essex police and (B) Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997. [211440]

Caroline Flint: Data for amphetamines and cannabis drug possession and dealing prosecutions is currently not collated in the format requested.

Information on the number of known drug offenders found guilty or cautioned for amphetamines and cannabis drug offences and the number of possession and dealing offences in the Essex police force area are available in the appropriate sections in the Area tables of the "Drug Seizure and Offender statistics, United Kingdom, 2001 and 2002", (the most recent year for which figures are currently available). Copies are available in the Library.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on the protection of

animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215406]

Caroline Flint: There were no meetings of the Advisory Committee on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes during the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidency of the EU.

Article 22 (3) of Directive 86/609/EEC (on the approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the member states regarding the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes) provides for the Commission to establish

> "a permanent consultative committee within which the member states would be represented, which will assist the Commission in organising the exchange of appropriate information, while respecting the requirements of confidentiality, and which will also assist the Commission in the other questions raised by the application of this Directive."

The Commission made a decision on 9 February 1990 (90/67/EEC) for setting up the Advisory Committee on the Protection of Animals for Experimental and Other Scientific Purposes under Article 22 of the Directive, including provision for representation and working methods. However, the Committee has never been established. The Commission has made a recommendation for the Directive to be revised. In its initial comments on what amendments might be considered, the United Kingdom has suggested that the Commission should consider either dispensing with or establishing the Advisory Committee.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the programme training, exchanges and co-operation in the field of asylum, immigration and crossing of external borders (Odysseus) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215411]

Mr. Browne: The Odysseus funding programme expired in 2002 and was replaced by a funding programme known as ARGO. The Management Committee of ARGO last met on 5 November 2003 in Brussels. The UK was represented at this Committee by a Home Office official and an official from the UK Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. The Committee did not meet during the Irish or Dutch Presidencies of the EU.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for the implementation of the incentive, exchange, training and co-operation programme for combating trade in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children (STOP) and (ii) Committee for the implementation of the programme of incentives and exchanges for legal practitioners (Grotius general and criminal) met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if he will make a statement; [216721]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the incentive, exchange, training and co-operation programme for the prevention of crime (Hippocrates) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [217244]

(3) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the Joint Action establishing a programme of exchanges, training and co-operation for persons responsible for action to combat organised crime (Falcone) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217245]

Caroline Flint: The STOP II, Oisin II, Falcone, Hippocrates and Grotius (general and criminal) funding programmes expired on 31 December 2002. Their Management Committees last met on 23 and 24 July 2002 to agree the successful projects for funding for that final year. They have since been replaced by a single funding programme known as AGIS.

During the period 1 July 2003 to 31 December 2004 the AGIS Management Committee met three times. On 14 October 2003 it met to discuss the draft annual work programme and call for bids for 2004. On 27 May 2004 it discussed the evaluation of bids for 2004. On 16 September 2004 it met to discuss the draft annual work programme and call for bids for 2005. Before each meeting the Home Office conducted preparatory consultations with past bidders, stakeholders, agencies and devolved Administrations to discuss the UK's position in the Committee.

The Committee meetings take place in Brussels. The UK is generally represented at meetings of these Committees by Home Office officials and an official from the UK Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels.

The composition of the UK delegation is always agreed beforehand and it is possible for Scottish Executive officials to attend meetings of the Committees as part of the UK delegation.

Europol

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Initiative 2004/C 317/06, OJ C317 of 22 December 2004, the designation of Europol as the central office for combating euro counterfeiting; what additional responsibilities Europol officers will have; what additional rights ensue with regard to *(a)* activities in the United Kingdom, *(b)* required liaison by UK officers, *(c)* obligations by UK courts and *(d)* the charging of criminals and the location of their hearings; and for what reasons the UK has agreed to sponsor this initiative. [215239]

Caroline Flint: The initiative to designate Europol as the central office for combating euro counterfeiting is still being discussed in the Council of Ministers. Its aim is to make Europol a central point at which EU member states and third countries can share information in relation to euro counterfeiting.

Euro counterfeiting is a growing area of crime. The UK Government considers that this initiative would improve the effectiveness of the fight against euro counterfeiting and consequently agreed to co-sponsor it.

The designation will not affect the responsibilities, rights or powers of Europol officers or Europol staff in the UK or elsewhere.

The Bank of England is the designated "National Central Office" in the UK and as such acts on behalf of the European Central Bank in the UK for matters relating to the counterfeiting of euro banknotes. UK officers send any counterfeit currencies found in the UK to the National Criminal Intelligence Service in the first instance. Counterfeit euros or English sterling are then sent on to the Bank of England which will represent the European Central Bank in court proceedings in the UK. UK officers supplying or requesting information about euro counterfeiting would liaise with Europol staff in the usual way. The initiative creates no new obligations for the UK courts, or in respect of charges or the location of hearings. Charges may be brought in the UK courts for euro counterfeiting crimes.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the raids which have been conducted by Europol in the United Kingdom in the last 10 years. [216447]

Caroline Flint: Europol is not an operational police force and its staff do not have operational powers. Europol does not conduct any raids.

Since the UK recently ratified the 2002 "Protocol amending the convention on the establishment of the European Police office (Europol Convention) and the Protocol on the privileges and immunities of Europol, the members of its organs, the deputy directors and the employees of Europol", Europol staff members are able to be present when joint investigation teams carry out coercive measures. However they will not have any operational powers when they are present in those situations.

Extradition (United States)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure reciprocity of extradition arrangements with the United States, following the recent agreement allowing British nationals to be handed over to the US authorities to face charges for any criminal offence. [217291]

Caroline Flint: Her Majesty's Government are satisfied that the extradition treaty concluded with the USA on 31 March 2003 is broadly reciprocal, and that there are sufficient safeguards in the treaty and in the Extradition Act 2003, which governs extradition requirements in the UK, to prevent unfairness.

The arrangements apply only to serious criminal charges, as defined in the Treaty and the Extradition Act 2003, these being punishable under the laws of both States by deprivation of liberty for a period of one year or more. This modernises the definition of an extradition offence in line with international practice. Both nations have been prepared to extradite their own citizens to each other, and to other states with whom they have had arrangements, since the 19th century.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the House was informed of the content of the treaty amendment agreed in 2003 between the USA and the United Kingdom relating to extradition; and if he will place a copy of the treaty amendment in the Library. [217775]

Caroline Flint: The text of the treaty was presented to Parliament in May 2003, and was published as a Command Paper on 22 May 2003. A copy of the new treaty was placed in the Library.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the URL is for the internet text of the US/UK extradition treaty as amended in 2003; and if he will make a statement. [217777]

Caroline Flint: The link for the US/UK bilateral extradition treaty can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website, at www.fco.gov.uk. The document is available in pdf format under the "Command Papers" section on the FCO site.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many deaths were caused by *(a)* legally held and *(b)* illegally held firearms in each year since 1996. [210009]

Caroline Flint: There have been concerns over the quality of this data and, as a result, it has not been published. Because of these concerns, and following consultation with the police service, this data item ceased to be collected centrally from 1 April 2004.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many civilians have been issued with a licence to own a pistol for self-defence pursuant to section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968 in England and Wales in each of the last five years, broken down by county. [215779]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* None.

Forensic Science Service

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the future of the Forensic Science Service; [216824]

(2) what representations he has received on the future of the Forensic Science Service. [216825]

Caroline Flint: As my statement of 11 January made clear, it is the Government's intention to transform the Forensic Science Service (FSS) into a wholly owned Government company (GovCo) during the course of this year. It is intended that GovCo should be a success, but we recognise that, in future, it may need access to private sector capital and skills in order to meet its full potential.

I recognise that there have been a range of representations expressing concern about our proposals for the FSS, but my statement made clear the need for change in the face of increased competition, the emergence of new technology and the action of the police service to achieve strategic market management.

Identity Cards

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what arrangements he plans to put in place for Swedish citizens resident in the UK in relation to identity cards and access to public services; [218023]

(2) whether the Danish biometric passport will be an accepted form of identification for Danish citizens in the UK to access public services; [218024]

(3) whether EU citizens will be required to *(a)* register for and *(b)* use a UK identity card to access public services in England and Wales. [218025]

Mr. Browne: In accordance with EU law, all EU nationals who come to stay in the UK from a specified date for more than three months will be required to enrol on the National Identity Register. The specified date will be set by Parliament in regulations. For those EU nationals who are already resident, the scheme would become compulsory if it became compulsory for British citizens to register, though EU nationals could choose to register voluntarily. Any EU nationals who are not required to register may, as now, use their national passport or identity card as proof of identity. EU legislation will require the incorporation of digital facial image and fingerprint biometrics from 2008. It is for each public service to decide how it will require its users to demonstrate their identity, irrespective of nationality. The Identity Cards Bill provides powers for Parliament to approve regulations specifying how individual non-devolved public services may use the Identity Cards Scheme to verify identity.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department conducted an assessment of the impact that the measures in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Bill would have upon the activities of the Inland Revenue, including its use of third party members of the public assisting it in investigating taxpayers' compliance with Revenue law. [215657]

Caroline Flint: The inclusion of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, in Schedule 1 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Bill, as relevant authorities for the purposes of section 28 (the authorisation of directed surveillance) and section 29 (the authorisation of covert human intelligence sources) was on the basis of the Inland Revenue having identified a necessary and proportionate requirement to authorise the conduct of directed surveillance and the use of covert human intelligence sources.

Inquests (Teesside)

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inquests in the jurisdiction of the Teesside coroner were heard in *(a)* August, *(b)* September, *(c)* October, *(d)* November and *(e)* December 2004 by the (i) coroner, (ii) deputy coroner and (iii) assistant deputy coroner. [212063]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is given in the table.

HM Coroner Teesside—Number of cases

	Inquests heard by:		
	Coroner	*Deputy coroner*	*Assistant deputy coroner*
August 2004	18	2	2
September 2004	25	2	12
October 2004	16	3	4
November 2004	22	2	2
December 2004	17	5	3
January 2005	16	3	3

This table includes all inquests concluded in the relevant months (i.e. a verdict delivered, or the coroner has declared that the inquest is not to be resumed after an adjournment under Section 16 of the Coroners Act 1988).

International Organisations Bill

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Europol informants would be protected by the provisions contained in the International Organisations Bill, with particular reference to clause 5 (3) *(b)*. [216467]

Caroline Flint: Europol is not operational and has no operational powers. It supports law-enforcement agencies in combating serious organised crime. Europol does not use informants, and so there are no issues of privileges and immunities as outlined in the International Organisations Bill.

Justice and Home Affairs Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the outcome was of the Justice and Home Affairs Council held on 25 and 26 October 2004; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [216665]

Caroline Flint: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, Cathy Jamieson (Scottish Minister for Justice) and I represented the United Kingdom at the Justice and Home Affairs Council in Luxembourg on the 25–26 October 2004.

A list of "A" points approved (with the exception of items 11 and 32, which were withdrawn) at the Council has been placed in the Library (Document PTS A 50 13815/04). The UK tabled a Declaration on item 1 (European Border Agency), in relation to its participation and its position regarding Gibraltar.

The main discussion at the Council centred around the new [illegible] annual work programme, the Hague Programme, which follows on from the programme agreed at the Tampere European Council in 1999.

The Home Secretary and I welcomed the Presidency's emphasis on evaluation and implementation within the Programme and the importance of delivering work at an EU level which was of demonstrable benefit to the EU's citizens. There was also a useful focus on key areas of work which the UK had been pushing for: on closer police co-operation and more intelligence led policing; on mutual recognition of judicial decisions, respecting the diversity of member states' legal traditions; on

biometrics and strengthening our external borders; and on working more closely together to combat terrorism and organised crime.

In areas where the draft text was less welcome, such as on asylum and parts of criminal justice, we intervened robustly to protect the United Kingdom's interests. The final draft of the Programme went to the European Council on 5 November for final agreement. The final draft accommodated our key priorities and provided a strong foundation for work at an EU level over the next five years which will be beneficial for the UK.

With regard to other issues on the agenda, the Presidency put forward a compromise solution on the time scale for including biometrics in passports. This would be 18 months from adoption of the Regulation for a first identifier (digital facial image) and 36 months from adoption for the second (fingerprint). I was able to support this as a means to ensure greater security for our borders. The text of the draft Regulation was agreed in principle.

The Counter-Terrorism Co-ordinator (De Vries) outlined to the Council the progress which had been made on "peer evaluations". An interim report, covering the 15 "old" member states, was discussed at the Council on 2–3 December. A similar report on the "new" member states will be prepared during 2005.

The Council did not reach an agreement on the issue of proposed amendments to the Framework Decision on Ship Source Pollution. The Presidency concluded that the issue would be sent to the European Council for further discussion.

The Commission presented its initiative for a Council Decision on the exchange of information from criminal records. This was a first step in meeting the mandate from the March European Council for a register of convictions and disqualifications. The Presidency confirmed that the Commission proposal would be further discussed in the Working Group.

In considering other business, the Presidency confirmed its intention to adopt Council Conclusions on improving access to durable solutions and on the development of a common readmission policy, which were subsequently adopted at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 2 November.

The Commission reported on the evaluation of the Drugs Action Plan for 2000–04. The evaluation assessed the impact of achievements to date and assessed the areas where more could be done. The Commission called for a future strategy to include clear aims, operational indicators and responsibilities, in order to meet these challenges.

Also during the Council, on behalf of the UK, I signed the agreement between Switzerland and the EU and EC, regarding their participation in the Schengen acquis. This means that they now join Norway and Iceland in attending Mixed Committees.

Knives

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans his Department has to outlaw the sale of knives to those under the age of 18 years. [215873]

Caroline Flint: As we announced on 15 December 2004 the Government are looking at a range of measures, including a ban on the sale of knives to the under 18s, to tackle knife crime. We expect to say more shortly about how we will take this forward.

Mental Health

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions his Department has had with the Department of Health concerning people who have mental health problems. [216215]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office is working in partnership with the Department of Health on a range of issues concerning mental disorder.

We are concerned to ensure that mentally disordered people who commit offences are not sent to prison inappropriately, by promoting court diversion schemes and flexible sentencing options for the courts. We are working together to develop services for dangerous offenders with severe personality disorder, and we are improving mental health services in prisons through the development of mental health in-reach services.

To ensure that these developments are managed in a co-ordinated fashion, a new cross cutting Directorate was launched on 1 October 2004, incorporating relevant organisations from both Departments.

Operation Reptile

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of Operation Reptile was. [216053]

Caroline Flint: The costs arising from the Operation to date are £130,000.

Police

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police dogs and *(b)* police horses are available to Lancashire police. [216217]

Caroline Flint: Lancashire constabulary tell me that they have 67 police dogs and 17 police horses available in their force area. They also use police horses from other forces, through mutual aid arrangements, for crowd management.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are trained to use *(a)* guns and *(b)* taser guns. [216216]

Caroline Flint: The number of Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) trained to use conventional firearms for 2003–04 was 6096. The Home Secretary has approved the M26 Taser in England and Wales for use by Authorised Firearms Officers as a less lethal alternative in circumstances in which a firearms authority has been granted in accordance with criteria laid down in the ACPO Manual of Guidance on Police Use of Firearms. We do not hold information centrally on the number of Authorised Firearms Officers who have been trained to use tasers.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many convictions for drug-related crime have been secured in Durham since 2001; [214463]

(2) how many convictions for drug-related crime have been secured in North Durham since 2001. [214468]

Caroline Flint: Official conviction figures include statistics on convictions for drugs offences, such as possession, supply, and on property crimes such as burglary, but do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible to estimate the volume of convictions which are linked to the use of drugs or to the operation of drug markets.

Information on the number of known drug offenders found guilty or cautioned for drugs offences is available for police force areas only and it is not possible therefore to give an estimate for North Durham alone. For the Durham police force area, there were 1,180 convictions for drugs offences in 2001. The equivalent estimate for 2002 is 1,200. This information is available in the area tables of the "Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics, UK, 2001 and 2002" filed in the House Library.

Proceeds of Crime Act

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; and if he will introduce further legislation to increase the powers of the *(a)* police and *(b)* courts to seize all (i) property and (ii) money gained from illegal activities. [210436]

Caroline Flint: The total amount of money recovered in the United Kingdom under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 since the Act came into force on 24 February 2003 is £25,484,192. The Proceeds of Crime Act already allows for the seizure of cash and the freezing of all property and assets that are derived from crime. The value of property and assets are then recovered following their sale. The Act contains significant new powers to investigate and recover criminal assets. It established a dedicated Assets Recovery Agency with new powers of civil recovery and taxation of criminal assets. We are determined that the powers in the Act will be used to the full to recover the proceeds of crime. There are no plans at this time to introduce further powers on recovering the proceeds of crime.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the value of all recoveries made under the Proceeds of Crime Act has been since it came into effect. [217382]

Caroline Flint: The total amount of money recovered in the United Kingdom under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 since the Act came into force on 24 February 2003 is £28,700,501.

Replica Guns

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what restrictions there are on the sale of replica guns; and if he will make a statement. [213878]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* Under the Firearms Act 1982, imitation firearms that are readily convertible to fire live ammunition are treated in law as real, working guns and are therefore prohibited or require a firearms certificate. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 introduced a new mandatory minimum sentence of five years imprisonment for the unlawful sale or possession of prohibited firearms. There are otherwise no restrictions on the sale of imitation firearms, some of which are capable of discharging low powered projectiles and some not. Any imitation sold as a toy must not have an energy level in excess of 0.08 joule.

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced a new offence of carrying an imitation firearm in public without reasonable excuse. The police believe that this is a significant contribution to dealing with problems of misuse as they can now challenge anyone seen in public with an imitation and can arrest them if they do not have a reasonable explanation. It is also an offence to possess an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear of unlawful violence.

We are looking at the need for further controls as part of our current comprehensive review of firearms legislation.

Security Industry Authority

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget has been allocated to the Security Industry Authority in each of the last two years [201731]

Caroline Flint: The Security Industry Authority (SIA) became a legal entity on 1 April 2003. It became operational on 1 March 2004 with the commencement of the rollout of door-supervisor licensing. It is intended that SIA will, in due course, be self-funding from fee revenue.

The level of grant in aid paid (or due to be paid) to the SIA in the financial year 2003–04 was £7.113 million; this was increased to £25.995 million in the current financial year, 2004–05.

Serious Organised Crime Agency

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the reasons were for the decision that National Crime Squad and National Criminal Intelligence Service officers transferring to the Serious Organised Crime Agency should have the status of holder of the Office of Constable and the powers of police officers. [206685]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* All permanent staff transferring to the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) from precursor agencies will become SOCA employees, with any previous office held in suspense. They may be designated with police, customs or immigration powers according to operational needs (subject to suitability and training).

Staff will be able to develop careers across the whole range of SOCA activities, and the Agency will be able to make the most effective use of the experience, skills and potential available to it.

Speeding

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what speed drivers found guilty of speeding offences automatically qualify for *(a)* speed awareness workshops and *(b)* refresher driving courses; and if he will make a statement. [216807]

Caroline Flint: Attendance at a speed awareness workshop or refresher driving course is offered to drivers by some forces as an alternative to prosecution. It is a matter for individual chief officers of police to decide in what circumstances such an offer is made, including at what speed a driver has been recorded as travelling.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals received *(a)* points penalties and *(b)* convictions in respect of speeding offences in each of the last five years. [211879]

Caroline Flint: Available data, given in the tables, shows the number of fixed penalty notices issued and convictions and endorsements imposed at all courts for speeding offences within England and Wales from 1998 to 2002 (latest available).

2003 data will be available in March 2005.

Fixed penalty notices issued, for speeding offences[1], 1998–2002, England and Wales

	Number issued (Thousand)
1998	781
1999	825
2000	989
2001	1,233
2001	1,505

[1] Including speeding offences detected by camera.

Total findings of guilt and endorsements[1] without disqualifications imposed at all courts, for speeding offences[2], 1998 to 2002, England and Wales

	Number of offences (Thousand)				
	1998	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Total findings of guilt	153	154	141	136	125
Endorsements without disqualification	136	136	126	116	106

[1] Excludes penalty points given under section 35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (totting up system).
[2] Including speeding offences detected by camera

Taser Guns

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the health risks posed by the taser guns to be used by the police. [215876]

Caroline Flint: The independent medical statement on Taser provided by the Defence Scientific Advisory Council (DSAC) Sub Committee on the Medical Implications of Less Lethal Weapons (DOMILL) concludes that the risk of life threatening and other serious injuries is considered very low. Copies of the statements provided by DOMILL were placed in the Library of the House on 15 September 2004.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what controls will be placed on the use of taser guns by police; [215877]

(2) in what circumstances taser guns may be used by police. [215878]

Caroline Flint: The Home Secretary has approved the M26 Taser in England and Wales for use by Authorised Firearms Officers as a less lethal alternative in circumstances in which a firearms authority has been granted in accordance with criteria laid down in the ACPO Manual of Guidance on Police Use of Firearms.

Halliday Report

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the Halliday report on traffic offences resulting in death or serious injury to be published. [213159]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The Home Office consultation paper "Review of Road Traffic Offences involving Bad Driving" was published on 3 February.

Traffic Wardens

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many traffic wardens for which his Department has responsibility operate within the Greater London area; and how many there were in each of the last five years. [214383]

Caroline Flint: The total numbers of traffic wardens operating within the Greater London area and employed by the Metropolitan Police Authority in each of the last five years are given in the table:

Traffic warden strength

	Number
1999–2000	[1]828
2000–01	698
2001–02	638
200203	650
2003–04	479

[1] Prior to boundary changes on 1 April 2000 a small number of Metropolitan police traffic wardens operated in areas which were outside Greater London but within the Metropolitan police district.

The Police Authority for the City of London has not employed any traffic wardens during the years for which details were requested.

Uninsured Drivers

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that penalties for uninsured drivers are commensurate with the financial gain achieved by not paying insurance premiums. [216523]

Caroline Flint: The courts set fines to reflect the seriousness of the offence while taking into account the means of the offender. Therefore the fines imposed for driving while uninsured are often lower than £200, the level of the fixed penalty notice. This may be addressed in part by the Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill. It proposes a simple statutory methodology for calculating the amount of the fine. In addition courts will have the discretion to adjust the amount of the fine up to the level of the fixed penalty that otherwise would have been imposed.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 introduces changes to community penalties offering courts much tougher sentences than are currently available. They will be

available as an alternative to fines where the court considers the offence serious enough to warrant a community punishment.

Visa Extensions (Students)

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect of increased student visa charges on international applications to UK universities with particular reference to science and technology and engineering courses and departments within UK universities. [214569]

Mr. Browne: Following on from the Home Office consultation document 'Review of Charges for Immigration Applications', I am introducing new fees for a range of immigration applications. On 7 February I published a summary and analysis of the consultation responses, the supporting Regulatory Impact Assessments and an analysis of the likely impact of the new charges on international student numbers. These documents are available on the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Martin Linton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to increase the supply of affordable housing in London over the next five years. [218526]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is investing nearly £1.5 billion through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme in 2004–2006 to provide over 21,000 affordable homes in London. Our consultation 'Housing investment in the Regions' on the regional split of housing investment for 2006–08 proposed that London should receive £2.3 billion to support local authority and Registered Social Landlord housing programmes, a significant proportion of which would be for affordable housing. We expect to announce the outcome of the consultation in the near future.

In addition, English Partnerships London-Wide Initiative will provide a further 2,000 affordable homes for sale over the next five years, of which half will be available under the First Time Buyers Initiative announced by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 21–25.

Antisocial Owner-occupiers

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to introduce legislation to deal with antisocial owner-occupiers. [219331]

Keith Hill: The Government have no plans to introduce legislation to deal with antisocial behaviour specifically in relation to owner-occupiers. Existing measures are designed to work as a package across housing tenure, so antisocial behaviour can be addressed no matter where it occurs.

"Tenure-neutral" measures include Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Anti-social Behaviour Orders, injunctions under Section 222 of the Local Government Act 1972 and measures to tackle noise nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Building Regulations

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* changes and *(b)* additions have been made since 1993 to the Building Regulations; when each (i) change and (ii) addition came into effect; and what the estimated change to (A) the annual cost of new house construction and (B) the overall annual cost of construction resulting from each change or addition was. [218321]

Phil Hope: The principal Building Regulations were revised in 1991 and 2000, with amendments in each year except 1993 and 1996. A list of the relevant statutory instruments, is published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website and can be reached at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_buildreg/documents/page/odpm_breg_600270.hcsp.

The text of all the instruments, including their detailed content and the date they came into force is available on the website of Her Majesty's Stationery Office by search at: http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/stat.htm The text of and amendments to the 2000 Regulations are also available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's webpage mentioned above.

Compiling estimates of the costs of all the actual changes since 1993 would incur disproportionate costs, as these are not kept as a running record. However, all proposals for change have been subject to a cost benefit or regulatory impact assessment to ensure they are justified.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* additions and *(b)* changes to building regulations are under development; when each is planned to take place; and what the estimated change to the annual cost of new house construction resulting from each would be. [218358]

Phil Hope: The following parts of the Building Regulations are under review:

B (Fire safety)—public consultation expected this spring.

F (Ventilation)—revised Approved Document expected to be published summer 2005, to come into force 31 December 2005.

G (Hygiene)—public consultation expected early 2006.

L (Conservation of fuel and power)—amendment to Approved Document (L1—condensing boilers) April 2005; revised regulations expected to be made summer 2005, to come into force 31 December 2005.

M (Access and use of domestic buildings)—public consultation expected summer 2006.

In addition, proposals for regulations on sustainability and security are being developed following the passing the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004.

For parts F and L a partial regulatory impact assessment, including estimated costs of the various options for change, was published last year as part of the consultation exercise on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website and is available, as part of the

relevant consultation document, at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=168&l=1.

However, until final decisions have been taken, it would be premature to regard these estimates as definitive. For the remaining parts listed above, a partial regulatory impact assessment will be published which will assess the estimated costs and benefits of recommended changes, as part of the public consultation.

Business Rates (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the likely average increase in business rates for 2005 for commercial properties in each London borough following revaluation of properties in October 2004. [218832]

Mr. Raynsford: No such estimate has been made.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many properties in each London borough will benefit from the new business rate relief scheme, based on the revaluation of commercial property in 2004; [218833]

(2) what the average relief given to businesses under the new business rate relief scheme will be in each London borough. [218834]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average increase in rateable value for commercial properties in each of the London boroughs is following the revaluation of businesses in October 2004. [218831]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency has published an analysis of the Draft Rating Lists, which were published on 1 October 2004. An analysis of the changes in rateable value, arising from the revaluation, can be found on their website www.voa.gov.uk under Business Rates Information—Non Domestic Revaluation 2005 Draft Lists Statistics.

Consent Regimes

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1576W, on consents, if he will list the consent regimes that regulate the activities of local government that the Government have resolved to maintain. [217867]

Mr. Raynsford: Of those consent regimes identified by the 1997 Efficiency Scrutiny, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no immediate plans to deregulate the 56 powers listed as follows, 36 of those 56 powers were recommended for retention by the scrutiny. Our announcement on consent regimes in September 2002 provided explanations for our retention of the additional 20 powers.

Description	*Number of powers*
Power to consent to employment based teacher training programmes	1
Power to approve the placing of a child with special needs in a non-approved independent school	1
Power to consent to use of ionising radiation in schools and colleges	1
Approval of the provision of welfare services	5
A power to approve the licensing of secure accommodation for children	1
A power to approve an order to direct that a disease is locally notifiable, and to vary or revoke such an order	1
Agreements between authorities to undertake public health functions at airports and ports	1
A power to consent to the provision by a police authority of advice and assistance to international organisations and overseas bodies	1
A power to implement a proposal to establish, vary or revoke a sea fisheries district order	1
Power to approve a reorganisation of small holdings	1
A power to consent to the exercise of land drainage powers by local authorities	1
Power to consent to the delegation of housing management to an agent	1
Power to approve a variation to the model registration scheme for houses in multiple occupation	1
Power to set statutory upper limits on defective housing grants, but also to relax those limits in certain circumstances	3
Housing Act 1985, s294. Extinguishment of public rights of way over land acquired under s290 (land acquired for clearance)	1
Control over areas of special control of advertisements	1
A power ("Article 4 Direction") to consent to withdrawal of permitted development rights	1
A power to consent to various planning matters in respect of the local planning authority itself, other than "planning permission to develop land"	1
Three powers to confirm various orders revoking, modifying or otherwise affecting existing planning permissions or existing uses of land or existing buildings or works	3
A power to confirm orders revoking or modifying listed building consent	1
Approval of orders removing caravan site licence exemptions	1
A power to confirm an order giving access to open country	1
Confirm orders amending definitive maps	1
Confirm public path orders and orders to extinguish or divert footpaths or bridle-ways to enable development	2
A power to approve industrial improvement areas	1
A power to confirm, amend, or revoke limestone pavement orders	1
A power to introduce a requirement to seek consent relating to management schemes for marine sites involving relevant local authorities	1
A power to consent to capitalisation of redundancy costs	1
A power to consent to the sale or appropriation of statutory allotment land, or its use for other purposes	1
A power to consent to commencing certain statutory nuisance proceedings in relation to prescribed industrial processes	1
Police use of wheel clamps on highways in a local traffic authority's area	1
Approval of the transfer of responsibility for enforcing on-street parking controls from the police to local traffic authorities	1
Confirming orders stopping up or diverting right of way for alterations to side roads	1
Two powers to consent to sale or financial restructuring of local authority-owned bus companies	2
Construction of bridges/tunnels on navigable waters/ to divert a non-navigable watercourse	2
Four powers to confirm traffic regulation orders (TROs) and other measures where the Secretary of State is the highway authority	4

Description	Number of powers
Altering tolls at statutory undertakings	1
A power to approve TROs on Crown roads	1
Three powers to consent to establish/maintain or acquire shares in an aerodrome, or operate an ancillary business	3
A power to approve non-standard traffic calming measures	1

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the consent regimes that regulate the activities of local government that have been created since May 1997. [217785]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council Tax (Second Homes)

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of total council tax revenue raised by local authorities from charging on second homes in 2004–05. [217576]

Mr. Raynsford: It is provisionally estimated that just over £220 million is being raised by local authorities from charging council tax on second homes in 2004–05.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215620]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grant funding that benefits the Blackpool, South constituency through a number of programmes.

For example over the period 2001–06 Blackpool has been allocated £12.8 million Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources to help the local authority, in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership, improve services in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the area.

More broadly, since 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the total amount of government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Blackpool council has received average annual increases in formula grant since 1997 of 5.3 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at: http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214694]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grant funding that benefits the Burnley constituency through a number of programmes.

For example over the period 2001–06 Burnley has been allocated £5.4 million Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources to help the local authority, in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership, improve services in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the area.

More broadly, since 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the total amount of government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Burnley council has received an average annual increase in formula grant since 1997 of 5.2 per cent. Residents of Burnley have also benefited from Lancashire county council's average annual increase in grant of 4.4 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at: http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Maidenhead constituency, the effects on Maidenhead of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215971]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grant funding that benefits the Maidenhead constituency through a number of programmes.

More broadly, since 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the total amount of government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. The two local authorities in Maidenhead

constituency have received average annual increases in formula grant since 1997 of 3.8 per cent. for Windsor and Maidenhead and 5.9 per cent. for Wokingham.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at: http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effects of his Department's policy since 1997 on Dudley, North constituency; and if he will make a statement. [213146]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, we are determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grant funding that benefits the Dudley, North constituency through a number of programmes.

For example over the period 2001–2006 Dudley has been allocated £6.5 million Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources to help the local authority, in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership, improve services in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the area.

Dudley metropolitan borough council was awarded a Liveability Fund grant worth a total of £3.4 million in March 2004. The grant is being used to support sustainable changes to the way the council delivers key environmental services and also to reward the council with capital grants for meeting agreed performance milestones.

More broadly, since 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the amount of government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms.

Dudley has received average annual increases in formula grant since 1997 of 5.9 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on entertainment by his Office in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204358]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created following the machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The information is not available in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, the following table shows how much the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Central) spent on catering, hospitality and official entertainment in 2002–03 and 2004–05.

	£
2002–03	241,124
2003–04	226,880
2004–05[1]	58,090

[1] Spend to date.

All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in "Government Accounting".

School Fires

Jim Knight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fires in school buildings were attended by each fire and rescue authority in England and Wales during the period from 1999 to 2004. [217517]

Mr. Raynsford: The number of school fires attended between 1999–2000 and 2003–04 by Fire and Rescue services in England and Wales are tabled as follows:

Fires[1] in schools, England and Wales, 1999–2000 to 2003–04[2]

Area	*Number*
England and Wales	6,882
England	6,469
England—Non-Met Counties	3,608
Avon	126
Bedfordshire	102
Berkshire	122
Buckinghamshire	80
Cambridgeshire	73
Cheshire	113
Cleveland	138
Cornwall	22
Cumbria	66
Derbyshire	94
Devon	104
Dorset	64
Durham	76
East Sussex	103
Essex	94
Gloucestershire	38
Hampshire	194
Hereford & Worcester	72
Hertfordshire	109
Humberside	163
Isle of Wight	16
Kent	146
Lancashire	247
Leicestershire	98
Lincolnshire	50
Norfolk	58
North Yorkshire	104
Northamptonshire	65
Northumberland	27
Nottinghamshire	125
Oxfordshire	98
Shropshire	38
Somerset	67
Staffordshire	146
Suffolk	49
Surrey	92
Warwickshire	88

Fires[1] in schools, England and Wales, 1999–2000 to 2003–04[2]

Area	*Number*
West Sussex	114
Wiltshire	34
England—Met Counties	2,860
Greater Manchester	663
Merseyside	317
South Yorkshire	199
Tyne and Wear	232
West Midlands	426
West Yorkshire	374
Greater London	650
Wales	413
North Wales	85
Mid and West Wales	139
South Wales	190

[1] Figures are based on sampled data weighted to true brigade totals.
[2] Provisional.
Note:
Excluding incidents not recorded during periods of industrial action in 2002 and 2003.
Source:
Returns by Fire and Rescue services to ODPM

Fire Authorities (Leaked Information)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the evidential basis was for the assertions made in the letter to chairs of fire authorities in the south-west that one of them had leaked figures for the outline business case for regional control centres to the Fire Brigades Union; [218804]

(2) whether he has undertaken an investigation into how the Fire Brigades Union obtained the figures from the outline business case for regional control centres. [218805]

Mr. Raynsford: The letter in question was sent to all the chairs of Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in England. It did not accuse any specific authority of leaking information to the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) but reflected findings that the leak did not originate from an official, consultant or from the Regional Management Boards.

An internal investigation showed that the version of the Outline Business Case (OBC) that was acquired by the FBU was the same as that circulated in confidence to Fire and Rescue Authority chairs. Forensic analysis showed that at some point between it being sent out to FRAs and the FBU placing it on their website it was electronically manipulated by a technically competent person. That analysis also showed that it was not leaked by anyone at headquarters.

High Hedges

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans his Department has to offer training to local councils with regard to the high hedges provisions contained within the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004. [218862]

Phil Hope: To assist local authorities in implementing Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003—the high hedges legislation—the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be issuing detailed guidance, which will cover such matters as how to deal with complaints and will include model letters and forms. Additionally, we are planning to hold a number of regional workshops to which we will invite members of each local authority in England.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he expects antisocial behaviour legislation relating to high hedges to be implemented before Easter. [219308]

Phil Hope: The Regulations to implement Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, which gives local authorities the powers to deal with complaints about high hedges, have not yet been laid before Parliament. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will not, therefore, be able to bring the legislation into force before Easter. We are, however, hoping to lay the Regulations before then.

Mayoral Elections (Expense Limits)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to take steps to change election expense limits for local government mayoral elections. [217781]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government have no plans to change elections expense limits for local government mayoral elections.

Local Government Employees (Medical Retirement)

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many members of local government pension schemes were granted ill-health retirement in each of the last three years. [218482]

Phil Hope: The number of members granted ill-health retirement from the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales in the three years commencing 2001–02 were 9,805, 7,515 and 6,784 respectively. Information about the number of ill-health retirements granted by other public service pension schemes that operate within local government is not held by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Structural Funds (East Midlands)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list *(a)* projects and *(b)* organisations which have received EU Structural Funds in the East Midlands Objective 2 Programme, broken down by amount received. [217930]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is available on the website of the Government office for the East Midlands. Full details of projects and organisations that have received European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can be viewed at:

http://www.go-em.gov.uk/european/obj2/erdf/approved.php?x=0

Projects and organisations that have received European Social Fund (ESF) can be viewed at:

http://www.go-em.gov.uk/european/obj2/esf/approved.php?x=0

The information on the website details grant which has been approved and offered to individual projects and organisations. Requests for information on up to date payments made can be obtained from the Government Office for the East Midlands as follows:

ERDF—Mark Klemba—mklemba.goem@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

ESF—Melanie Phythian—mphythian.goem@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the East Midlands Objective 2 Programme. [217931]

Mr. Raynsford: In common with all other regions receiving EU Structural Funds under the Objective 2 Programme, the East Midlands completed a Mid Term Evaluation in October 2003 which assessed the performance of the Programme in its first four years and made recommendations to change its strategy over the second half of the programme. In addition, the programme is reviewed on an annual basis and the findings documented in an Annual Implementation Report. The 2003 Annual Implementation Report was completed in June 2004. Copies of the full report of the East Midlands Mid Term Evaluation and the Annual Implementation Report can be viewed at:

http://www.go-em.gov.uk/european/obj2/evaluation.php?x=0

Further information on the Objective 2 Programme can be obtained from Peter Holmes, Head of European Finance, Performance and Policy Team at the Government Office for the East Midlands—pholmes.goem@go-regions.gsi.gov.uk

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what purpose his Department requested copies of campaign material from "North East Says No" during the North East referendum period in 2004. [219076]

Mr. Raynsford: Schedule 12 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 gives designated organisations (the yes and no campaigns) the right to send a referendum address post free. The referendum addresses must be sent by the universal postal provider. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister therefore put in place a contract with the Royal Mail in summer 2004 to deliver these referendum addresses. The total cost was just under £500,000.

To ensure that the Royal Mail had complied with the contract and delivered the referendum addresses to a high standard, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also had a small quality control contract with NOP. NOP contacted a sample of the electorate by telephone to ask whether they had received leaflets from the yes or no campaigns. To do this effectively, NOP had to describe the leaflets. Therefore officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister requested a copy of each campaign organisation's leaflet from the Electoral Commission and explained in full the reasons for doing so. Copies of these leaflets were not sent to Ministers or special advisers.

A copy of the questionnaire used by NOP and their results has today been made available in the Library of the House.

Social Housing (Right to Buy)

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether centrally pooled capital receipts from the sale of council homes under the Right to Buy in debt-free authorities will be used as Approved Development Programme funding. [217578]

Keith Hill: Pooled capital receipts from debt-free authorities do not form a dedicated funding stream into any particular grant or borrowing support regime, rather, the level of pooled capital receipts from debt-free authorities are taken account of when the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determining its level of investment in housing, including the Approved Development Programme.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Anti-bribery/Corruption Procedures

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1011W, on anti-bribery/corruption procedures, if she will make a statement on the conclusions reached following comparison of the revised Export Credits Guarantee Department anti-bribery and corruption procedures and those provided by G7 counterparts. [217445]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1922W.

Caviar

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much *(a)* wild and *(b)* farmed caviar was imported into the UK in each of the last five years, broken down by country of origin. [217989]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

The following table shows UK imports of caviar and caviar substitute for the years 2000 to 2004. Imports for wild and farmed caviar are not separately identified.

Tonnes

Product/country	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*Total*
Caviar						
Germany	14	1	10	87	69	181
France	3	1	64	9	43	120
Russia	6	7	0	—	—	12
Denmark	0	0	2	2	0	4
Greece	—	—	—	3	0	3

Tonnes

Product/country	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*Total*
Others	4	1	2	2	2	12
Caviar total	27	11	78	102	115	333
Caviar substitute						
Iceland	229	134	17	39	10	430
Denmark	33	52	29	27	26	167
USA	3	38	8	6	21	75
Greece	3	8	3	1	27	42
Netherlands	0	3	1	1	23	29
Others	9	7	15	13	47	91
Caviar substitute total	278	242	73	88	153	835

Note:
2004 data are subject to amendments until 30 June 2005
Source:
HM Customs and Excise
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, DEFRA

Company Law

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the *(a)* next steps and *(b)* timetable for the Government's review of company law; and what proposals she is considering to change the liability of individual directors of UK companies, when a company causes social or environmental damage overseas. [218218]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Parliament has already passed the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004, and agreed the Companies Act 1985 (International Accounting Standards and Other Accounting Amendments) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/2947). The Companies Act 1985 (Accounts of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise and Audit Exemption) (Amendment) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/16) are also in force. The draft Companies Act 1985 (Operating and Financial Review and Directors' Report etc.) Regulations 2005 have been laid before Parliament for approval.

Completion of implementation of the Company Law Review will be achieved through the Company Law Reform Bill, draft clauses for which will be published this session. The Bill will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time permits.

Department Store Chargecards

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the levels of interest charged on department store chargecards. [218926]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In March 2004, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) published a report on the store card market and referred the supply of store card services to the Competition Commission.

The OFT report raised particular concerns about the rate of interest on store cards compared to credit cards; a lack of transparency and clarity for customers; the ability of store card providers to enter the market; and the ability of existing providers to expand market share.

As part of its inquiry, the Competition Commission published its emerging thinking in January this year. It is due to publish its final report by early July.

Departmental Policies (Havant)

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Havant constituency, the effects on Havant of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215982]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department of Trade and Industry has provided funding totalling £253,572 since 2 May 1997, to organisations in the Havant constituency through the Small Business Service's grant for Research and Development formerly known as SMART.

In addition the South East England Development Agency, which receives funding from the Department of Trade and Industry and others has provided a range of initiatives that have an impact on Havant. Havant is a SEEDA priority area for economic regeneration and they have invested in excess of £20,000,000 in the Havant area since 1999. Projects include five rounds of Single Regeneration Budget funding targeting more than £9 million at Havant, principally in the Leigh Park area, a £10 million investment in the Broadmarsh area, in particular acquiring 12 hectares of brownfield land that has been developed in four phases providing 7,400 sq m of office and industrial units and £6,300,000 Area Investment Framework funding in South East Hampshire over four years.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee on security of information systems, (ii) Committee for the implementation of the multi-annual Community action plan on promoting the safe use of the Internet and (iii) Committee on projects of common interest in the field of trans-European telecommunications networks met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if she will make a statement. [216725]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Committee on the Security of Information Systems (know as SOGIS) did not meet during the Presidencies of the European Council you have specified. It has not done so since 1998. The Committee on the implementation of the multi-annual Community action plan on promoting the safe use of the

Internet did not meet during the Italian and Dutch Presidencies; but did so during the Irish Presidency of the EU, on 27 January 2004 in Luxembourg, and was attended by an official from the Home Office.

The Financial Committee and Guidelines Committee for the trans-European telecommunications networks (eTEN) met nine times during the course of the three Presidencies (on 3 October, 29 October and 18 November 2003 and on 20 January, 26 April, 15 July, 23 September, 9 November and 14 December 2004). The meetings took place in Brussels with the exception of that on 3 October 2003, which was held in Milan. On each occasion the United Kingdom was represented by an official from the Digital Content and Publishing Unit of the Department of trade and Industry.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee for the management of generalised preferences met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217837]

Mr. Alexander: Further to the answers given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on 19 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 979W, and 19 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 645W, the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) Committee met in Brussels three times during the Italian Presidency on 11 July 2003, 13 October 2003, 24 November 2003 and once during the Irish Presidency on 18 June 2004. No GSP Committee took place during the Dutch Presidency.

Both UK and Brussels based staff attended these meetings.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on conformity assessment and surveillance of the telecommunications market met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217885]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Meetings of the Telecommunications Conformity Assessment and Market Surveillance Committee took place during:

(a) the Italian presidency on 18–19 September 2003 in Luxembourg, when four officials from my Department, one from the Office of Telecommunications and one from the Home Office attended;

(b) the Irish presidency on 23–24 March 2004 in Luxembourg, when three officials from my Department and one from the Office of Communications attended, and on 21–22 June 2004 in Luxembourg when three officials from my Department and one from the Office of Communications attended; and

(c) the Dutch presidency on 17–18 November 2004 in Brussels when two officials from my Department and one from the Office of Communications attended.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on Protection Against Subsidised Imports met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217913]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on Defence Against Obstacles to Trade Which Affect the Market of the Community or a Non-member Country met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217918]

Mr. Alexander: These Committees are not recognised under the tiles given. Matters relating to trade defence issues would have been discussed in the EU Advisory Anti-Dumping and Anti-Subsidy Committee. This Committee met in Brussels as follows:

Italian Presidency

2 July, 24 July, 3 September, 11 September, 16 October, 17 November, 1 December and 18 December 2003.

Irish Presidency

15 January, 30 January, 12 February, 8 March, 7 April, 21 April, 13 May and 16–17 June 2004; and

Dutch Presidency

22 July, 7 September, 14–15 October, 16 November and 16 December 2004.

Officials from the Department of Trade and Industry attended each meeting.

Flexible Employment

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have so far exercised their right to request more flexible employment arrangements; and how many have been successful, broken down by gender. [215528]

Mr. Sutcliffe: From the results of the First Working Employee Survey (2004) 10 per cent. all of male employees requested to work flexibly, compared with 16 per cent. of all female employees. However of those with children under six 10 per cent. of male employees, compared with 37 per cent. of female employees have requested flexible working.

Over three quarters (77 per cent.) of flexible working requests were fully accepted and a further 9 per cent. were either partly accepted or a compromise arrangement was reached. 78 per cent. of all female employees reported requests being fully accepted, compared with 75 per cent. of all male employees.

Gas Prices

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to limit the impact of the recent gas price rises on customers with low incomes. [218820]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* I am working with the industry, Ofgem, Energywatch and voluntary sector to ensure that customers on low incomes are aware of, and take advantage of, the significant reductions that can be made in energy bills by transferring supplier, using the cheapest and simplest payment methods, installing energy efficiency measures and accessing Government and industry social and fuel poverty programmes.

Hydrogen Fuel

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to develop new and renewable energy sources in the North East and Tees Valley, with particular reference to the use of hydrogen. [218504]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government's role is to provide a supportive regulatory/fiscal framework for the development of renewable energy sources. The Government's key mechanism for supporting the development of renewables is the Renewables Obligation. The obligation is a market-based mechanism which is technology neutral. In addition to the obligation the Government are spending over £500 million between 2002 and 2008 on R and D and funding for capital grants for emerging renewable and low carbon technologies.

Hydrogen is an energy carrier (like electricity), not a renewable energy source. It can be produced via a number of different routes, including electrolysis using fossil, renewable or nuclear electricity, or by chemical reactions using biomass, natural gas or coal.

Kazakhstan

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many visits were made to Kazakhstan by her *(a)* officials and *(b)* Ministers in 2004. [208934]

Mr. Alexander: Officials made four visits to Kazakhstan in 2004. There were no ministerial visits.

Nuclear Waste

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Department's policy is towards burying nuclear waste. [215884]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

The UK Government and devolved Administrations have established the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) to assess the options for the long term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste. This includes underground disposal. The Committee's recommendations are due to be delivered in July 2006. Further details of CoRWM's work programme, including the options that the Committee is considering, can be found at www.corwm.org.uk.

Post Office

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post office closures have been stopped following objections from local users in each of the last five years. [218649]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Under the urban reinvention programme, to date, 78 closure proposals have been withdrawn following public consultation.

Data prior to the start of the urban reinvention programme in November 2002 is not available.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices have been closed since the start of the Post Office Reinvention Programme. [218650]

Mr. Sutcliffe: To the end of December 2004, the latest quarter for which figures are available, 2,070 sub-post office had closed under the Urban Reinvention Programme.

Postal Services (Scotland)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations were conducted with mail users in Scotland on the opening of the UK postal services market to full competition by 1 January 2006. [218593]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Postcomm conducted consultations concerning the opening of the UK postal services market to full competition throughout the UK including Scotland.

Solar Photovoltaics

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's estimate is of the number of jobs that will be affected in the solar PV industry and related sectors in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* the UK when the Government's 2002–2012 solar PV Major Demonstration Programme comes to an end in March 2006. [218602]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department plans to continue its support for PV and other building scale renewables through a "low carbon building programme". This programme will succeed both the Major PV Demonstration Programme and the Clear Skies programme which are due to end in March 2006

The low carbon building programmes is currently under development and there will be formal consultation on this later this year. As recommended in the Renewables Innovation Review, February 2004, the programme will be technology blind addressing building integrated renewables and energy efficiency technologies. Therefore the Department has not estimated the number of jobs that will be affected in the solar PV industry and related sectors by the introduction of this programme.

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to ensure continuity of capital grant support for large scale solar PV installations when stream 2 funding allocations under her Department's 2002 to 2012 solar PV demonstration programme comes to an end in November. [218981]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The final call for proposals for the Major PV Demonstration programme will take place at the end of 2005. Grants are expected to be paid up to March 2007.

The Department plans to continue its support for PV and other building scale renewables through a "low carbon building programme". The low carbon building programme is currently under development and there will be formal consultation on this later this year. The programme is expected to begin operating in financial year 2006–07.

Trade Balance

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent steps her Department has taken to promote trade with Europe. [217365]

Mr. Alexander: My Department promotes trade with Europe on an ongoing basis through UK Trade and Investment, the Government organisation which helps UK companies build their international business success. It does so through a range of services and support designed to help companies gain international trade skills and turn trade opportunities into real business.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Recipients (Scotland)

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in Scotland were in receipt of *(a)* the minimum income guarantee, *(b)* council tax benefit, *(c)* jobseeker's allowance and *(d)* housing benefit in 2002–03; [217724]

(2) how many non-pensioners in Scotland were in receipt of income support in 2002–03. [217725]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Benefit recipients in Scotland, 2002–03

	Number
Housing Benefit	447,700
Council Tax Benefit	527,900
Jobseekers Allowance	101,000
Minimum Income Guarantee	185,400
Income Support (non-pensioners)	260,100

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. HB/CTB figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
4. Council Tax Benefit totals exclude any Second Adult Rebate cases.
5. Housing Benefit figures exclude any Extended Payment cases.
6. Figures are given as a four quarter average (May, August, November 2002 and February 2003).
7. Non-pensioners are defined as working age claimants (i.e. men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59) therefore there will be a small overlap between the Income Support non-pensioner figure and the Minimum Income Guarantee figure; men aged 60–64 are counted in both categories.

Sources:
Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples for Income Support and Minimum Income Guarantee; Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count; and Seasonally adjusted count of unemployment-related benefits, Jobcentre Plus computer systems.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will issue notifications of basic entitlement to council tax benefit to relevant claimants of pension credit. [218028]

Mr. Pond: The Pension Service are already doing much to promote council tax benefit take-up, from issuing a housing benefit/council tax benefit claim form to everyone who calls the pension credit application line and wishes to claim, to helping people fill in this form when visiting pensioners to take a claim for pension credit.

The Pension Service have also recently provided local authorities with details of those people in their area claiming pension credit but not claiming housing benefit or council tax benefit, for authorities to use to complement their own take-up activities.

Disability Awareness Training

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department spent on disability awareness training in 2003–04; and what information he collects concerning the *(a)* number and *(b)* occupation of training recipients. [217359]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provides a variety of training for its staff which raises awareness of disability. It is principally aimed at advisers and other people who deal with the public but some is available to all employees. It includes an event called 'Dealing with Vulnerable Groups' which helps staff in dealing with people who are deaf or are visually impaired or who have mental health issues.

In addition to formal training courses, people are increasingly developed by a variety of other means, including mentoring and e-learning in the work place. These include The Diversity Toolkit, which offers a range of training options and which won a British Diversity silver award in the innovation and awareness category in 2004. The disability awareness strand of this has been made compulsory for staff in several DWP businesses.

Although the Department works in partnership with external organisations to develop disability awareness products, training is only delivered to the Department's own staff.

The Department does not collect information about the numbers of its staff who access particular types of training or the cost of delivering different types of training. This information could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many company *(a)* directors, *(b)* managers and *(c)* secretaries have been (i) prosecuted and (ii) convicted for health and safety offences under section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 in each year since 1996. [216303]

Jane Kennedy: Information is not available in the format requested. The numbers of company directors or other senior corporate officers (i) prosecuted and (ii) convicted for offences under section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 in each year since 1996, in cases following as HSE investigation, are as follows.

Year[1]	Number of individuals prosecuted	Number of individuals convicted
1996–97	17	15
1997–98	6	5
1998–99	9	9
1999–2000	17	12
2000–01	16	15
2001–02	16	11
2002–03	18	9
2003–04[2]	12	10

[1] Year refers to operational year which runs from 1 April to 31 March.

[2] Figures for 2003–04 are provisional

Information specifically about company directors, managers or secretaries is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Similar figures for local authority cases are not available from the (voluntary) local authority returns on health and safety enforcement.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the question tabled by the right hon. Member for Birkenhead on 19 January, reference 210053. [218695]

Mr. Pond: An answer was given on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 405–06W.

Pension Service

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of calls made to the crisis line from Scotland in each month since July 2004 *(a)* were answered within 30 seconds, *(b)* received an engaged tone or recorded message that all agents are busy and *(c)* were abandoned. [217081]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available.

Public Service Pensions

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of the review of the local government, health and other public service pension schemes. [218013]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The cost of the reviews of local government, health and other public service pension schemes is a matter for the individual Departments which are responsible for the schemes and is not available centrally.

Social Fund

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Social Fund *(a)* community care grants, *(b)* crisis loans and *(c)* budgeting loan applications have been (i) made and (ii) received by Jobcentre plus in Scotland in each month since January 2002. [216921]

Mr. Pond: Information is only available on the number of Social Fund claim applications received.

The available information is in the table.

Numbers of applications for Social Fund Community Care Grants (CCGs), Crisis Loans (CLs) and Budgeting Loans (BLs) received in Scotland since January 2002

	CCGs	CLs	BLs
January 2002	6,700	29,290	17,100
February 2002	8,060	27,810	19,730
March 2002	8,550	28,130	21,350
April 2002	8,400	27,870	22,270
May 2002	8,840	28,240	21,960
June 2002	7,050	24,390	18,580
July 2002	8,320	27,230	20,330
August 2002	8,150	27,000	19,100
September 2002	7,520	23,670	18,360
October 2002	9,040	27,900	25,000
November 2002	8,790	24,030	28,390
December 2002	6,550	21,560	17,910
January 2003	7,420	28,570	17,540
February 2003	8,190	26,200	19,370
March 2003	8,290	25,510	20,530
April 2003	8,180	25,820	20,200
May 2003	7,850	26,660	20,150
June 2003	7,820	27,440	20,210
July 2003	8,060	28,280	18,910
August 2003	7,210	26,530	18,020
September 2003	8,000	26,870	18,910
October 2003	8,590	28,940	23,350
November 2003	8,270	24,610	25,950
December 2003	6,850	24,700	19,010
January 2004	6,930	28,300	15,610
February 2004	7,620	28,120	17,030
March 2004	9,080	30,260	21,430
April 2004	7,400	24,500	18,050
May 2004	7,590	25,410	17,850
June 2004	8,360	26,860	19,250
July 2004	7,010	22,750	15,380
August 2004	7,840	25,140	17,530
September 2004	7,030	24,320	16,670
October 2004	7,280	23,710	18,980
November 2004	8,260	24,350	27,420
December 2004	6,270	22,500	18,260
January 2005	6,780	27,820	12,810

Notes:

1. Jobcentre Plus was created in April 2002. Data prior to that is for the Benefits Agency.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan/Iraq

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent since 2001 on UK military operations *(a)* solely and *(b)* mainly relating to (i) Afghanistan and (ii) Iraq. [218320]

Mr. Ingram: Ministry of Defence identifies the costs of operations in terms of the net additional costs it has incurred. Additional costs for larger operations are identified separately and are published in the MOD's annual report and accounts following audit by the NAO.

On this basis, the cost of military operations in Afghanistan from 2001–02 to the end of 2003–04 was £578 million. Similarly, the cost of activities in Iraq under Operation Telic commencing in 2002–03 and to the end of 2003–04 was £2,158 million.

Figures for costs in 2004–05 will be published in the MOD's annual report and accounts for 2004–05 in the autumn.

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the *(a)* timescale for, *(b)* size of, *(c)* capability of, *(d)* contracts for, *(e)* sub-contracts for and *(f)* cost of the new aircraft carriers. [215504]

Mr. Ingram: Our target acquisition cost for the Future Carrier (CVF) programme is around £3 billion, with target in service dates of 2012 and 2015. The project is in its Assessment Phase. We have not so far sought to fix the dimensions of the ships, but are focusing instead on the future capability required. This was outlined in the July 2004 Defence White Paper supplement "Delivering Security in a Changing World: Future Capabilities". As is normal for a project at this stage, the design will continue to evolve. The timescale, cost and performance parameters will be set following the main investment decision.

We believe that the Alliance approach represents the best prospect for delivering the future carriers to time and cost. Discussions are ongoing on the contracting arrangements for the Demonstration and Manufacture phase of the project.

Army Officers

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* established and *(b)* current trained strength of officers in the British Army is, broken down by arm. [217035]

Mr. Caplin: The information in the following table is the strength and establishment figures for Trained UK Regular Army Officers as at 1 January 2005:

Arm/Service	*Establishment*	*Strength*
Total	13,720	13,760
Staff	830	820
Household Cavalry/Royal Armoured Corps	800	860
Royal Regiment of Artillery	1,020	1,060
Corps of Royal Engineers	1,290	1,200
Royal Corps of Signals	960	1,000
Infantry	2,500	2,950
Army Air Corps	510	480
Royal Army Chaplain's Department	160	130
The Royal Logistic Corps	1,670	1,640
Royal Army Medical Corps	980	860
Corps of Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers	800	850
Adjutant General's Corps (Staff And Personnel Support Branch)	230	210
Adjutant General's Corps (Provost Branch)	480	470
Adjutant General's Corps (Educational and Training Services Branch)	330	330
Adjutant General's Corps (Army Legal Services Branch)	120	90
Royal Army Veterinary Corps	20	20
Small Arms School Corps	30	30
Royal Army Dental Corps	170	150
Intelligence Corps	330	280
Army Physical Training Corps	50	40
Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps	400	260
Corps of Army Music	30	40
Unallocated	—	—

Notes:

1. UK Regular Army includes nursing services and excludes Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, mobilised reservists.
2. Denotes zero or rounded to zero.
3. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. Due to the rounding methods used, figures may not always equal the sum of the parts. While rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Canberra PR9

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Canberra PR9 to be withdrawn from service; what will replace the capability; and when. [218129]

Mr. Ingram: We currently expect the Canberra PR9 to be withdrawn from service in 2006. We will continue to provide Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) capabilities through a mix of in-service systems and new equipment programmes that will deliver enhanced capability incrementally.

Chief of the Defence Staff

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what methodology is used to calculate the Chief of the Defence Staff's performance-related pay. [218675]

Mr. Ingram: Following a recommendation from the Senior Salaries Pay Review Body, an incremental pay scale has been introduced for the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS). Each year, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, in conjunction with the independent member of the Department's Remuneration Committee, will make recommendations to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on whether CDS should move up the incremental pay scale. This recommendation will take account of a short narrative, prepared by the Secretary of State, setting out how CDS has contributed to delivering the Government's objectives for defence over the past year.

Chinook Crash

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date flight lieutenants Jonathan Tapper and Richard Cook were given self-authorisation status for VIP flights, prior to the crash of Chinook ZD576 on 2nd June 1994. [217789]

Mr. Ingram: Flight Lieutenants J. Tapper and R. Cook were granted self-authorisation for all Chinook flights, other than displays and role demonstrations, on 23 May 1994.

Civil Contingency Reaction Forces

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many personnel are employed as part of the Civil Contingency Reaction Forces; [217811]

(2) how many personnel are employed as part of the Civil Contingency Reaction Forces in a state of permanent readiness; [217810]

(3) how many specific Civil Contingency Reaction Force (CCRF) training days have taken place in each year since the creation of CCRF; how many people were involved in each event; and where each such training day was held; [217734]

(4) how many of the reservists who make up the operational capability of Civil Contingency Reaction Forces are on active duty overseas. [217733]

Mr. Ingram: The 14 Civil Contingency Reaction Forces (CCRFs) are based on the 14 TA infantry battalions spread across the country and, should the need arise, would be manned by members of the Volunteer Reserve Forces, albeit mainly the Territorial Army. A list of qualified volunteers up to a maximum of 500 per CCRF is maintained by each CCRF Headquarters in order that they can respond at short notice to a crisis. But CCRF volunteers are not permanently employed by the armed forces, nor are they held at permanent readiness.

It is, however, a fundamental principle that volunteers for the CCRFs agree to be mobilised at relatively short notice. We expect to be able to deploy a CCRF within 24 hours should the need arise, although this may be tempered by the need for additional training depending upon the nature of the crisis.

The list of CCRF volunteers is dynamic and reflects the availability of individuals as their personal circumstances change. When an individual becomes unavailable, whether through operational deployment or any other change in circumstances, they cease to be a member of the CCRF and another volunteer is brought forward to replace them. In this way the CCRF capability is maintained.

Volunteers receive five days training per year, in addition to their normal reservist training. Details of individual training activities are not held centrally, but in general the additional days are used to ensure familiarisation and integration with the local authorities and the emergency services and to ensure that the procedures for mobilisation are well practised.

It should be borne in mind that the CCRFs are neither an automatic nor the only option to respond to a request from the civil authorities for military assistance. Regional commanders will identify the best choice from all available units, regular or reserve, depending on the nature and urgency of the request.

Courts Martial

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will re-examine the operation of courts martial; and if he will make a statement. [218425]

Mr. Caplin: The maintenance of a system of military law is essential for the operational effectiveness of the armed forces. Courts martial are a vital element of this system. The next armed forces Bill will introduce a number of changes to the operation of courts martial, as part of the modernisation and harmonisation of service law. These are set out in the Ministry of Defence's Memorandum to the Defence Select Committee of 5 October 2004.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether commanding officers are advised in all cases by military lawyers prior to deciding on the most appropriate disciplinary action to take against soldiers facing *(a)* murder charges and *(b)* other serious charges. [218426]

Mr. Caplin: In accordance with Queen's Regulations, Commanding Officers are obliged in all cases to seek legal advice prior to deciding on the most appropriate disciplinary action to take against soldiers facing murder charges and other serious charges.

Falcon II

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Falcon II tactical radio sets have been used in Iraq since November 2004. [218131]

Mr. Ingram: The Bowman PRC325 High Frequency patrol radio and the AN/PRC117F radio are both variants of the Falcon II range of radios. Some 330 Bowman PRC325 have been delivered to Iraq for use by UK forces since November 2004. A small number of AN/PRC117F radios have been used by UK forces in Iraq since November 2004.

Infantry Future Army Structure

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 50W, on Infantry Future Army Structure, what procedure will be used for a regiment with two or more battalions in deciding which Sandhurst officer cadets are to join which battalion; and whether the procedure is the same for all super regiments. [215950]

Mr. Ingram: Recruitment of officer cadets under the Future Infantry Structure will be by regiment rather than by battalion. An individual posting policy is presently being developed and therefore the procedure for assigning officer cadets to a specific battalion has yet to be determined. However, individual posting preferences will be accommodated where possible, while recognising that the interests of the Regiment and the Infantry must come first.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when UK armed service personnel first received the United States military planning document on the Iraq war which contained references to P day, A day and G day. [210737]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: P, A and G day are standard US military planning terms. They refer to the day a presidential decision would be required for military action (P day), in order for action to commence in the air (A day) and on the ground (G day) by specified dates.

As set out in the Butler report, UK and US military personnel had frequent discussions on Iraq dating back to June 2002. However the decision to resort to military action to ensure that Iraq fulfilled its obligations imposed by successive UN Security Council Resolutions was taken only after other routes to disarm Iraq had failed. The decision to commit UK forces was taken after approval of the House had been secured in the vote on 18 March 2003.

Joint Strike Fighter Programme

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's current estimate is of the cost of the Joint Strike Fighter programme. [218167]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom's procurement cost is likely to be up to £10 billion, depending on the eventual number of aircraft required. In service support costs will be determined by whatever through life support strategy we decide to adopt.

Military Bands

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost to his Department is of maintaining the military bands of *(a)* the Royal Navy, *(b)* the Army, *(c)* the Royal Air Force and *(d)* the Royal Marines. [204945]

Mr. Caplin: The approximate annual costs to the Ministry of Defence of maintaining military bands are as follows:

	£ million
Royal Navy	0
Army	24.0
Royal Air Force	5.5
Royal Marines	8.4

The costs comprise band personnel and associated expenses, e.g. travel, but not infrastructure costs. Personnel costs include time spent on other duties, e.g. first aid support.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions in each of the past three years an aircraft from the Queen's Flight carrying Ministers on official business has stopped off at a UK airport other than RAF Northolt during a return flight from overseas. [213984]

Mr. Caplin: The number of occasions in each of the past three financial years an aircraft from 32 (The Royal) Squadron carrying Ministers on official business has stopped off at a UK airport other than RAF Northolt is as follows.

	Number
April 2002 to March 2003	17
April 2003 to March 2004	17
April 2004 to February 2005	8

Since RAF Northolt is not open on a 24 hour basis, these figures include occasions when aircraft from 32 (The Royal) Squadron have had to land at London Heathrow when RAF Northolt was closed.

RAF Personnel (Warton)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many RAF personnel work at BAE Warton, broken down by rank. [216555]

Mr. Ingram: The numbers of RAF personnel who were posted to Warton at the 1 July 2004 are shown in the table. These are Trained RAF Regular Forces and Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel:

	Number
Wing Commander and above	—
Squadron Leader	5
Junior Officer	5
Total Officers	10
Master Aircrew and Warrant Officer	5
Flight Sergeant	10
Chief Technician	30
Sergeant (including FTRS)	30
Corporal	5
Senior Aircraftsman/woman	—
Total Ranks	80
Total RAF personnel	95

[1] Denotes fewer than 5.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Due to rounding methods used totals may not equal the sum of their parts.

Secondary Monitoring

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which naval bases have a policy of mandatory secondary monitoring; which do not; and if he will make a statement; [218441]

(2) what the reasons were for implementing mandatory secondary monitoring at *(a)* HM Rosyth and *(b)* HM Base Devonport; [218442]

(3) what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect on levels of safety of introducing mandatory secondary monitoring at HM Base Clyde Faslane; [218443]

(4) whether he plans to introduce mandatory secondary monitoring for radiation at HM naval base Clyde Faslane; what modifications of existing facilities would be required to allow such monitoring; and if he will make a statement. [218444]

Mr. Ingram: At HM Naval Base Clyde (Faslane) staff working in the Active Processing Facility and the Nuclear Repair Workshop are required to use routine secondary monitoring. Staff exiting submarine reactor compartments are monitored by suitably qualified and

experienced workers, using appropriate hand held instrumentation, capable of detecting very low levels of radioactive contamination. This monitoring is precautionary as work procedures and protective clothing are designed to minimise the chance of becoming contaminated. Secondary monitoring (using a walk-through monitor), which takes place after the worker has completed primary monitoring and removed his protective clothing, is mandatory when contamination is suspected or found. All nuclear safety matters relating to the Royal Dockyards at Rosyth and Devonport are a responsibility of the owners of the Dockyards: Babcock Rosyth Defence Limited and Devonport Management Limited respectively. However, they must comply with nuclear safety regulations including the Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999.

There are no plans to make secondary monitoring mandatory at the Clyde Naval Base as current arrangements within existing facilities comply with legal requirements and have been assessed by the Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (HSE/NII). A recent review of the options for enhancing monitoring arrangements for new facilities has been completed and will inform future worker monitoring protocols. There are no further plans, at this stage, to commission research into whether levels of safety would be increased by introducing mandatory secondary monitoring.

Swan Hunter Contract

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1017W, on Swan Hunter, what the clerical error was; what investigation he has conducted into the reasons for the error; and if he will make a statement. [217910]

Mr. Ingram: I have looked into the reasons behind this error and Ministry of Defence officials have found that:

Shortly after the parliamentary question was received by the Department on 24 November 2004, officials drafted a reply. That draft reply accurately reflected the situation at that time. This was forwarded to the Department's parliamentary branch on 25 November 2004. As the question concerned a defence procurement issue, the reply was passed to my hon. Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Lord Bach)'s Private Office for clearance.

My hon. Friend the noble Lord was on official duties overseas between the periods 29 November to 5 December, 6 to 9 December, and 9 to 10 December. Some time between the period 5 to 21 December, my hon. Friend the noble Lord cleared the draft reply. Our records do not show the exact date this happened, but this was more likely to have been towards the end of this period.

On 9 December, the Department concluded its negotiations with Swan Hunter regarding the Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) project and a contract amendment was signed. At this point, the reply which had been drafted no longer accurately reflected the situation.

By the time the reply was signed out of Minister (DP)'s Private Office on 21 December, the answer was incorrect. This was not identified by the Private Office.

I approved the reply at some point between 21 December 2004 and 7 January 2005, on the assumption that the reply and supporting advice provided was accurate. The reply was returned to the Table Office on 7 January 2005. The reply appeared in the "Official Report" on the next sitting day, 10 January 2005.

This was a regrettable incident resulting from a genuine error. There was no intention by Ministers deliberately to mislead the House. My hon. Friend the noble Lord has put in place measures to improve the handling procedures in his Private Office which should help prevent such an incident happening again.

Trident

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment of possible acquisition costs for a replacement for the Trident nuclear submarine he has made. [218336]

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimates have been made of the possible acquisition costs of a replacement for the Trident nuclear warhead delivery system. [218345]

Mr. Hoon: We made clear in the 2003 Defence White Paper (paragraph 3.11) that decisions on the UK's future nuclear deterrent capability were not needed during this Parliament but were likely to be needed during the next Parliament. Cost factors will of course be taken fully into account along with all other relevant issues.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the last risk assessment was made on the transportation of nuclear material for the Trident nuclear system; and whether the Scottish Executive has been involved in the risk assessment process. [218338]

Mr. Hoon: The last risk assessment on the transport of nuclear material for the Trident nuclear system was issued in January 2005. The Scottish Executive was not involved in the generation of this risk assessment.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many accidents have taken place since 1990 involving *(a)* nuclear warheads and *(b)* other nuclear material related to the Trident nuclear missile system. [218339]

Mr. Hoon: None.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed command and control procedures for the Trident missile system. [218340]

Mr. Hoon: All aspects of the operation of the UK nuclear deterrent force are audited on a regular basis.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of potential risks of malfunction in the *(a)* nuclear warhead and *(b)* delivery system of the Trident nuclear missile. [218346]

Mr. Hoon: Comprehensive assessments of risks arising from ownership of the Trident missile and associated warheads were undertaken before introduction into service. Risk is kept under constant review and arrangements are in place to ensure formal regular reporting to the appropriate bodies.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 2 March 2005

WALES

Police and Community Support Officers

9. **Ann Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent assessment he has made of the numbers of police officers and community support officers in Wales. [218074]

Mr. Touhig: This Government have delivered record police numbers to Wales. There were 7,448 police officers at the end of September 2004, an increase of 856, or around 13 per cent., since March 1997. Funding is now in place for nearly 300 community support officers.

13. **Dr. Francis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the numbers of police officers and community support officers in Wales. [218078]

Mr. Touhig: This Government have delivered record police numbers to Wales. There were 7,448 police officers at the end of September 2004, an increase of 856, or around 13 per cent., since March 1997. Funding is now in place for nearly 300 Community Support Officers.

Child Poverty

10. **Huw Irranca-Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent assessment he has made of measures to address child poverty in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Ogmore. [218075]

Mr. Touhig: This Labour Government are delivering on their promise to tackle child poverty:

228,000 working families in Wales benefit from the child tax credit

an average of 30,000 babies born in Wales every year will benefit from the Child Trust Fund

record increases in child benefit have produced a real terms increase of 25 per cent.

I can tell my hon. Friend that in his constituency, 6,000 families benefited from the child tax credit.

National Assembly

11. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will take steps to increase the scope of the powers of the National Assembly for Wales. [218076]

Mr. Hain: The Government of Wales Act 1998 provides for the transfer of additional functions to the National Assembly for Wales; other functions can be and have been transferred by primary legislation. Examples are responsibility for animal health by order under section 22 of the Government of Wales Act; responsibility for the Fire Service in the Fire Services and Rescue Act 2004 and responsibility for CAFCASS in the Children Act 2004.

Public Service Broadcasting

12. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues on the Ofcom report on public service broadcasting in Wales. [218077]

Mr. Touhig: My right hon. Friend and I have regular discussions with ministerial colleagues about matters affecting Wales. Ofcom's report addresses the changes necessary to protect Public Service Broadcasting in the run up to the digital age, and in particular in maintaining the plurality of service in the nations and regions.

Coal Health Claims Monitoring Group

14. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when the Welsh sub-group of the coal health claims monitoring group last met; and what progress was reported on payments under the scheme. [218079]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Monitoring Group met on Monday 24 January 2005 and reported progress for the whole of Wales showing that by mid January, a total of over £462 million had been paid out in Wales under both schemes.

This figure has since increased by over £5 million bringing the total to over £467 million under both schemes.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Advertising

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many advertising contracts, and to what value, were signed by his Department in the periods *(a)* 1 September 2004 to 1 March 2005 and *(b)* 1 September 2003 to 1March 2004, broken down by (i) television, (ii) radio, (iii) press, (iv) direct mail and (v) other advertising. [219353]

Hilary Benn: DFID has only one advertising contract. This contract has been in place since 22 October 2001 and was extended for a further 12 months in November 2004. Under the terms of the contract no fee is levied on DFID for the services provided by the advertising agency. They negotiate fees on a commission basis with the media. The placement of adverts is agreed by DFID.

Asian Tsunami

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he has had discussions with the governments of the tsunami-affected countries about the representation of women on their tsunami reconstruction panels and task forces. [218515]

Hilary Benn: I have not had any discussions with the governments of tsunami-affected countries specifically about the representations of women on tsunami reconstruction panels and task forces. However, the Department for International Development (DFID) is working to ensure that the international response to the tsunami, which is being led by the affected Governments and international organisations such as the UN and the

Asian Development Bank (ADB), focus on helping the poorest people and those often marginalised because of gender, caste, age, ethnicity or religion.

For example, donors and the Government of Sri Lanka have agreed a set of Guiding Principles for post-tsunami relief and recovery. These provide the framework for all Government and donor initiatives and stipulate that the allocation of resources should be strictly guided by identified needs and local priorities, without discrimination on the basis of political, religious, ethnic or gender considerations. The taskforces will include Government, civil society, private sector and donor representatives and will reflect gender concerns. In India, we are actively engaging with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to ensure that social inclusion and gender issues are central to the reconstruction and livelihoods work that they will be funding.

Bangladesh

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which civil society organisations in Bangladesh are supported by UK-funded aid programmes. [218630]

Hilary Benn: Department for International Development (DFID)'s Country Assistance Plan (CAP) 2003–06 to Bangladesh, emphasises access for the poor to resources and services, and the realisation of their rights. In working to achieve this, approximately 40 per cent. of DFID Bangladesh's programme is channelled through civil society organisations (CSO)—both through direct grants and indirectly through grants issued by DFID funded organisations, agencies and through large sector programmes. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) also supports some CSOs through their Small Grants Scheme (SGS).

Some examples of Bangladesh CSOs funded by DFID are:

Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee (BRAG) (£64 million over 13 years)-Specific BRAG programmes improving the quality of education and livelihoods of the poor.

Nijera Kori (£5 million over 7 years)—An organisation lobbying to give poor people better access to decision making processes, resources and services.

Transparency International Bangladesh Chapter (TIB) (£4 million over 5 years)—Working towards increased citizens' demand for transparency in public, non-profit and private sectors.

Samata (£7 million over 7 years)—Improving livelihoods and empowerment of the landless poor.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) (£3 million over 5 years)—Providing legal services and advocacy for greater access to justice.

CARE Bangladesh (£22 million over 12 years)—Enhancing livelihood security of poor people and improving the ability of public and private sectors to deliver more financial services them. Improving the quality and coverage of sustainable HIV/Aids programmes nationwide.

Action Aid (£2 million over 10 years)—Increasing literacy rates and problem-solving skills, particularly for women.

Friends in Village Development in Bangladesh (FIVDB) (£2 million over 7 years)—improving the quality of primary education through action learning.

Under Privileged Children's Education Programme (UCEP) (£5 million over 3 years)—Giving urban working and underprivileged children access to basic education and skills training.

DFID funds umbrella organisations that provide grants to smaller size CSOs/NGOs, for example Manusher Jonno (£14 million over 5 years) which provides grants to CSOs demanding better human rights and governance.

In response to the 2004 floods in Bangladesh, DFID channelled funds to national and international NGOs in Bangladesh through United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) (£15 million) and World Food Programme (WFP)(£10 million).

Several CSOs are funded through the central DFID Civil Society Challenge Fund and through regional and global Partnership Programme Agreements (PPAs) with international NGOs that have representation in Bangladesh.

Some examples of CSOs funded by the FCO SGS are:

Centre for Sustainable Development (CFSD)—Climate Change Education

Democracy Watch—Media training on human rights

Waste Concern—Environmental management for the private sector

Indonesia

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's estimate is of the number of homeless refugees in the Puncak Jaya region in West Papua. [218846]

Hilary Benn: As at 31 January 2005 the number of homeless refugees in the Puncak Jaya region of West Papua stood at 14,071. DFID obtained this figure from information provided by the UN.

International Conference on Population and Development

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the plan of action arising from the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD); and what steps the UK Government are taking to help achieve the goals of the ICPD programme. [218665]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government remain firmly committed to the Cairo Programme of Action (POA) and its key goal of reproductive health for all by 2015. The UK believes that sexual and reproductive health are also fundamental human rights. DFID5s recently published position paper on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights makes this position clear and we continue to invest strongly in reproductive health, such as recent multi-year increases in funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF).

Progress on the POA has been made since 1994. The recent regional International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) plus 10 celebratory events in Asia and Latin America strongly demonstrated country ownership and commitment to the Cairo POA and how this has become a platform for real policy change at country level. The UK Government have also advocated vigorously to maintain the ICPD consensus

within the UN and elsewhere. Tony Blair was the first Head of State to sign the World Leaders Statement in support of ICPD plus 10. DFID also continues to support country programmes via budgetary support and project funding to NGOs, and agencies such as the Global Fund, active in reproductive health supply security.

The UK believes that sexual and reproductive health and rights are fundamental to attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Progress towards the attainment of the goals is currently being reviewed. The Sachs Millennium Project Review and accompanying Task Force Reports, all emphasise the importance of reproductive health and rights to the attainment of the MDGs. Access to reproductive health, a key feature of the Cairo POA, is identified within the main Sachs report as one of the "quick wins"—solutions to implement now for speeding efforts to reduce poverty. DFID is therefore working with like-minded EU member states to ensure that positive reproductive health and rights messages strongly appear in the Secretary-General's report which is due in March.

Iraq

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made in the reconstruction of *(a)* hospitals and *(b)* civic and judicial buildings in Iraq since the end of the war in 2003; and if he will make a statement. [218532]

Hilary Benn: The Iraqi Ministry of Health is leading on the rehabilitation of health services in Iraq, working closely with international agencies including the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Ministry of Health reports that more than 75 hospitals and nearly all the primary care clinics which were damaged or looted during and after the 2003 conflict have been rehabilitated. Further work to construct and rehabilitate hospitals in Iraq is under way, and health services are gradually improving. More than $1 billion has been pledged in donor support to the health sector. In 2003, DFID provided £5 million to the WHO to enable it to assist the Iraqis on health issues, including improving the delivery of drugs and medical supplies. DFID is providing further support through its contribution to the United Nations and World Bank International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, and through the provision of an adviser to the Iraqi Ministry of Health on secondment from the UK Department of Health. United States agencies are renovating 19 hospitals and constructing a new Paediatric Hospital in Basra, and the Japanese Government are funding the rehabilitation of 11 general hospitals.

The WHO is working to improve primary health care and emergency obstetric provision. The World Bank has agreed an emergency health and rehabilitation project to finance the rehabilitation of emergency services in 12 hospitals. Nevertheless, it will still take several years for Iraq's health sector to recover fully from the under-investment and poor management which it suffered under Saddam Hussein's regime, and approach the standards experienced in developed countries.

Comprehensive figures on the numbers of civic and judicial buildings which have been rehabilitated in Iraq since May 2003 are not readily available. However, considerable progress has been made in rebuilding Iraq's civic infrastructure. In the first year after the conflict, DFID renovated over 50 public buildings in southern Iraq including hospitals, universities and governorate offices, enabling the resumption of public sector work and the continued provision of services to the Iraqi people. United States agencies carried out similar work in other parts of Iraq, are currently renovating buildings for three Ministries in Baghdad, and are planning the construction of new facilities for the Council of Judges, Court of Cassation and Central Criminal Court.

St. Helena

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the progress of the establishment of an airport on St. Helena. [218967]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Options to maintain future access for St. Helena are under consideration. Decisions will be taken, in consultation with the St. Helena Government, as soon as it is possible to do so.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when her Department was notified of the results of the four counties study on bovine tuberculosis in Ireland. [214124]

Mr. Bradshaw: My Department was notified of the final results of the Irish four area trial at the time of publication in *Preventive Veterinary Medicine* on 5 January.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis in cattle herds in Cumbria were judged by her officials to be caused by infection transmitted by purchased stock during 2004. [214127]

Mr. Bradshaw: Seven of the 16 confirmed bovine tuberculosis breakdowns disclosed in Cumbria during 2004, were judged, to have been introduced through purchased stock. In a further incident, the source of infection was not definitive, however, purchased stock or contiguous contact were considered to be potential sources of infection. This number is provisional pending culture results for incidents disclosed in the last quarter of 2004.

BSE

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cases of BSE in cattle were reported *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* in each EU country in the last year for which figures are available. [217532]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information is as follows:

(a) The number of BSE cases reported in the United Kingdom for 2004 is as follows:

	Number
Great Britain	309
Northern Ireland	34
United Kingdom	343

Source:
DEFRA & DARD

(b) The number of BSE cases reported in European Union member states in 2004 is as follows:

EU member state	*BSE cases reported*
Austria	0
Belgium	11
Cyprus	0
Czech Republic	7
Denmark	1
Estonia	0
Finland	0
France	54
Germany	59
Greece	0
Hungary	0
Ireland	126
Italy	7
Latvia	0
Lithuania	0
Luxemburg	0
Malta	0
The Netherlands	6
Poland	11
Portugal	92
Slovakia	7
Slovenia	2
Spain	131
Sweden	0

Source:
OIE

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate she has made of the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by private pleasure craft in each year since the Energy Products Directive came into force; [218535]

(2) what estimate she has made of the annual change in the level of carbon dioxide emissions that would take place if the rebate on diesel for private leisure craft under the Energy Products Directive were to end in 2006. [218536]

John Healey: This information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Cattle Transportation

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what requirements exist in respect of the transportation of pregnant cattle; and if she will make a statement. [216343]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997 prohibits transport of an animal unless it is fit for the intended journey and suitable provision has been made for its care. An animal that is likely to give birth during transport is not fit for transport. There no requirements specific to the transport of pregnant cows.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate she has made of the proportion of pregnant cattle transported which had calves that died before or at birth since 1997; [216344]

(2) what estimate she has made of the proportion of cattle transported which were pregnant in each year since 1997. [216345]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra does not hold this information.

Contaminated Land

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how much financial assistance has been given to meet the capital costs of site investigation and clean up of contaminated land in each of the last three years *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by local authority; and if she will make a statement; [216795]

(2) how much has been given to local authorities through the Contaminated Land Supplementary Credit Approval programme in each of the last three years; which authorities have received funding through this programme; how local authorities' expenditure through the programme is monitored; and if she will make a statement; [216819]

(3) what sites of contaminated land have been *(a)* investigated and *(b)* cleaned up under the auspices of (i) local authorities and (ii) the Environment Agency in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [216820]

Mr. Morley: Tables A-D will be made available in the Library of the House. Support to local authorities given under Defra's Contaminated Land capital projects programme is shown in Table A. The Environment Agency's Contaminated Land capital programme is shown at Table B, with an indication of the local authority area involved. Figures for 2004–05 are not yet available.

Under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, investigation is undertaken to decide whether or not land is "contaminated land" as defined. Investigations also take place in other contexts and central records are not kept. Information about "clean-up" is only available where Defra and Environment Agency funding programmes are involved and is shown in Tables C1–3 and D. This includes work in progress.

Under the Defra programme successful authorities are required to provide mid financial year progress reports. Final returns, certified by the authority's Chief Finance Officer, are provided at the end of the financial year showing actual expenditure incurred on each project. Full details of our monitoring requirements are set out in "A Guide for English Local Authorities" which is made available to each authority.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what financial assistance she makes available to local authorities to compensate residents living on contaminated land where the owners of the land have gone into liquidation; and if she will make a statement; [216817]

(2) if she will make a statement on compensation from local authorities for residents living on contaminated land. [216818]

Mr. Morley: Under Part MA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 local authorities are under a statutory duty to inspect their areas to identify contaminated land as defined in the Act, and to secure its remediation in accordance with the detailed provisions of the regime. DETR Circular 02/2000 "Contaminated Land" contains statutory guidance including detailed liability rules as to who is the appropriate person(s) to bear responsibility for remediation. In line with the polluter-pays principle, this is normally the person who caused or knowingly permitted the presence of the substances causing the problem. Where this person cannot be found, for example because the company no longer exits or has gone into liquidation, the landowner may be the appropriate person, subject to the Act and guidance.

The Act recognises that, particularly in the case of private individuals owning land, costs of remediation might cause hardship. Section 78P(2) of the Act requires local authorities to have regard to hardship and to statutory guidance when serving remediation notices, or recovering costs, and there is provision for remediation costs to be waived or reduced in certain circumstances. Charging notices may be used in certain cases to recover costs where local authorities carry out remediation on behalf of appropriate persons, which allows recovery to be deferred until land is sold. The regime does not provide compensation to any individuals, unless they are required to grant rights in order that remediation can be carried out.

Energy Conservation

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Government has spent on energy conservation in *(a)* York and *(b)* Yorkshire in each year since 1996–97. [217623]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* Defra currently provides grant funding for energy efficiency through four main routes. These organisations or programmes undertake work at a national or UK level. Previous to 2001 some of the activities undertaken by the Carbon Trust and Energy Saving Trust were carried out under the Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme which was also UK wide. The Trusts' programmes have no specific levels of funding attributed to particular regions and therefore no figures for these programmes are given as follows:

The Warm Front programme—to provide energy efficiency measures to the vulnerable.

The Community Energy programme—capital and development funding to refurbish existing and install new community heating schemes.

The Carbon Trust—to support and promote energy efficiency and low carbon innovation for business and public sector.

The Energy Saving Trust—to support and promote energy efficiency in the household sector.

Warm Front

The total annual estimated expenditure on energy efficiency measures under the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme in the City of York and North Yorkshire from June 1997 to May 2000 was:

£

	City of York	*North Yorkshire*
1996–97	177,000	1,180,000
1997–98	97,000	4,955,000
1998–99	202,000	5,332,000
1999–2000	82,000	6,234,000

From the launch of the new Home Energy Efficiency Scheme now known as Warm Front in June 2000 until the end of January 2005 the total approximate expenditure for these areas was:

£

	City of York	*North Yorkshire*
2000–01	46,000	2,980,000
2001–02	176,000	18,500,000
2002–03	233,000	19,500,000
2003–04	112,000	15,890,000
2004–05 (Up to end of January 2005)	81,000	17,000,000

Note:
The figures quoted for North Yorkshire include the following areas East Riding, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull.

Community Energy programme

There has been no programme spend in York, but the Yorkshire spend figures are as follows.

	£
1996–02	[1]—
2002–03	No spend
2003–04	53,000
2004–05	[2]33,000

[1] Programme not up and running until 2002–03.
[2] To date.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committee for fisheries products met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214316]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Management Committee for fisheries products routinely meets in Brussels at one of the Commission's meeting facilities. The dates of the meetings during the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies of the EU are given as follows. Representatives from the UK Fisheries Departments were present at virtually all of these meetings. The exact nature and number of representatives depended on the subjects under discussion, with experts on marketing standards, support prices, producer organisations, tariff quotas and other relevant issues, being present as necessary.

Italian presidency

10 July 2003
12 September 2003
7 October 2003
7 November 2003
8 December 2003

Irish presidency

25 March 2004
23 April 2004
13 May 2004
24 June 2004

Dutch presidency

15 September 2004
7 October 2004
13 October 2004
12 November 2004
8 December 2004

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committee for the fisheries and aquaculture sector met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215917]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EU Committee for the fisheries and aquaculture sector routinely meets in Brussels at one of the Commission's meeting facilities. The dates of the meetings during the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidencies of the EU are given as follows. Representatives from the UK Fisheries Departments were present at all of these meetings. The exact nature and number of representatives depended on the subjects under discussion, with experts on control and enforcement, fleet policy and statistics being present as necessary.

Italian Presidency

15 July 2003
1 October 2003
20 October 2003
19 November 2003
9 December 2003

Irish Presidency

14 January 2004
11 February 2004
10 March 2004
20 April 2004

Dutch Presidency

6 and 7 July 2004
9 September 2004
13 October 2004
17 November 2004
14 December 2004

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on Community policy regarding forestry and forest-based industries met; when and there these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215903]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EU Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding forestry and forest-based industries did not meet during the Italian and Irish Presidencies; it met once during the Dutch Presidency and this meeting took place in Brussels on 16 November 2004. There was no UK Government expert present at the meeting, which was attended by individuals from the UK forest-based industries private sector.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress and implementation of the directive on urban waste-water treatment met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217241]

Mr. Morley: The information is as follows:

Italian presidency—July to December 2003

The Committee met over 1–2 September 2003 when five delegates from the UK attended.

Irish presidency—January to June 2004

The Committee met twice on 19 April, when one UK delegate attended, and 1–2 June when no UK delegate attended.

Dutch presidency—July to December 2004

The Committee met three times over 22–23 July when no UK delegate attended; 7–8 October when one UK delegate attended; 23 November 2004 when four delegates from the UK attended.

All the meetings were held in Brussels.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Management Committee on application of the Directive on the standardisation and rationalisation of reports on the implementation of certain Directives relating to the environment met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217243]

Mr. Morley: During the Irish, Italian and Dutch Presidencies in 2003 and 2004 there were no Management Committee meetings on this issue. The Management Committee on the application of the "Standardised Reporting" Directive (91/692/EEC) last met in 1997. In 2002 the Commission started work on a new framework for environmental reporting in response to the 6th Environment Action Programme. An Expert Group was set up to discuss Commission proposals for a Directive. This group last met in October 2002. There is as yet no formal proposal for a Directive, and no Management Committee has been convened. In the event of any meeting being scheduled, officials will, as a matter of course, liaise with their counterparts in the Scottish Executive and the other devolved Administrations.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the Protection of Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by Regulating Trade met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217818]

Mr. Morley: The EC CITES Committee on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora met three times during the Italian presidency (1 July 2003, 19 September 2003 and 13 November 2003), twice during the Irish presidency (29 January 2004 and 20 April 2004) and twice during the Dutch presidency (2 July 2004 and 14 December 2004). All meetings took place in Brussels. UK representation normally comprises officials from my Department, supported where necessary by scientific advisers from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew or the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. Business at these meetings concentrated mainly on issues relating to implementation of the European Wildlife Regulations and preparation for the 13th Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) held in Bangkok in October 2004.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee on the Conservations, Characterisation, Collection and Utilisation of Genetic Resources in Agriculture met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217875]

Mr. Morley: The Committee on the Conservations, Characterisation, Collection and Utilisation of Genetic Resources in Agriculture had no meetings during the Italian and Dutch Presidencies of the EU. The Committee met twice (26 April and 21 June 2004) during the Irish Presidency. On both occasions the United Kingdom was represented by Defra officials responsible for policy issues on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Regulation 870/2004 is now in force and the Commission are preparing the Call for Proposals documentation which will be advertised in the Official Journal shortly.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Scientific Review Group for the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade, (ii) Committee on the Community action programme in the field of civil protection and (iii) Committee on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances (Seveso II) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government experts were present; and if she will make a statement. [218261]

Mr. Morley: The details relating to these Committees are as follows:

(i) The Scientific Review Group (SRG) met once during the Italian presidency (9 October 2003), twice under the Irish presidency (15 January and 19 April 2004) and twice under the Dutch presidency (1 July and 13 December 2004). All meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by Defra's scientific advisors from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

(ii) The Committee for the Action Programme and for the Mechanism in the field of Civil Protection met once during the Italian presidency (28 November 2003), twice during the Irish presidency (26–27 February and 3–4 June 2003) and once during the Dutch presidency (21–22 October 2004). All meetings took place in Brussels and were attended by officials from the Cabinet Office.

(iii) The Committee on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances (Seveso II) met once during each of the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies, in Cagliari, Sardinia (16 October 2003), Dublin (13 May 2004) and Amsterdam (7 October 2004) respectively. The UK representatives were from the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency.

EU Fisheries

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) under which European Court decisions the common fisheries policy has been changed to exclusive competence over the marine biological resources of the seas in the EU constitution; [215489]

(2) whether the exclusive competence over marine resources of the sea provided for in the EU constitution will necessitate the development of a common policy on other marine vertebrates and invertebrates. [215490]

Mr. Bradshaw: Existing Community competence over marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy derives from article 102 of the UK treaty of accession. The EU constitutional treaty does not change the current arrangements.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the *(a)* budget and *(b)* role of the European Fisheries Fund. [215206]

Mr. Bradshaw: The budget for the European Fisheries Fund remains to be negotiated. The European Commission has proposed that the figure for the whole of the European Union should be €4.963 billion. Decisions have yet to be taken on the Financial Perspective for the period 2007–13, from which the amount for EFF spending will be derived. The UK believes the budget proposed by the Commission for the financial perspective is unaffordable.

The proposed fund aims to:

Support the CFP to ensure sustainable exploitation of natural marine resources and the protection of the environment;

Promote a sustainable balance between resources and fleet capacity, strengthen economic competitiveness and improve the quality of life in fishing communities; and

Promote equality between women and men in the sector.

Fallen Stock

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs within what time scale farmers should expect their fallen stock to be collected under the fallen stock scheme. [217538]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003 farmers must arrange collection or other disposal of fallen stock without undue delay. The National Fallen Stock Company has said that it would normally expect fallen stock collectors to collect carcases within 48 hours following notification.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she is taking to ensure that the fallen stock scheme works effectively in all areas. [217539]

Mr. Bradshaw: This is a matter for the National Fallen Stock Company (NFSCo) which has been set up jointly by government and the farming industry to run the scheme. Generally, the scheme is working well in most areas of the UK but the company is aware that the service in some areas requires improvement and is actively addressing this with the local collection industry.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many companies are registered to collect fallen stock; [217356]

(2) how many companies registered to collect fallen stock are hunt kennels. [217401]

Mr. Bradshaw: Over 360 approvals have been granted to establishments under Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 to allow them to collect and/or treat Category 1 and 2 animal by-products (including fallen stock). Of this number 143 are hunt kennels.

In practice not all of the establishments referred to above will be engaged in the collection of fallen stock. Under the National Fallen Stock Scheme, there are currently 126 collectors registered, of which 25 are hunt kennels.

These latter figures include some freelance collectors, who do not require approval under the Regulation, but who must consign any collected carcases to an appropriately approved plant for disposal.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what mechanisms are in place to monitor the National Fallen Stock Scheme. [216593]

Mr. Bradshaw: The National Fallen Stock Company (NFSCo) which is running the Scheme has Government representation on its Board to ensure that government funding is spent properly. In addition NFSCo is subject to the normal financial and audit controls which apply to a Limited Company. With regard to the operation of the Scheme the Company actively seeks feedback from its members on the service provided and records are kept of calls to the helpline and of complaints received to inform improvements to service provision. NFSCo has also engaged the State Veterinary Service to inspect collection premises and vehicles to enable compliance with Scheme rules, in particular in relation to biosecurity.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many complaints the National Fallen Stock Company has received to date. [216595]

Mr. Bradshaw: The National Fallen Stock Company Ltd. reports that as of 11 February 2005 it had received 282 complaints. Of these 84 were in relation to the collection of fallen stock. This is out of some 30,000 collections in the same period.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the maximum recommended time period is under the National Fallen Stock Scheme for the collection of fallen stock. [216596]

Mr. Bradshaw: The National Fallen Stock Company has said that under most circumstances it would normally expect fallen stock collectors to collect carcases within 48 hours following notification.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the average costs of the collection of fallen stock to farmers subscribing to the National Fallen Stock Scheme *(a)* in the last year before and *(b)* since the Scheme began. [216597]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. Information of this nature is not collected by the Department.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many collections under the National Fallen Stock Scheme since its implementation have occurred 48 hours or more after the animals death was reported to the National Fallen Stock Company. [216598]

Mr. Bradshaw: Although comprehensive information of this nature is not collected the National Fallen Stock Company Ltd. reports that as of 11 February 2005 it had received 62 complaints regarding collections that were not made within 48 hours of the animals' death being reported.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to raise the *(a)* registration and *(b)* other fees payable by farmers subscribing to the National Fallen Stock Scheme. [216599]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. The setting of registration fees for farmers subscribing to the National Fallen Stock Scheme is for the National Fallen Stock Company Board to decide. The Board also sets the percentage rate by which farmers' collection costs are reduced using the government contribution to the Scheme. No other fees are payable by farmers with regard to subscribing to the Scheme.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the compliance of delivery of information systems for the National Fallen Stock Scheme with the original *(a)* schedule, *(b)* functionality specification and *(c)* budget. [216644]

Mr. Bradshaw: The IT system was delivered to enable the Scheme to begin in the autumn of 2004 which was as previously announced by the National Fallen Stock Company. However, further work is taking place to provide full functionality in respect of financial and reporting systems. Defra previously announced it would provide £1 million towards setting up the system. The final cost will not be known until full functionality is in place, but it is likely to be close to this figure.

Flooding

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the role of *(a)* regional resilience teams and *(b)* regional flood defence committees; and what discussions each has with local planning authorities (i) on preventing flooding and (ii) building on functional floodplains. [216009]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1023W, where I stated that the Government have set up a Regional Resilience Team in each of the English regions to enhance the co-ordination of planning for wide impact events, such as major flooding, and to improve lines of communication between central Government and local responders during the response to an incident. These arrangements worked successfully in relation to the Boscastle and Carlisle floods.

The Environment Agency (EA) is required by section 106 of the Water Resources Act 1991 to carry out most of its flood defence functions through regional flood defence committees (RFDCs). The committees in particular take decisions about the annual programmes of improvement and maintenance work to be carried out by the Agency and oversee other aspects of the Agency's work and operations. RFDCs also decide on such matters as the extension of main rivers, the making and operation of land drainage byelaws and various issues affecting any internal drainage boards in their area. They are required annually to approve estimates of expenditure and to determine the amounts to be levied by the Agency on constituent councils.

Through Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 (PPG25), the Government have given strengthened guidance to local planning authorities regarding inappropriate development in areas of flood risk. The EA (in conjunction with RFDCs) provides advice to local planning authorities on planning applications in areas at risk of flooding and this is used by the authorities in reaching decisions. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Defra have recently consulted on the need to revise PPG25 and whether the EA should be made a statutory consultee on proposals for development in flood risk areas.

Regional Resilience Teams have been established to enhance the co-ordination of major events and incidents and are not involved in the development control process.

Foot and Mouth

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the 10 largest amounts paid to valuers in each county in relation to the foot and mouth epidemic were. [216185]

Mr. Bradshaw: A national fee structure applied to reimbursement of valuer's fees for valuations undertaken during the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak. The fee agreement was a fee of 1 per cent. of the valuation total, subject to a £500 per day minimum and a £1,500 per day maximum per valuer.

Individual valuers often worked across a number of disease emergency control centres and animal health offices which themselves covered more than one county.

Information on the 10 largest amounts paid to individual valuers in each county is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of a possible link between the level of commission paid to valuers in the foot and mouth epidemic and the level of their valuations; [216186]

(2) if she will take steps to uncouple the link between fees paid to valuers and the levels of commissions paid to them for assessments of animals to be destroyed due to disease. [216187]

Mr. Bradshaw: A review of the system for valuation was undertaken after the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001. A national list of valuers, approved on the basis of their qualifications and experience in livestock valuation, has been set up. There are 280 valuers covering England and Wales. There is a separate list for Scotland, though valuers on either list can be used both sides of the border. The lists are for use in any future outbreak of exotic disease e.g. foot and mouth disease, classical swine fever and Newcastle disease.

Fees will be paid on the basis of £100 per hour for time spent carrying out the valuation and reasonable travelling from office to office. As fees in the future will be based on an hourly rate, they will not be related to the level of valuation of the livestock.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what changes took place in the average amount paid in compensation for *(a)* sheep and *(b)* cattle during the foot and mouth epidemic in each month of the epidemic. [216540]

Mr. Bradshaw: The average amount paid in compensation for both sheep and cattle is as follows:

Month	Average Sheep	Cattle
February	62	547
March	122	988
April	159	1,182
May	200	1,467
June	229	1,689
July	292	1,478
August	220	1,455
September	176	1,308
October	108	2,010

The amounts shown are rounded to the nearest whole £.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) which countries are recorded as having endemic foot and mouth disease; [217533]

(2) what steps are taken to prevent direct or indirect imports from countries which have endemic foot and mouth disease. [217534]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra does not hold separately, a list of countries that are recorded as having endemic foot and mouth disease (FMD). The internationally recognised central source for official information on the distribution of animal diseases such as FMD is the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). Also known as the World Organisation for Animal Health, the OIE is the world organisation responsible for the collection and dissemination of information on international animal health—it has a role analogous to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Information on FMD can be found on their website, at the following address: http://www.oie.int/eng/info/en_fmd.htm.

Rather than listing countries in which FMD is considered to be endemic, the OIE lists countries and regions that are considered to be free of FMD, broken down into those that are free and do not vaccinate; and those that are free and do vaccinate against the disease.

European Community legislation permits the importation of meat from certain countries where FMD is present, but only where the disease is officially recognised as being restricted to specific areas and effective movement controls are in place within the country. Imports are permitted either from parts of the country that are free of disease or under strict conditions that ensure the meat does not come from any animal that may have come in contact with FMD before, during and after slaughter. These provisions are in line with the guidelines established by the OIE.

All meat imported from third countries must be accompanied by veterinary certification. This must confirm that the meat is derived from animals which have been subjected to a veterinary inspection during the 24 hours prior to slaughter and showed no signs of FMD.

Community legislation does not permit imports of livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs and goats) from countries with FMD.

If there is an outbreak of disease likely to present a risk to human or animal health, Community legislation allows us to take appropriate safeguard action, which may include a ban on imports of animals and animal products from all, or parts, of that country.

All meat and animals imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated border inspection posts where they are subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks. At least 20 per cent. of consignments of animal products undergo physical checks, and a number of animals in each consignment are physically checked. These checks ensure import conditions are met.

For personal imports meat and dairy products are banned from most countries outside the EU. Customs are responsible for enforcement at the border. Defra and Customs undertake publicity campaigns to make the public aware of the rules relating to personal food imports.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether the contiguous cull used in the last foot and mouth outbreak would be implemented in a future outbreak; [217540]

(2) whether vaccines would be used in a future outbreak of foot and mouth disease. [217614]

Mr. Bradshaw: The decision tree published as part of the foot and mouth disease (FMD) contingency plan on the Defra website sets out the factors that the Government would take into account in deciding disease control strategy including vaccination or different approaches to culling in a future outbreak. The disease control strategy adopted will depend on many factors.

The EU directive gives greater prominence to the potential use of emergency vaccination in the event of an outbreak as an adjunct to this basic slaughter policy. Article 14 of the directive places a duty on member states

"to prepare all arrangements necessary for emergency vaccination in an area at least the size of the Surveillance Zone"

as soon as the first case of FMD is confirmed.

The Government will consider emergency vaccination as a disease control option from the start of any outbreak of FMD on the basis of vaccinate to live. The vaccines held by the UK are suitable for use in emergency vaccination. This is in line with the recommendations of the main FMD inquiries. The circumstances in which vaccination might be used are illustrated in the vaccination scenarios published last year on the Defra website.

The decision tree makes it clear that other forms of culling beyond that on infected premises and dangerous contacts are not ruled out.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what contingency plan is in place in case of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease; and what elements of the plan drew on the experience of the outbreaks of 1967 and 2001. [217820]

Mr. Bradshaw: The measures that the Government would take in the event of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease are set out in the Defra FMD Contingency Plan, the latest version of which was laid before Parliament at the end of March 2004. These include the immediate imposition of movement controls on all susceptible livestock, strict biosecurity guidance and enhanced options for controlling disease. Vaccination would be considered from the onset of an outbreak in addition to the culling of all susceptible animals on infected premises and those that have been exposed to infection, as required by EU law.

We are engaging with operational partners and with stakeholders to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and the measures that would be taken in an outbreak. Plans are also in place in the event of an outbreak to enable a rapid increase in resources and for the implementation of contingency contracts, including that for emergency vaccination. We have revised the instructions for staff and are ensuring that they are trained and equipped to deal with an outbreak of disease. A revised version of the contingency plan, incorporating lessons learned form the national Foot and Mouth Disease Exercise held last June, will be issued for public consultation shortly.

The current FMD contingency plan reflects lessons learned from the outbreaks of FMD in 1967 and 2001. The vast majority of the recommendations of the Northumberland Committee after the 1967 outbreak were applied during the 2001 outbreak. Such elements of the response in 2001 as bringing in senior administrators to allow vets to be relieved of non veterinary duties such as carcase disposal and cleansing and disinfection, and calling in the armed forces, resulted from the experiences of the 1967 outbreak and remain in the contingency plan. Lessons learned from 2001 and from the inquiries thereafter have resulted in the contingency plan including revised policies including the immediate imposition of a GB national movement ban on susceptible animals, closure of footpaths only within the 3 km protection zone and a hierarchy of disposal options for carcases headed by incineration and rendering. They have also led to the inclusion in the plan of senior management structures and systems that would be established in an outbreak.

Free Trade

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on biodiversity in developing countries of allowing free trade in agricultural products. [217346]

Mr. Morley: In 2004 my Department commissioned a review of the literature on the implications of trade liberalisation for sustainable development, which included an initial assessment of the impact on biodiversity in developing countries of freer trade in agricultural products. The report, "The Implications of Trade and Investment Liberalisation for Sustainable Development: Review of Literature", is available on the Defra website.

The Department subsequently has commissioned new research which will include further assessment of the impact on biodiversity of trade liberalisation in agricultural products. The report is expected to be published this July.

In addition, the European Commission has released recently its draft sustainability impact assessment on agriculture which includes a more comprehensive assessment of the impact on biodiversity of freer trade in agricultural products. The draft report is available on the website of the Institute for Development Policy and Management at Manchester University.

The assessments carried out to date show that the impacts on biodiversity of liberalising trade in agricultural products depend upon a range of factors, including the location and type of agricultural activity being undertaken. However, the assessments suggest that there could be negative impacts on biodiversity in some areas and hence a need to develop policies to mitigate any such impacts.

Game Birds

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will seek to legislate to ensure that game birds are reared in humane conditions. [216497]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the Protection of Animals Act 1911 it is already an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to a domestic or captive animal in the keeping of man, this includes game birds that are being kept for rearing.

The proposed Animal Welfare Bill would allow certain animal related activities to be regulated by use of secondary legislation. It is proposed that game bird rearing should be subject to a Government code of practice to help secure the welfare of the birds.

The Animal Welfare Bill will also introduce an offence of failing to promote the welfare of an animal kept by man. The duty to promote welfare will apply to those responsible for captive game birds.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will consult interested groups which are critical of current game bird rearing practices; and if she will make a statement. [216501]

Mr. Bradshaw: The proposed Animal Welfare Bill would allow certain animal related activities to be regulated. It is proposed that game bird rearing should be subject to Government codes of practice made under the Bill. Any proposals will be subject to wide consultation.

GM Crops

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to announce the formal consultation on co-existence measures and the GM planting regime. [217355]

Mr. Morley: In collaboration with the devolved Administrations we held a series of stakeholder workshops last Autumn as the first phase of consultation on co-existence measures for GM and non-GM crops. As the second phase of consultation we are now developing a package of specific proposals and options. This is not expected to be published before the summer. Once published everyone will get a chance to contribute to, and comment upon, our proposals.

It remains the Government's clear intention to introduce co-existence measures before any commercial cultivation of GM crops takes place in the UK. No commercial cultivation is expected here before 2008 at the earliest, so we have time for a thorough consideration of this issue.

Greenhouse Gases

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to ensure that implementation of the EU Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Directive takes into account the national climate change target of achieving a 20 per cent. cut in emissions of carbon dioxide between 1990 and 2010. [218291]

Mr. Morley: The UK is on course to exceed its Kyoto Protocol target of a 12.5 per cent. reduction in CO_2 emissions on 1990 levels during 2008–12. The Climate Change Programme expects emissions of carbon dioxide to be about 14 per cent. below 1990 levels in 2010. The impact of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme will contribute to further savings.

The total number of allowances to be allocated in the UK National Allocation Plan for Phase I (2005–07) are significantly below (c.5 per cent.) the finalised emissions projections for this period (subject to Commission approval). This takes the UK ahead of other member states, in terms of effort against business as usual.

The Government have stated that the overall number of allowances to be allocated for Phase II (2008–12) should be consistent with the trading sector's contribution to the achievement of our goal to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010. The Climate Change Programme review will consider what that contribution will be.

Meat (Illegal Imports)

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many successful prosecutions of those illegally importing meat into the UK there have been in each of the last eight years. [217536]

Mr. Bradshaw: Details of prosecutions taken by local authorities specifically for offences relating to illegal import of meat into the UK are held by individual local authorities and are not held centrally.

HM Customs and Excise have had responsibility for anti smuggling controls on products of animal origin since 11 April 2003. In the year April 2003-March 2004, no prosecutions were taken by HM Customs and Excise for Products of Animal Origin (POAO) illegal import offences. In the year April 2004-March 2005, they have prosecuted six people for imports contrary to the POAO regulations.

Protected Birds

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the current review of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with regard to the advice offered by the Joint Nature Conservation Council on Schedule 4 to the Act on the list of birds given protection by the registration scheme. [217220]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 2002 Defra carried out a full public consultation on the bird registration scheme with the key results that the scheme be retained with some minor changes to the administration process and that a study be commissioned by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), firstly to agree scientific criteria for including species on Schedule 4 and then to apply those criteria to candidate species.

The study has now been completed and the recommendations in their report are likely to form the basis for a full public consultation where interested parties will be invited to comment on the proposals and to submit further evidence for consideration.

Timber

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to include social criteria in the UK's timber procurement policy. [216574]

Mr. Morley: A key objective of the UK Government's timber procurement policy is to encourage the protection of forest dependent peoples' rights and enhance their well-being. By requiring its contractors to supply only timber that has been legally harvested and by preferring timber grown in sustainably managed forests, the Government are helping to achieve this outcome in many producing countries.

The EU public procurement directives ensure that public bodies conduct their procurement in a fair and transparent manner, do not discriminate or create barriers to trade and obtain value for money for taxpayers. In line with the above requirements, the criteria for selecting bidders must be limited to their capacity and ability to supply the product or service, and the criteria for specifying requirements must be limited to relevant technical, quality and performance characteristics that can be objectively measured and priced. The criteria can include relevant manufacturing processes and that enables forest management standards that affect the product to be specified. Protecting and conserving a product's raw material is relevant, measurable and a reasonable demand to make of a contractor. Protecting and conserving the rights and socio-economic well-being of forest dependent people is not something a contractor based in another country could be reasonably expected to undertake. Such social and ethical issues are beyond the capacity of suppliers to control, measure and price. Furthermore, the introduction of non product related issues into contracts would enable contracting authorities to choose their suppliers on the basis of subjective

judgements that would jeopardize the fairness and openness that have served the public procurement process so well for many decades.

A public authority can refuse to invite tenders from suppliers who have been convicted of an offence or grave professional misconduct in relation to the conduct of their business and that could include offences relating to the treatment of forest dependent people. Any such refusal would have to be proportionate to the offence.

UN Environment Programme

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the annual grant from her Department to the United Nations Environment programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre was in each financial year from 2000; and how much the grant from each other donor nation was in each year. [218000]

Mr. Morley: The Department, on behalf of the UK Government has contributed $ million per annum to the main United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Environment Fund since 2000. UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) receives direct income from UNEP, as well as project funding.

The Department does not provide an annual grant to UNEP-WCMC. However DETR made a contribution to the Centre when it was incorporated into UNEP. This payment of £750,000 was to pay off the mortgage on the premises to give UNEP-WCMC a secure financial basis for their new beginning.

Defra, and other Government Departments, make use of the Centre's expertise and services to deliver specific products and services. Defra/DETR funding for projects in the years since 2000 is as follows:

	£
2000	500.00
2001	1,000,228.77
2002	109,096.00
2003	340,543.84
2004	180,183.00

UNEP-WCMC has also undertaken work for DFID and FCO.

We do not have information on other states contributions to UNEP-WCMC.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she last held discussions with the management of the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre on *(a)* staff levels at its establishment in Cambridge and *(b)* the level of her Department's financial support to it; and what the outcomes of those discussions were. [218001]

Mr. Morley: I met Dr. Klaus Toepfer, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), at the Eighth Session of UNEP's Governing Council in Nairobi (held 21–25 February 2005) and discussed the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) among other issues. Dr. Toepfer and I expressed our commitment to securing the short and long term future of the Centre.

In addition, my officials are in regular discussions with UNEP, WCMC Trustees and staff of the Centre to explore ways to secure the Centre's short and long term future.

These discussions have embraced a range of issues relating to the Centre's organisation including its financing. Staff levels are a matter for the management of the Centre and UNEP.

Waste Incineration

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* local, *(b)* regional and *(c)* national targets have been set on levels of incineration of waste. [217822]

Mr. Morley: Government have set no specific targets for levels of waste incineration.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what dates since June 2001 Ministers have met *(a)* the Environment Agency and *(b)* the cement industry to discuss the burning of waste in cement kilns. [218015]

Mr. Morley: Ministers have met the Environment Agency (EA) on two occasions since June 2001 to discuss the burning of waste in cement kilns.

On 15 July 2004 I met the Environment Agency for that purpose together with representatives of the waste treatment company Cleanaway.

On 9 September 2004 I again met the Environment Agency for that purpose together with representatives of the British Cement Association.

Waste Management Regulations

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when the Waste Management Licensing (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 will come into force; [216808]

(2) what account is being taken of differences in size and resources of different composting operations when defining the tonnage brackets under the Waste Management Licensing (England and Wales) Regulations 2005; [216809]

(3) what steps she will take to ensure that charges for composting sites proposed under the Waste Management Licensing (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 do not place a disproportionately high financial burden on small scale organisations composting less than 150 tonnes of organic waste per annum. [216810]

Mr. Morley: The Government have taken account of comments made during the consultation process by representatives of smaller community composting schemes and is considering amending the original proposal.

Details of the scheme will be available when the regulations are published. This is expected to be in late spring/early summer 2005.

Flood Defence (York)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on flood defence in the City of York. [217063]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 10W, which I hope will answer this question also. The Environment Agency's plans for the City of York remain unaltered.

Zoos

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to review the licensing of zoos. [218279]

Mr. Morley: The terms of reference of the Zoos Forum, the Government's independent advisers on zoo matters, include keeping the operation and implementation of the zoo licensing system continually under review and advising Government as necessary.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Commonwealth Working Holiday Scheme

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers, *(b)* teaching assistants and *(c)* other school staff from Commonwealth countries are working in the UK under the Commonwealth working holiday scheme on two year visas; and if she will make a statement on the effect on recruitment in the education system of changing the scheme to one year visas. [218043]

Mr. Browne: I have been asked to reply.

Working holidaymakers are required to obtain entry clearance prior to coming to the United Kingdom. This allows them to take relevant employment, including as teachers, teaching assistants and as other school staff. No central record is kept by the Home Office of the numbers of working holidaymakers in each part of the work force, including teaching and other jobs in educational establishments, because they do not need separate permission to work after arrival.

After 12 months in the United Kingdom working holidaymakers are eligible for work permit employment in any of the occupations on the list of designated shortage occupations maintained by Work Permits (UK). These include all teaching posts that relate to the provision of compulsory schooling. Working holidaymakers were eligible to switch into these occupations after 12 months in the United Kingdom before the changes announced on 7 February. The effect of these changes on recruitment into teaching roles in the education system is therefore neutral. Non-teaching roles in schools are not generally shortage occupations and so will not feature, but it is unlikely that there will be difficulty in filling such posts.

Curriculum

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether any changes have been made to *(a)* the primary school curriculum and *(b)* the secondary school curriculum in the past year. [219018]

Derek Twigg: We introduced new flexibilities to Key Stage 4 of the secondary curriculum in September 2004 to enable schools to offer programmes that better meet young people's individual needs and strengths. Pupils are no longer required to learn modern foreign languages and design and technology. Instead schools are required to provide access to a minimum of one course in each of the following areas: the arts; design and technology; the humanities; and foreign languages. Students within Key Stage 4 are able to follow a course of study in a subject within each of these entitlement areas if they wish to do so. We also introduced a new statutory requirement for work-related learning at Key Stage 4.

There have been no other statutory changes to the primary and secondary curriculum in the last year.

Education (Hartlepool)

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding per pupil was allocated for *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school education in Hartlepool in each year since 1997. [218514]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is contained within the following table:

Average funding per pupil, Hartlepool

	£	
	Primary (3 to 10-year-olds)	*Secondary (11 to 15-year-olds)*
1997–98	2,230	3,220
1998–99	2,350	3,280
1999–2000	2,510	3,380
2000–01	2,720	3,740
2001–02	2,890	3,980
2002–03	3,020	4,010
2003–04	3,330	4,210
2004–05	3,450	4,380

Notes:

1. Total funding includes funding via education formula spending/standard spending assessment and revenue grants allocated at an LEA level. It excludes the pensions transfer to EPS and the Learning and Skills Council, and is in real terms.
2. Real terms at 2003–04 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 30 September 2004.
3. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.
4. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged 3–10 and 11–15 and exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level.
5. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3-year-old maintained pupils and estimated 3 to 4-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.
6. Figures are as reported by the LEA and rounded to the nearest £10.
7. 2003–04 and 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.
8. 1997–98 figures for LEAs subject to local government reorganisation in that year have been estimated, pro-rate to their post LGR figures.

New Approaches to Contact

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) when the Department's Design Team planning the Family Resolutions Pilot Project met the New Approaches to Contact organisation; [216440]

(2) when the Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families met the Director of New Approaches to Contact as referred to in the letter from the Minister to the right hon. Member for Bromley and Chislehurst of 24 January (ref 2004/0065500POMH). [216442]

Margaret Hodge: Neither I, nor the Design Group, nor the Steering Group, for the Family Resolutions Pilot Project have met New Approaches to Contact (NATC).

Individual members of the Design Group for the Family Resolutions Pilot Project and my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families have met the Director of New Approaches to Contact, to discuss his early interventions proposals.

My reply of 24 January 2005 to correspondence of 29 November 2004 from the hon. Member (ref 2004/0065500POMH) contained an error in stating that I had met the Director of NATC to discuss the Early Interventions project. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families met the Director of New Approaches to Contact .

Local Intervention and Development Fund

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under which line in the Budget 2004 Annual Report the Local Intervention and Development Fund appears; and what the projected budget for the fund is for each year from 2005–06 to 2009–10. [218684]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Local Intervention and Development (LID) Fund is administered by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and appears within the LSC figures in Chapter 2 and Annex B to the 2004 Annual Report. For 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 a budget for the LID fund of £195 million in each year was set out in the LSC Grant Letter published on 15 November 2004. Figures from 2008–09 onwards have not yet been set.

Music

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Department's policy is regarding the position of music education in the school curriculum. [219016]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department's commitment to music education is set out in the Music Manifesto and the national curriculum.

We recognise the importance of music in schools both as a subject in its own right and as a means of driving up standards across the curriculum. Music is a statutory entitlement for all pupils up to the age of 14, and can be taken as an option at Key Stage 4.

Primary Teachers

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many graduates have entered teaching at primary education level in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [218807]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the number of graduates with qualified teacher status entering service for the first time in maintained nursery and primary schools from 1996–97 to 2002–03, the latest year available.

	Full and part-time entrants
2003[1]	13,410
2002[1]	14,250
2001	13,590
2000	13,640
1999	12,670
1998	13,480
1997	12,670

[1] Provisional data: The numbers shown in service may change as a result of late receipt of annual service returns.

Source:

Database of Teachers' Records.

Figures include teachers who have qualified in the previous calendar year and those who have no known service in the English maintained sector and qualified before the previous calendar year. It is possible that a very small number of this latter group are not graduates.

10–20 per cent. of part-time teachers may not be included in the data.

School Funding Arrangements

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to extend the consultation period for her consultation on new school funding arrangements if a General Election intervenes before the closing date of 13 May. [218539]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Guidance on the conduct of Government business, including the handling of consultation exercises, will be published by the Cabinet Office on the announcement of a General Election.

School Violence

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's policy is on dealing with violence taking place in primary and secondary schools. [219363]

Derek Twigg: Although violence in schools is rare the Government takes the issue very seriously. We have made it clear that head teachers may permanently exclude pupils for violence even when this is a first offence. But it is even more important to help schools create an environment that reduces the risk of violence to an absolute minimum. To achieve that we have:

given every secondary school access to high-quality behaviour management training materials and expert advice from behaviour management consultants;

funded extra support for schools facing the greatest challenges through our Behaviour Improvement Programme;

provided £120 million for school security improvements since 1997; and

based over 300 police officers in schools.

In addition we are:

giving every primary school access to high-quality behaviour management training materials and curriculum materials for developing pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills;

developing staff training and curriculum materials to help secondary schools develop the social, emotional and behavioural skills of their pupils;

developing specific violence prevention materials through our Violence Reduction in Schools project; and

consulting on new proposals on keeping knives out of schools, including searching suspect pupils.

Sexual Abuse

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of individuals under the age of 18 years who had been sexually abused who received support and counselling in each of the last five years. [218655]

Margaret Hodge: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of progress towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport from 25 per cent. in 2002 to 75 per cent. in 2006. [219210]

Derek Twigg: Progress in delivering the Public Service Agreement target—which the Department for Education and Skills shares with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport—is monitored annually via the national PE, School Sport and Club Links survey. This is the largest and most comprehensive survey of school sport in England.

Good progress is being made. The 2003/04 survey, in which over 6 500 schools took part, showed that 62 per cent. of children were spending two hours in a typical week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum. The survey results were published on 29 April 2004 and a copy of the report "The Impact of School Sport Partnerships: The Results of the 2003/04 PE, School Sports and Club Links Survey" has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Schools will take part in the 2004/05 survey between May and July this year and the results will be published later in the year.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce school absence by 8 per cent. compared to 2003 will be met by 2008; [219215]

(2) whether the Public Service Agreement target for 2004 to reduce school truancies by 10 per cent. compared to 2002 was met. [219209]

Derek Twigg: Schools appear well on course to meet the Public Service Agreement target to reduce school absence by 8 per cent. compared to 2003 by 2008. Absence data for state schools covering the autumn term 2004 was placed in the Libraries of both Houses on 24 February 2005. The data indicate that the level of absence from state schools has fallen to 6.17 per cent.—a decrease of 11 per cent. from 2002/03 and equivalent to over 50,000 more pupils in school each day.

The Public Service Agreement target to reduce the 2002 level of unauthorised absence by 10 per cent. by 2004 was not met as the level remained unchanged at 0.72 per cent. Unauthorised absence has remained near to 0.7 per cent. since national records for school attendance began in 1993/94.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to improve the basic skills levels of 2.25 million adults by 2010 will be met. [219219]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government reported in December 2004 that it had been successful in meeting its Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults by 2004. The most recent estimates show 827,000 adults have attained at least one qualification in literacy, numeracy or language since the launch of "Skills for Life" in 2001. Due to continued commitment and development of the Skills for Life Strategy we remain confident that we are on track to meet the challenging 2010 target of improving the literacy, language and numeracy skills of 2.25 million adults.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Public Service Agreement target for at least 28 per cent. of young people to start a modern apprenticeship by age 22 by 2004 was met. [219251]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a 2004/05 academic year PSA target against which we are due to measure progress in July 2005. In the last full academic year 2003–04 the proportion of young people starting an apprenticeship had risen to 24.8 per cent.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether, in accordance with the Public Service Agreement's targets for minimum performance and value for money have been set for further education colleges; and whether these targets have been met. [219253]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Public Service Agreement committed Government to set minimum performance and value for money targets for further education colleges. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) set the minimum performance targets in May 2003. Each college has been set a minimum standard for learner achievement. Success rates are continuing to improve in colleges and we expect every college to meet or exceed the minimum standard by 2006. On latest data, the percentage of Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges below this standard (for both short and long qualifications) has fallen from 30 per cent. in 2000–01 to 15 per cent. in 2002–03.

Value for money targets for colleges have not yet been set. The Department and LSC will develop and trial new value for money indicators during 2005/06 and implement new measures from 2006/07.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Public Service Agreement target to improve the basic skills levels of 750,000 adults as a result of the launch of the Skills for Life initiative was met in 2004. [219259]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I reported in the House of Commons on 9 September 2004 that the Government had met its Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults by 2004. I refer the hon. Gentleman to 9 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 851.

This announcement was confirmed on the 6 December 2004, with the release of a press notice in England.

Since the launch of the Skills for Life Strategy in 2001, 2.4 million adults across England have taken up 4.8 million courses in literacy, language and numeracy skills. Over 750,000 of these learners have gone on to achieve nationally recognised qualifications.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to improve the basic skills levels of 1.5 million adults will be met by 2007. [219260]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government reported in December 2004 that they had been successful in meeting their Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of 750,000 adults by 2004. The most recent estimates show 827,000 adults have attained at least one qualification in literacy, numeracy or language since the launch of "Skills for Life" in 2001. Due to continued commitment and development of the Skills for Life strategy we remain confident that we are on track to meet the challenging 2007 target of improving the literacy, language and numeracy skills of 1.5 million adults.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce by at least 40 per cent. the number of adults in the workforce who lack NVQ 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010 will be met; [219261]

(2) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target for one million adults in the workforce to achieve Level 2 by 2006 will be met. [219262]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: We welcome the continuing increase in the number of adults who have at least NVQ level 2, as published in the Labour Force Survey Statistical First Release on 24 February.

We are taking action to increase the numbers of adults getting level 2 qualifications and the forthcoming Skills White Paper will set out clear proposals for raising the numbers of adults getting qualifications at level 2 and above.

If we maintain the progress made over recent years, we are on course to achieve the target of one million adults getting a level 2 by 2006; and through a combination of public and private investment, to make progress towards the 2010 target.

Teachers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how long teachers stayed in the profession in England according to the most recently produced statistics; and what percentage of teachers retired from the profession in the last year for which figures are available. [218065]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Of those teachers entering service in 1993, 63 per cent. were in service in the maintained sector 10 years later (at March 2003). Of those entering in 1998, 77 per cent. were in service five years later. Some teachers may have not have been in service continually.

In 2002–03, 9,260 full or part-time teachers retired from regular service in the maintained sector, 2.0 per cent. of the number in service in March 2002.

TREASURY

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether citizens advice bureaux will be eligible for assistance from the new Financial Inclusion Fund towards their money advice services. [218988]

Mr. Timms: Yes. Further details on the breakdown of the fund, including eligibility criteria will be announced in due course.

Correspondence

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to reply to the letter of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead of 4 February regarding the tax credits of his constituent Mr. Williams. [219385]

Dawn Primarolo: I understand that the Inland Revenue has replied to the right hon. Member.

They aim to reply to 80 per cent. of correspondence within 15 working days and 95 per cent. within 40 working days.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to reply to the letter of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead of 9 February regarding the tax credits of his constituent Mrs. Smith. [219386]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue have told me that they will be replying to the right hon. Member very shortly.

They aim to reply to 80 per cent. of correspondence within 15 working days, and 95 per cent. within 40 working days.

Employment (Hartlepool)

Iain Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what proportion of the workforce in Hartlepool was

employed in *(a)* the public sector, *(b)* the manufacturing industry, *(c)* the service sector and *(d)* farming and agriculture in (i) 1997 and (ii) the last year for which figures are available; [218806]

(2) how many people were in employment in Hartlepool in each year since 1992. [218503]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Iain Wright, dated 2 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about the number of people employed in Hartlepool and the proportion of the workforce employed in selected industries in Hartlepool (218503, 218806).

The attached tables show the available information requested.

Table 1 shows estimates of the number of employed people resident in Hartlepool and are taken from the Labour Force Survey. Estimates are for 12 month periods ending in February from 1995, the first year in which these statistics are available for Parliamentary Constituencies, to 2004.

Table 2 shows estimates of employees working in the public sector resident in Hartlepool as a proportion of all in employment, for 12 month periods ending February in 1999, 2002 and 2004. Equivalent figures for 1997 are not available for Parliamentary Constituencies.

Tables 3 shows estimates of the proportion of total employees jobs in Hartlepool which are in the manufacturing industry, the service sector and in agriculture and fishing industries. These figures are taken from the Annual Business Inquiry. Estimates are provided for 1997 and 2002, the latest available year for Parliamentary Constituencies.

Table 1: Number of employed people resident in Hartlepool parliamentary constituency

12 months ending February	*Number*
1995	28,000
1996	34,000
1997	37,000
1998	35,000
1999	34,000
2000	32,000
2001	35,000
2002	36,000
2003	34,000
2004	35,000

Note:
LFS estimates are subject to sampling variability. Changes from year to year in particular should be treated with caution.
Source:
Labour Force Survey

Table 2: Employees in the public sector resident in Hartlepool as a proportion of all in employment

12 month period ending February	*Percentage*
1999[1]	24.5
2002	23.7
2004	25.5

[1] LFS estimates are not available for 1997.

Note:
LFS estimates are subject to sampling variability. Changes from year to year in particular should be treated with caution.
Source:
Labour Force Survey

Table 3: Employee jobs[1] in Hartlepool in selected industries as percentages of all employment

	Manufacturing	*Total services*	*Percentage Agriculture and fishing[2, 3]*
1997	23.3	63.3	0.1
2002	18.2	73.7	.

[1] Excludes self-employed jobs.
[2] These figures are aggregates from which agriculture class 0100 (1992 SIC) have been excluded.
[3] Estimates for agriculture and fishing for 2002 are not given to conform with the 1947 Statistics of Trade Act, preventing release of data that may disclose companies.
Source:
2002; Annual Business Inquiry, 1997; Annual Employment Survey (re-scaled).

Energy Products Directive

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will commission research on the earning levels of owners of private leisure craft who have benefited from rebated diesel under the Energy Products Directive. [218954]

John Healey: This information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian and *(b)* Irish presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Committee-EEC Cyprus met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [218851]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian and *(b)* Irish presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Committee-EEC Malta met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218852]

Dawn Primarolo: This committee is the responsibility of the European Commission. No UK Government expert was present.

Health Expenditure

Iain Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the per capita spending on health in each year since 1997 was in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* Hartlepool. [218801]

Mr. Boateng: Expenditure based on individual constituencies is not available. The closest match for Hartlepool is Tees health authority area, and its successor County Durham and Tees Valley strategic health authority. Public expenditure per capita on health in these areas, in the North East and in England is shown in the following table.

£

	England	*North East*	*Tees health authority*	*County Durham and Tees valley strategic health authority*
1997–98	710	586	556	n/a
1998–99	750	635	623	n/a
1999–00	820	749	771	n/a

£

	England	North East	Tees health authority	County Durham and Tees valley strategic health authority
2000–01	890	796	824	n/a
2001–02	990	879	858	n/a
2002–03	1,120	995	n/a	991
2003–04	1,280	1,081	n/a	1,075

Notes:

1. Public spending on health per capita in England will always appear higher because many areas of health expenditure are funded centrally and are not factored into local health authority spending. These include medical research, the funding of Special Health Authorities, NDPBs and some central budgets.
2. Expenditure per capita for health authorities and the North East is taken from audited health authority summarisation forms and primary care trust summarisation schedules that are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. Weighted capitation figures are used to determine expenditure per capita—these are population figures that are weighted to reflect differing needs. Figures are given in cash terms.
3. Figures for 1997–98 to 2001–02 have been prepared using gross expenditure figures. Figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 have been adjusted to eliminate expenditure that would be double counted where an authority acts as a lead in commissioning healthcare or other services.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will match the United States' commitment to top up the Paris Club deal in respect of Iraq's debt by a bilateral agreement taking the debt write-off to 100 per cent.; and if he will make a statement. [208732]

Mr. Timms: The UK has been at the forefront of efforts to help rehabilitate Iraq's economy. The UK fully supported a generous debt treatment for Iraq at the Paris club meeting of 21 November at which it was agreed to write off 80 per cent. of Iraq's debt in order to provide a robust exit from debt unsustainability. Under the Paris Club deal, no payments are due from Iraq to Paris Club creditors until 2008. In addition to supporting the IMF and World Bank in providing assistance, the UK has pledged £544 million in direct aid over three years to March 2006, of which over £331 million has been committed. These funds are bringing immediate benefits to the Iraqi people. We continue to keep options to support Iraq's economy under review.

Law and Order Expenditure

Iain Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the per capita spending on law and order was in each year since 1997 in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* the North East and *(c)* Hartlepool. [218787]

Mr. Timms: The information is as follows:

Spending in England and Wales

To enable proper comparison to other regions, the following data shows total per capita spending on Public Order and Safety that can be identified as spending for a region within England and Wales. This is different from total per capita-spending as it excludes expenditure that cannot be identified as spending for a region.

£

	England	Wales
1998–99	246	240
1999–2000	245	237
2000–01	265	260
2001–02	300	295
2002–03	323	320

Source:

Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2004, ONS Population Data

Spending in the North East

Per capita spending on Public Order and Safety in the North East is outlined as follows. This shows only expenditure that can be identified as spending for the North East.

£

1998–99	279
1999–2000	301
2000–01	319
2000–02	345
2002–03	387

Source:

Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2004

Figures are not provided for 1997–98 as there are not comparable sources of data across all of these fields for this year.

Data is collected on the basis of "Public Order and Safety" as HMT functional analyses are based on the UN standard classification of the functions of Government. Public Order and Safety includes police, fire, administration of justice, prison and offender programmes and immigration and citizenship.

Regional data for 2003–04 will be announced in PESA 2005 later this year.

Data is not held for spending in Hartlepool.

Further information can be found in PESA 2004 (Table 8.10) and a full definition of identifiable and non-identifiable spending can be found in paragraph 8.15 of PESA 2004.

MRSA

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many recorded deaths from MRSA there have been in the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey area in each of the past five years. [219408]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Chris Grayling, dated 2 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many recorded deaths from MRSA there have been in the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey area in each of the past five years. (219408)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. Numbers of deaths where MRSA was a contributory factor are given in the table below.

Number of deaths where MRSA was a contributory factor,[1] East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust, 1999–2003[2]

	Number of deaths where MRSA was a contributory factor
1999	[3]
2000	[3]
2001	5
2002	[3]
2003	[3]

[1] Identified using the methodology described in Griffiths C, Lamagni TL, Crowcroft NS, Duckworth G and Rooney C (2004) Trends in MRSA in England and Wales: analysis of morbidity and mortality data for 1993–2002. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 21, 15–22.

[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in the years 1999 to 2003.

[3] Fewer than 5 deaths

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Pensions

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will defer the proposed reforms to the public sector pension scheme pending further consultation. [219279]

Mr. Timms: Each public service pension scheme is the subject of a separate review led by the responsible Department. Schemes have been consulting on proposals for reform. In some cases consultation is over, in other cases consultation is still in progress. To allow consideration of all the relevant issues, including the appropriate timetables for implementing reforms, it is right for the reviews to continue, accepting representations from all those affected, as at present.

Population Census

Mr. Amess: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about the conclusions of the last Census on the population of towns. [219429]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Amess, dated 2 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what representations have been received about the conclusions of the last Census on the population of towns. 219429

Between September 2002, when the 2001 Census results were published and February 2005, The Office for National Statistics has received letters of concern regarding the published population figures from the 2001 Census from 44 Local Authorities.

In addition to the representation made by Southend-on-Sea, we are aware of six others having been made.

Public Sector Accounts

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the changes made to the definitions of capital spending in the Public Sector Accounts since May 1997. [218916]

Mr. Boateng: The Public Sector Accounts are drawn up by the ONS. They are based on the definitions in the European System of Accounts (ESA 95), which are determined by Eurostat. Interpretation of these standards is a matter for the ONS.

School Buildings

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes he has made to the scope and definitions of the repair of school buildings in the Public Sector Accounts since May 1997; and if he will make a statement. [218915]

Mr. Boateng: The Public Sector Accounts are drawn up by the Independent ONS. They are based on the definitions in the European System of Accounts (ESA 95), which are determined by Eurostat. Interpretation of these standards is a matter for the ONS.

Tax Credits

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many recipients of *(a)* working and *(b)* child tax credit award notices issued in 2003–04 who queried the accuracy of the Revenue's calculations and received no response within the 30-day period are being asked to make repayment; and if he will make a statement. [218543]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue (IR) do not hold the information in the format requested.

The IR's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

Mr. Pope: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the total value of over-payments of working tax credits in the last year for which figures are available. [218549]

Dawn Primarolo: For working tax credit and child tax credit, I refer my hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

For the previous system of working families' and disabled person's tax credits, I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) on 12 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 394W.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy for child care provided by grandparents to be considered eligible for the working tax credit child care element. [218610]

Dawn Primarolo: The child care element of working tax credit is only available for the costs of formal child care and is in line with the Government's commitment to promote good quality and safe provision.

Relatives can provide a high standard of child care in a safe environment but the Government do not wish to impose requirements of registration on family members.

If grandparents are registered childminders, then the cost of their services will count as eligible child care for the purposes of claiming the child care element of the

working tax credit. However, if the child care is being provided from the child's home, then it will not be treated as eligible child care.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how long it took on average for an adjudication decision on a tax credit to be made in the last year for which figures are available. [218642]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's aim is to decide 55 per cent. of all new tax credits claims, renewals and changes of circumstances within five working days of receipt, and 95 per cent. within 30 working days. They published their performance for 2003–04 against these targets in their Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2004 and this is available at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk. They are on course to meet the targets for 2004–05.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the Stroud constituency have current cases in the adjudication process for tax credit overpayments. [218644]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

VAT (Further Education Colleges)

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will reduce the level at which further education colleges pay VAT to the same level as that applicable to the school sector. [219423]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 762W to the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Lidington).

TRANSPORT

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218673]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department and its agencies have access to Occupational Health Advisers and Counselling and Support Services/Employee Assistance Programmes, which would be used to provide specialist support and advice to employees suffering with cancer.

Our attendance management policies and medical referral protocols are sympathetic to individuals suffering from cancer.

Driving Instruction

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department collected to inform the decision that compulsory motorway tuition is unnecessary; and if he will make a statement. [218774]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department collects statistics and carries out research to help inform road safety policy. In 2003, there were 14,839 car drivers involved in injury road accidents on Britain's motorways. Of these car drivers, 258 were aged 17–18 and 309 were aged 19. However, casualty statistics do not take account of the amount of driving done on motorways by different categories of drivers.

Research for the Department published in 2002 indicates that although young novice drivers are more at risk than other drivers in all or most situations, motorways do not present them with a disproportionately higher risk than other road types.

The research report, TRL 527, is available in the Libraries of the House and on-line, at www.trl.co.uk/static/dtlr/pdfs/TRL527.pdf. Paragraphs 7.3.4 and 7.3.5 and figures 17 and 18 on page 19 refer.

Driving Licence (Medical Checks)

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he plans to introduce compulsory medical checks when driving licence holders reach the age of 70; and if he will make a statement. [219393]

Mr. Jamieson: At present there is no clear evidence to suggest that mandatory medical examinations for drivers at the age of 70 would result in a marked improvement to road safety sufficient to justify the potential inconvenience and expense for the majority of drivers, who remain fit to drive.

London Commuters

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* passengers in excess of capacity and *(b)* total number of passengers figure was (i) for each London commuting service train operator and (ii) in total, broken down into (A) am peak and (B) pm peak figures measured in the annual survey in 2004; and what the number was of peak passengers into London for (1) am peak periods, (2) pm peak periods and (3) in total for each London commuting service train operator. [218212]

Mr. McNulty: The results of the autumn 2004 counts are not yet available. The results of the autumn 2003 counts are shown in the following table. The "Passengers In Excess of Capacity" (PIXC) mechanism monitors services into London in the morning peak and out of London in the evening peak.

	Am peak		*PM peak*		
Operator	*Load*	*PIXC (percentage)*	*Load*	*PIXC (percentage)*	*PIXC total (am and pm) (percentage)*
Chiltern	9,191	3.3	8,157	0.8	2.1
South Central	69,127	4.7	52,083	1.1	3.1
Connex South Eastern	118,162	3.1	92,048	0.5	2.0
Great Eastern	49,739	2.1	46,358	2.1	2.1
c2c	26,643	1.3	23,619	0.6	1.0
Silverlink	19,824	6.0	17,395	2.1	4.2
South West Trains	81,670	7.4	70,373	2.8	5.2
Thames	11,054	2.0	8,977	0.9	1.5

Operator	Am peak Load	Am peak PIXC (percentage)	PM peak Load	PM peak PIXC (percentage)	PIXC total (am and pm) (percentage)
Thameslink	27,131	2.3	23,218	2.7	2.5
WAGN	47,367	1.5	43,003	1.3	1.4
Total	459,908	3.8	385,231	1.5	2.7

Taxis

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of taxis per head of population in each metropolitan authority. [218390]

Charlotte Atkins: The estimates are given in the following table.

Met. district	Taxis per 1,000 head of population
Gateshead	0.9
Newcastle on Tyne	3.1
North Tyneside	0.7
South Tyneside	1.5
Sunderland	1.1
Knowsley	1.6
Liverpool	3.2
St. Helens	0.4
Sefton	1.0
Wirral	0.6
Bolton	0.4
Bury	0.5
Manchester	1.9
Oldham	0.4
Rochdale	0.5
Salford	0.4
Stockport	0.4
Tameside	0.7
Trafford	0.5
Wigan	0.4
Bradford	0.5
Calderdale	0.3
Kirklees	0.6
Leeds	0.6
Wakefield	0.3
Barnsley	0.3
Doncaster	0.4
Rotherham	0.2
Sheffield	1.1
Birmingham	1.1
Coventry	1.7
Dudley	0.5
Sandwell	0.1
Solihull	0.2
Walsall	0.2
Wolverhampton	0.4

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which metropolitan councils have placed limits on the numbers of licensed taxis; what the limits are in each case; and which metropolitan councils have placed no limits on the number of taxis. [218391]

Charlotte Atkins: Our latest statistics, as at 31 March 2004, show that 26 metropolitan authorities place a limit on the number of taxis they license. Those authorities, together with their respective limits, are listed as follows:

Authority	Number
Newcastle on Tyne	2,000
South Tyneside	224
Sunderland	306
Knowsley	240
Liverpool	1,417
Sefton	271
St Helens	63
Bolton	104
Manchester	833
Oldham	85
Rochdale	103
Salford	78
Stockport	114
Tameside	143
Trafford	103
Wigan	136
Bradford	224
Calderdale	[1]65
Kirklees	217
Leeds	402
Wakefield	96
Barnsley	65
Rotherham	48
Solihull	32
Walsall	60
Wolverhampton	92

[1] Limit applies in only one licensing zone.

10 metropolitan authorities do not impose a limit on the number of taxis they license:

Gateshead
North Tyneside
Wirral
Bury
Doncaster
Sheffield
Birmingham
Coventry
Dudley
Sandwell

We have written to those authorities which control taxi numbers requesting that they undertake a review of their policy, and if they decide to retain a limit that they publish a justification of that policy by the end of March 2005.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Exports (Indonesia)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 627W on arms exports (Indonesia) if she will provide a breakdown of the most recent repayment schedule for the sums owed by Indonesia in connection with the Indonesian purchases of *(a)* Scorpion and Stormer vehicles and *(b)* Hawk aircraft. [217443]

Mr. Alexander: Repayments in respect of the amounts referred to in my previous answer are due to be made in half-yearly instalments, the next falling due on 1 June 2005 and the last on 1 June 2021.

Because details of amounts owed to the Paris Club are not held at contract level, it is not possible to provide repayment schedules in relation to individual contracts.

Business Regulation

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with businesses to review current levels of regulation. [217357]

Nigel Griffiths: I maintain close and regular contact with business. Businesses are routinely invited to participate in consultations on new policy and legislative proposals.

Business Regulatory Costs

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate her Department has made of the financial burden of business regulation for 2004. [217363]

Nigel Griffiths: All proposals which impact on business, charities or the voluntary sector require a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) which includes details of the costs, benefits and risks of the proposal. Copies of final RIAs are available from the House Libraries and on departmental websites. We consult fully on proposals on the basis of these RIAs with business and other stakeholders.

Business Start-ups (Hartlepool)

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many business start-ups were registered in Hartlepool in each year since records for unitary authorities are available. [218511]

Nigel Griffiths: Barclays data show that there were 400 business start-ups in Hartlepool unitary authority in 2003 and a further 500 in the first nine months of 2004. This represents a 67 per cent. increase on the first nine months of 2003.

Business start-up data for unitary authorities are not available for before 2003. Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were 445,000 business start-ups in England and Wales in 2003, a 16 per cent. increase on the year before. A further 396,000 businesses started up in England and Wales in the first nine months of 2004. This represents an increase of 14 per cent. on the first nine months of 2003.

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations and de-registrations for Hartlepool unitary authority are shown below for 1994 to 2003. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

VAT registrations	*Hartlepool*
1994	145
1995	95
1996	105
1997	110
1998	130
1999	110
2000	110
2001	115
2002	105
2003	135

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service, available from the Library of the House and also at: http://www.sbs.gov.uk/analytical/statistics/vatstats.php.

A separate series of data is available for 1980 to 1993. Due to large increases in the VAT threshold in 1991 and 1993, and geographical boundary changes in the 1990s, this series is not comparable to the 1994 to 2003 series. DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations and de-registrations for Hartlepool are shown in the table for 1980 to 1993.

VAT registrations in Hartlepool 1980 to 1993

	Number
1980	130
1981	160
1982	180
1983	200
1984	195
1985	210
1986	220
1987	195
1988	235
1989	230
1990	215
1991	165
1992	170
1993	155

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1980–1993, Small Business Service, available from http://www.sbs.gov.uk/analytical/statistics/vatstats.php

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

Debt Recovery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1788W, on debt recovery, what the repayment schedule for each of the countries listed is; and what the estimated cost to the Government of rescheduling the debts is. [217612]

Mr. Alexander: The following table shows repayment schedules for debt that has been rescheduled under Paris Club agreements. Repayments are due to be made in half-yearly instalments.

Market	*Next payment due*	*Final payment due*
Algeria	31 May 2005	30 November 2011
Ghana	01 April 2005	01 July 2025
Indonesia	01 June 2005	01 June 2021
Pakistan	31 May 2005	30 November 2024

The details of non-Paris Club rescheduling arrangements are Commercial in Confidence. To reveal details would compromise ongoing negotiations with similar debtors.

In addition to the premium that ECGD charges for insuring or guaranteeing a risk, the debt agreements through which recoveries of claims are made earn interest which is expected to cover the cost of funding the outstanding debt, including administration costs.

Digital Tick Logo

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the take-up has been to date of the digital tick logo indicating digitally compatible products and service among manufacturers and retailers; what the cost of the scheme has been so far; and if she will make a statement on the take-up of digital products and services. [218603]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Digital Switchover Logo licensing scheme was open to receive licence applications from manufacturers and retailers from 16 September 2004. As at Thursday 18 February 2005, manufacturer and retailer licensees of the logo numbered:

245 retail organisations, representing 2,303 retail outlets across the UK

20 manufacturers of digital television equipment (including most major brands)

8 manufacturers of television aerials and/or coaxial cable

Those companies who applied within the first seven weeks of the scheme, and single branch independent electrical retailers, were not required to pay an administration fee for the first year of the scheme. Once the founder member period, ended, all subsequent applicants were charged an administration fee.

Ellington Colliery

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with *(a)* the National Union of Mineworkers and *(b)* UK Coal about (i) safety of and (ii) the proposal to close Ellington Colliery. [219070]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: I have held discussions with representatives of both the National Union of Mineworkers and UK Coal. A range of issues were discussed.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the proposed closure of Ellington Colliery. [219072]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: As a privately owned company, UK Coal is the operator of Ellington, and any decision taken is a commercial one for the company. However, the Government do deeply regret the loss of Ellington, and our sympathies are with the workforce and their families at this difficult time. One North East is working with its partners on plans to assist regeneration in the in the area and offer the best possible new job opportunities for Ellington workers.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on medical devices met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217886]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

The committee on safety of devices (CSD) is an advisory non-departmental public body. This committee advises on a wide range of device related initiatives in order to help healthcare professionals deliver high standards of care to patients in relation to medical devices.

The CSD met once during the Italian presidency, not at all during the Irish presidency and twice during the Dutch presidency. These meetings took place on 20 November 2003, 1 July 2004, and 18 November 2004. All the meetings took place in London. The Government expert present was Dr. Susanne Ludgate, clinical director (devices) of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, which acted as secretariat.

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the European Union—Cm6174, laid in April 2004, Cm 6310, laid in September 2004 and Cm 6450, laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on Common Rules for Exports of Products met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217914]

Mr. Alexander: This Committee did not meet during these presidencies.

Nuclear Industry Safety

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many site inspections at nuclear installations did not proceed as a result of the recent work-to-rule by inspectors; [217764]

(2) what the full complement of site inspectors is; and how many are employed in monitoring the safety performance of the nuclear industry. [217765]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* No site inspection visits have been cancelled because of the work-to-rule associated with the HSE-wide pay dispute, but some visits have been shorter and have covered fewer topics. Ministers have been advised by the Acting Chief Inspector, Dr. Mike Weightman, that the dispute has not resulted in a less than adequate level of nuclear regulatory oversight to date.

The Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) has a complement of 179 inspectors to provide regulatory oversight of the civil and defence-related nuclear industries. At present there are 164 inspectors in post, and there is a recruitment campaign underway. Inspectors are deployed flexibly across a wide range of inspection,

project management and assessment duties, all of which contribute to delivery of nuclear safety assurance, including performance monitoring.[1]

NII does not have a fixed complement of site inspectors, but has a nominated lead inspector for every site. At present some 46 inspectors are employed full-time on site inspections (including investigations). In addition some inspectors normally employed on assessment work are also carrying out site inspections.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the question tabled by the right hon. Member for Oldham, West and Royton on 10 January, reference 207743. [218704]

Mr. Alexander: I answered the question on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 696W.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much central Government grant has been paid to each local authority in England to cover the cost of asylum seeker support in each year since 1996–97. [211919]

Mr. Browne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1519W.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the payments and grants made by the Government to each local authority in Wales to reimburse the costs of supporting asylum seekers in each year from 1996–97 to the establishment of the Welsh Assembly. [217879]

Mr. Browne: The information requested is not available in the precise format requested. The available information on grant payments to local authorities in Wales in respect of the support of asylum seekers was given to the hon. Member on 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1519W.

Communicable Diseases

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1469W, on communicable diseases (NHS staff), whether tests for communicable diseases are *(a)* compulsory and *(b)* required before a visa is issued, in those cases where a visa is necessary. [218730]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* It is long standing policy that people subject to immigration control who are seeking to enter the UK for more than six months from countries which are high risk for tuberculosis, whether for work or another purpose, should be checked for tuberculosis. High-risk countries are those with an annual incidence rate of over 40 cases of tuberculosis per 100,000 population.

As we made clear in our five-year strategy for asylum and immigration Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain (Cm 6472), we will target health screening for tuberculosis in high-risk areas at the entry clearance stage; those who are diagnosed with it would then need to seek treatment at home before being allowed to enter the UK. We are keeping the case for extending routine health checks to diseases other than tuberculosis under review.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213638]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office produces one departmental internal magazine centrally, Inside Track. Costs of production are held since April 1998 as follows:

	£
1998–99	109,000
1999–2000	87,000
2000–01	125,000
2001–02	134,000
2002–03	171,000
2003–04	174,000
2004–05	[1]143,000

[1] To January 2005.

Costs of other internal publications in the different business areas of the department are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213676]

Fiona Mactaggart: Staff surveys are regularly undertaken within the Home Office to assist understanding of organisational issues and pressures. External survey professionals are used to conduct these surveys and historical trends are evaluated. These surveys have the benefit of concentrating the department's efforts on issues which are considered to be problems by its staff. The cost of conducting the staff survey in the Department are set out in the table.

£

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2003	2004
Non-Agency Home Office	Cost not available	Cost not available	Cost not available	120,475	No survey	75,459
Prison Service	No survey	No survey	30,000	40,000	47,700	[1]23,000
United Kingdom Passport Service	No survey	22,150	No survey	22,250	35,904	No survey
Forensic Science Service	No survey	No survey	12,619	10,175	16,050	8,490

[1] This is the estimated cost of the 2004 survey. The reduction in cost can be attributed primarily from the transfer from a paper based survey to an electronically disseminated questionnaire.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214718]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Burnley constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Lancashire police force increased by 332 from 3,247 to 3,579. The Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 117 CSOs on Lancashire police force streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Lancashire police force area has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 41 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 39 per cent.

Lancashire police will receive £190.8 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 4.31 per cent. (£7.9 million) over last year. Lancashire police also gains around £0.4 million from the amending report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 4.52 per cent. General grants funding to Lancashire has increased by 29.9 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Lancashire will also receive around £17.4 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. One CCTV project in the Burnley CDRP area received a total of £426,000 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 crime and disorder reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £760,658 has been allocated to Burnley CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.3 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office regional director in the north west for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Burnley set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's crime reduction website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Burnley a total of 51 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 10 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and their policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focussing on the four strands of:

- reducing the supply of illegal drugs;
- preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;
- providing effective treatment to all who need it; and
- reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Burnley has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Lancashire Drug Action Team amounted to £5.47 million, rising to £7.61 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Burnley constituency can be obtained from the Lancashire Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the "futurebuilders" fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

The Home Office allocated £305,000 community support team funding (2002–04) for Burnley borough council. This funding covered four strands of work: leadership and change management (focusing on training and capacity building for members and officers) as well as providing managerial support, consultation and communications, youth and conflict resolution and race and community relations work.

To support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued, the Home Office funded a Community Cohesion Pathfinder in East Lancashire for 18 months ending September 2004. Burnley borough council was one of five authorities that made up the East Lancashire Pathfinder (known as East Lanes Together—ELT). The other areas included in this were Pendle, Rossendale, Lancashire county council and Hyndburn.

ELT, for example, set up three different funding streams, which together distributed £275,000 to over 40 bodies and produced 20 Young Community Champions. Through this work, Community Empowerment Networks have run conflict resolution workshops; schools from very different areas have linked up; and local community groups have run multiracial sports and arts events.

This year, 2005, is the year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org .

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office annual report and in the strategic plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, the effects on Huddersfield of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216873]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Huddersfield constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the West Yorkshire police force increased by 104 from 5,209 to 5,313. The Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 298 CSOs on West Yorkshire streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, West Yorkshire has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 23 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 6 per cent.

West Yorkshire police will receive £313.6 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 4.95 per cent. (£14.7 million) over 2004–05. West Yorkshire police also gains around £0.6 million from the amending report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 5.15 per cent. General grants funding to West Yorkshire has increased by 31.7 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, West Yorkshire will also receive around £26.1 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Four CCTV projects in the Kirklees CDRP area (which includes Huddersfield constituency) received a total of £438,650 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 crime and disorder reduction partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £2.07 million has been allocated to Kirklees CDRP under these initiatives. A further £1.8 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office regional director in the Yorkshire and the Humber for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Kirklees set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's crime reduction website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Kirklees a total of 66 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 21 February 2005. Kirklees is also one of 50 communities across the country that have been designated as 'Together Action Areas' and are set to get extra help to tackle antisocial

behaviour. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and their policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Kirklees has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Kirklees Drug Action Team amounted to £2.32 million, rising to £3.06 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in Huddersfield constituency can be obtained from the Kirklees Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the futurebuilders fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

To support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued, in 2003 the Home Office allocated from the Connecting Communities Fund a total of £590,000 to two, three-year projects in the Kirklees area. A Voluntary Action Kirklees project (grant £338,812) is supporting the development of Asian women's networks to promote greater community involvement from Asian women. Outcomes include partnership work with South Asian Healthy Living to run a confidence project and fitness training programmes. A Kirklees Racial Equality Council project (grant £251,718) is being launched in April 2005 and will see a series of seven faith resource centres, reflecting the major faiths, set up across Kirklees, with books, displays and other information materials. The centres will provide a unique educational experience for local school children and others wishing to learn more about faiths and cultures within Kirklees.

Kirklees has also benefited from participation in the 18-month Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme, established and launched in 2002 by the Home Office and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Kirklees was one of 14 successful Pathfinders and was granted £285,000 to explore the best ways of building strong, active, and harmonious communities. Key outcomes from the programme included the 'Learning Lessons' report, which, by establishing what levels of community cohesion already existed, provided a basis for moving forward; and the "Stories in a suitcase" project, which encouraged people over 50 in the community to create a story board reflecting where they had come from. This project was popular with both white and Asian residents living in Kirklees and helped change local perceptions about the differences between community groups.

This year, 2005, is the year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org.

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of his Department's policies and activities since 2 May 1997. [21498!]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Pendle constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Lancashire Police Force increased by 332 from 3,247 to 3,579. The Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 117 CSOs on Lancashire's streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Lancashire CDRP has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 41 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 39 per cent.

Lancashire Police will receive £190.8 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 4.31 per cent. (£7.9 million) over last year. Lancashire Police also gains around £0.4 million from the Amending Report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 4.52 per cent. General grants funding to Lancashire has increased by 29.9 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Lancashire will also receive around £17.4 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision

in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. One CCTV project in the Pendle CDRP area, which includes the Pendle constituency, received a total of £201,000 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £543,187 has been allocated to Pendle CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.3 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the North West for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Pendle set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's crime reduction website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Pendle a total of 16 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 22 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and its policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focussing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Pendle has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Lancashire Drug Action Team amounted to £5.47 million, rising to £7.61 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Pendle constituency can be obtained from the Lancashire Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the "futurebuilders" fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk

To support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued, the Home Office funded a Community Cohesion Pathfinder in East Lancashire for 18 months ending September 2004. Pendle borough council was one of five authorities that made up the East Lancashire Pathfinder (known as East Lanes Together—ELT). The other areas included in this were Burnley, Rossendale, Lancashire county council and Hyndburn. ELT, for example, set up three different funding streams, which together distributed £275,000 to over 40 bodies and produced 20 Young Community Champions. Through this work, Community Empowerment Networks have run conflict resolution workshops; schools from very different areas have linked up; and local community groups have run multiracial sports and arts events.

This year, 2005, is the year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Rochdale constituency, the effects on Rochdale of his Department's policies and actions since 1997. [217373]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Rochdale constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Greater Manchester Police Force increased by 1,189 from 6,922 to 8,111. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 229 CSOs on Greater Manchester's streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, the Greater Manchester Police Force area has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 16 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 29 per cent.

Greater Manchester Police Force will be receiving £412.5 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 4.89 per cent. (£19.3 million) over 2004–05. Greater Manchester also gains around £0.8 million from the Amending Report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 5.1 per cent. General grants funding to Greater Manchester Police has increased by 30 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Greater Manchester will also receive around £39 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Two CCTV projects in the Rochdale CDRP area received a total of £209,536 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £1.6 million has been allocated to Rochdale CDRP under these initiatives. A further £1.8 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the North West for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Rochdale set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Rochdale a total of 54 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 17 February 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and their policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library). Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focussing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Rochdale has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drug Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Rochdale Drug Action Team amounted to £2.04 million, rising to £2.31 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Rochdale constituency can be obtained from the Rochdale Drug Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

Rochdale was one of the founder members of the Home Office's Civic Pioneers network which now includes 14 local authorities in England. As a 'Civic Pioneer', a local authority shows its commitment to involving and engaging local people in decision making processes and in the design and delivery of local services, so that their involvement in local decision-making can be more diverse, constructive, sustained and rewarding. Rochdale has pioneered devolution to Area Forums and has been innovative in devising ways to engage and motivate young people at risk of offending, through schemes like Junior Wardens and projects to improve the local environment.

To support strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued, the Home Office funded a Community Cohesion Pathfinder in Rochdale over 18 months from April 2003. This invested £150,000 via the local authority and £90,000 via voluntary and community sector partners. The Rochdale Community Cohesion Pathfinder focused on the complexity, diversity and distinctiveness of the local communities and put community partnership at the centre of the programme. Activities engaged a broad cross of people in the borough and included cultural and sports projects, local voluntary and community activity and activities developed by young people themselves. Examples of activity are the Sports United project which targeted territorialism and tension among local young people through the medium of sport and the Multi-faith partnership which promoted dialogue, learning and understanding between different faiths. Rochdale local authority achieved Beacon status for community cohesion.

This year, 2005, is the year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org .

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Entry Clearance (Students)

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many student applications for entry clearance from *(a)* the Indian sub-continent, *(b)* Africa, *(c)* the United States, *(d)* Canada, *(e)* Australia and *(f)* New Zealand there were in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004; how many were (A) granted and (B) refused; how many successful appeals there were against refusal; when he introduced fees for in-country variation of leave for students; and what assessment he has made of the reasons for the change in the number of students coming to the UK between 2002 and 2003. [217616]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

The information on student applications for entry clearance, which are issued and refused for the specified areas, is as follows:

	Visas	April 2001 to March 2002 Issued	April 2001 to March 2002 Refused	April 2002 to March 2003 Issued	April 2002 to March 2003 Refused	April 2003 to March 2004 Issued	April 2003 to March 2004 Refused
(a)	Indian Sub-Continent[1]	16,192	10,502	18,808	14,331	29,409	25,827
(b)	Africa	19,864	8,978	20,551	14,363	19,312	20,501
(c)	US	658	6	699	8	1,917	33
(d)	Canada	219	1	294	1	612	3
(e)	Australia	363	2	355	1	412	2
(f)	New Zealand	74	5	62	7	78	20

[1] Comprised of Chennai (Madras), Colombo, Dhaka, Islamabad, Karachi, Kathmandu, Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai (Bombay), New Delhi.

Figures for April 2004 to March 2005 are not yet available. When they are, they can be found, along with further entry clearance statistics, on the UKvisas website at www.ukvisas.gov.uk—"Entry Clearance: Facts and Figures". The figures provided represent pre-entry applications and show a general increase in issues and refusals. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not have figures detailing the number of successful appeals that were made against decisions to refuse entry clearance.

The Home Office introduced fees for in-country leave to remain applications in August 2003. A joint project undertaken recently by the Home Office, the Department for Education and Skills, and the British Council includes an assessment of the impact of the charges on the numbers of international students coming to the UK (see particularly Sections 5 and 6 of the report). The report was published on the Home Office website on 7 February 2005 and is available at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk (Link through "News"—to "Press Releases and Announcements"—to "2005 IND Fee Review"—to "Improving the Evidence on International Students").

EU Directive 2004/81

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 741W on EU Directive 2004/81, if he will publish the review undertaken. [217585]

Mr. Browne: The cross Whitehall review referred to in my response to the hon. Member, 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 741W, was an internal process and was not intended for publication.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what categories of information are available

under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207835]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Leslie) on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215217]

Fiona Mactaggart: Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and non-departmental public bodies should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate.

Both our policy and our Publication Scheme is currently being developed to ensure that where information releases are likely to be of interest to the wider public the information is routinely and simultaneously disclosed on the departmental website, and additional classes considered for inclusion within the Publication Scheme, where it is appropriate. We do not currently have plans to place copies of released information in the Library.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions when considering requests to his Department for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 it has been necessary to extend the statutory reply period beyond 20 working days because of consideration of whether the request might result in a breach of national security. [214643]

Fiona Mactaggart: For the period from 1 January to 4 February, there has been one case in the Home Office where we have written to the applicant, extending the deadline because we are considering the public interest test in relation to the exemption contained within s.24 (national security).

Initiatives (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget has been allocated to the Home Office Internal Communications Unit in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Unit in each year. [201893]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office Internal Communication Unit's budget was £1.593 million in the financial year 2003–04, when it employed 19 staff.

In 2004–05 the Unit's budget was £1.619 million and 21 staff were employed.

Religious Qualifications

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the outcome of his consultations with faith groups on his Department's proposal to introduce religious qualification requirements for those seeking admission as a Minister of Religion. [216801]

Fiona Mactaggart: We have carried out extensive consultation with faith bodies and representatives about the introduction of a pre-entry English language requirement for Ministers of Religion from abroad that came into effect last August. Individuals now applying for leave to enter the United Kingdom as Ministers of Religion are required to demonstrate that they are competent in the use of spoken English, to level 4 of the International Language Testing System, this will be raised to level 6 after two-years.

We will shortly begin a further stage of consultation with faith communities on other requirements the Government are considering introducing to ensure that Ministers of Religion admitted from abroad are able to play a full role in their communities and gain an understanding and appreciation of British civic life. An announcement about the launch of this consultation will be made in February.

Rural Policing Fund

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to expand in real terms the Rural Policing Fund. [214466]

Ms Blears: There are no plans to expand the Rural Policing Fund. We consider it is fairer to put any increases in grant into the main £4.6 billion Home Office general police grant provision. The Rural Policing Fund remains a discrete £30 million pot outside the main formula grant arrangements for 2005–06. It is paid to 31 police authorities.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the New Grant Programme for small and medium-sized (SME) enterprises to be launched on 26 January by the Home Office is applicable to SMEs in Scotland. [209145]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The Payroll Giving Grant Programme does apply to SME's in Scotland and a dedicated launch event took place in Scotland on 2 February.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215093]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Staff identity passes for the Office are produced by the Scottish Executive and separate costs of production are not available. Details of passes lost or stolen are only available from January 2003; the information is as follows.

Period	Lost	Stolen
2002–03[1]	1	0
2003–04	3	1

[1] Part year only.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many publications his Department has produced in each of the last six years; how many copies of each publication were made; and what the total cost of producing each set of documents was. [210651]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Information on publications is set out in the following table; this does not include a number of documents currently on the Office website which were produced solely for web-based consultation or printing.

Year	Title	Number of copies	Cost (£)
1999–2000	Comparisons of Motoring Taxation Costs Across Europe	200 (estimate)	4,500
2000–01	The Scotland Office Departmental Report 2000	150	2,000
	The Scotland Office Resource Accounts 1999–2000	30	151
2001–02	Scotland Office Winter Supplementary Estimate 2001–02	50	2,200
	Friends of Scotland	1,000	4,171
	The Scotland Office Departmental Report 2001	150	3,160
	The Scotland Office Resource Accounts 2000–01	55	2,323
2002–03	The Size of the Scottish Parliament—a consultation	750	1,007
	Sunday Working in Scotland—a consultation	750	1,250
	The Scotland Office Departmental Report 2002	150	3,869
	The Scotland Office Resource Accounts 2001–02	55	2,346
2003–04	The Scotland Office Departmental Report 2003	150	4,036
	The Scotland Office Resource Accounts 2002–03	60	2,142
2004–05	The Scotland Office Annual Report 2004	150	4,119
	The Scotland Office Resource Accounts 2003–04	61	1,999
	Fifth Periodical Report of the Boundary Commission for Scotland	500	7,374

Gaelic Language

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what his Department's policy is on the use of the Gaelic language; and what plans his Department has to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme. [217096]

Mrs. McGuire: As I confirmed to the hon. Member at Scottish questions on 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1331, the Scotland Office has been working closely with colleagues in Whitehall and the Scottish Executive on the voluntary arrangements for UK bodies in Scotland to reflect the spirit of the Scottish Parliament's legislative proposals on Gaelic language schemes.

The Scotland Office attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of the Gaelic language in line with the UK's obligations under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

Gaelic Language

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Advocate-General what her Department's policy is on the use of the Gaelic language; and what plans her Department has to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme. [217090]

Dr. Lynda Clark: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* EDS and Fujitsu jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much; over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211606]

Mr. Miliband: The following contracts were awarded to EDS Ltd. and Fujitsu in 2002–03 and 2003–04.

EDS Ltd:

For: An Emergency Communications Network

This contract was originally let in October 2000 by the Home Office, through the Government Telecommunications Catalogue. The contract was transferred to the Cabinet Office in February 2002, and was extended by the Cabinet Office in October 2003 for a further two years to November 2005.

Value: As this contract is still current, this information is regarded as commercially confidential.

Fujitsu:

For: A Risk Analysis Study

Competitively Tendered: Yes

Value: Approximately £24,000

Duration: October 2002 to December 2002

For: Development of an Information Strategy

Competitively Tendered: Yes

Value: Approximately £140,000

Duration: March 2003 to June 2003

For: Audit of Secure Computer Systems in Emergency Room

Competitively Tendered: No, in view of the value of the contract and the swift resolution required, a single-tender action was taken using Fujitsu. Fujitsu were able to provide information technology engineers who were already security cleared, which was a necessary requirement of this contract.

Value: Approximately £4,700

Duration: Five days in May 2003

For: A Scoping Study for a Management Information System

Competitively Tendered: Sourced from S-CAT

Value: Approximately £100,000

Duration: February 2004 to April 2004

No joint contracts were awarded to EDS Ltd. and Fujitsu.

The Cabinet Office awards contracts in open competition according to the EU Procurement Regulations, based on best value for money.

Government Car and Despatch Agency

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent on overtime pay to drivers from the Government Car and Despatch Agency in each year since 1997. [215113]

Mr. Miliband: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car and Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr. Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Waste

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the status is of the review of co-ordination of interdepartmental responsibility for waste policy and the possible establishment of a strategic waste authority; and what plans there are to publish the review findings. [217602]

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what has been the outcome of the review conducted by his office of the scope for improving the co-ordination of interdepartmental responsibilities for waste policy; and what plans he has for its publication. [218771]

Mr. Miliband: The Strategy Unit's report "Waste not Want Not: a Strategy for Tackling the Waste Problem in England" concluded that there should be a review to assess the merits of focusing all central government's waste policy in one Department. The Cabinet Office was invited by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs to conduct this review. The conclusions of the review will be published in due course.

HEALTH

Alcohol-related Emergencies

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* binge drinking and *(b)* other alcohol-related emergency cases there were in hospitals in *(a)* England and *(b)* Romford and Havering in the last period for which figures are available. [219369]

Dr. Ladyman: These data are held collectively by counts of finished admission episodes for in-patients for alcohol-related cases where the admission method was emergency. Figures for binge drinking are not held centrally.

The table shows data for finished admission episodes in England and Barking, Havering and Redbridge hospitals national health service trust, which operates in Romford and Havering.

Count of finished admission episodes (alcohol-related[1])—NHS hospitals in England 2003–04

		Finished admission episodes
RF4	Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust	563
	England	103,918

[1] ICD-10 codes = "alcohol-related" as advised by NHS Information Authority clinical coding service. Counts include any of the records where the following listed codes are recorded in the primary or secondary field.

Primary diagnosis:

F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol.

R78.0—Finding of alcohol in blood.

T51.0—Ethanol.

Secondary diagnosis:

F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol.

R78.0—Finding of alcohol in blood.

X45—Alcohol poisoning and exposure to alcohol.

Y90—Evidence of alcohol involvement determined by alcohol level.

Notes:

1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
3. As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.
4. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

Ambulance Service

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he issues about the number of ambulances per head of population that should be on call at any one time. [219413]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No recent guidance has been issued about the number of ambulances per head of population that should be on call at any one time.

Each ambulance service should plan to provide appropriate resources to meet local demand. This may include resources in addition to ambulance provision, for example using community paramedics or emergency care practitioners.

The "Ambulance improvement checklist" includes a section on information management, which refers for example to; matching supply and demand on an hourly

basis by good use of information and establishing systems to analyse and predict demand and resulting capacity requirement throughout the trust on a dynamic basis. The checklist is intended as an aid to all national health service ambulance trusts and their staff to ensure that all possible steps are being taken to improve and streamline the care of patients presenting to emergency care, and is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/05/07/60/04050760.pdf.

Aneurysm

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to introduce an NHS national screening programme for aneurysm. [217954]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The United Kingdom national screening committee (NSC) is currently considering the feasibility of implementing a screening programme for abdominal aortic aneurysms, including the implications for the national health service. This follows a multi centre study funded by the Medical Research Council.

The NSC is expected to advise later in the year.

Cardiac Care (Essex)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cardiac-related emergency cases have been treated in hospitals in Romford and Havering in each year since 1997. [219365]

Dr. Ladyman: A count of finished consultant episodes for in-patients for cardiac-related operations where the admission method was emergency at Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals National Health Service Trust is shown in the table. The trust operates in Romford and Havering.

Counts do not include those elective patients who undergo an emergency treatment.

Count of finished consultant episodes for selected providers. Method of admission—emergency. Main operation—heart operations defined as OPCS-4 between K01 to K71. NHS Hospitals in England 1996–97 to 2003–04

	RG4 Redbridge Healthcare NHS Trust	*RG7 Havering Healthcare NHS Trust*	*RF4 Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust*	*Total*
1996–97	48	74	—	122
1997–98	46	55	—	100
1998–99	52	62	—	114
1999–2000	65	40	—	105
2000–01	54	20	—	74
2001–02	—	—	97	97
2002–03	—	—	82	82
2003–04	—	—	208	208

Notes:

1. A finished consultant episode is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

2. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2002–03 and 2003–04, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

3. The main operation is the first recorded operation in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, eg time waited, but the figures for "all operations count of episodes" give a more complete count of episodes with an operation.

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

CFS/ME

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his most recent estimate is of the incidence of chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis *(a)* in England and *(b)* in Worcestershire. [218902]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not hold the information requested on the incidence of chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis.

Departmental Policies (Stourbridge)

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the Stourbridge constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on the Stourbridge constituency. [219416]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Stourbridge constituency.

For example:

At the end of December 2004, the number of people waiting more than six months for in-patient treatment within Dudley South Primary Care Trust (PCT) has fallen to three, from 327 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Dudley South PCT has fallen to two, from 209 in June 2002.

In September 2002, at the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, 85.5 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or

discharge. Figures for December 2004 show an improvement to 96.5 per cent.

The latest figures, September 2004, show that all urgent general practitioner referrals with suspected cancer are seen by a specialist within two weeks.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Dudley South PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a GP within two working days and a primary care professional within one working day.

Russell's Hall Hospital, part of the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, is a new £160 million private finance initiative-funded hospital due to be officially opened later this year.

A new computed tomography scanner was delivered to the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust in January 2005.

Between September 1997 and June 2004, the number of consultants working at the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 84 to 105. Between September 1997 and September 2003, the number of nurses has increased from 1,087 to 1,112.

Between September 2001 and June 2004, the number of general medical practitioners within the Dudley South PCT has increased from 120 to 130.

Chorley Hospital

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been treated for cancer at Chorley Hospital in the last five years. [216206]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not collected in the format requested. The table shows the number of patients treated for cancer at Chorley and South Ribble National Health Service Trust, Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. Chorley and South Ribble District Hospital was previously part of Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust and is now part of Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

Provider of Treatment		*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
RJU	Chorley and South Ribble NHS trust	—	1,542	1,631	n/a	n/a
RMF	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS trust	8,338	7,470	5,336	n/a	n/a
RXN	Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,611	5,927
Unique patients[1]	8,338	8,673	6,770	6,611	5,927	

[1] This is not the sum of the counts for each trust, since a patient may be treated by more than one trust.

Notes:

1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
3. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
4. Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HESID. This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

Providers of treatment:
RJU—Chorley and South Ribble National Health Service Trust
RMF—Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
RXN—Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
Primary diagnosis: (ICD-10 C00-D48) Cancer Neoplasms—counts of finished admission episodes and patients. NHS hospitals, 1999–2000 to 2003–04

Source:
HES, Department of Health.

Co-proxamol

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department will maintain approval for Co-proxamol for those patients who have intolerance to other painkillers. [217484]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are a number of alternatives for managing painful conditions and the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) has issued advice on pain management options to assist prescribers together with individual patients, in choosing appropriate pain management strategies. This guidance also refers to a number of sources of additional advice including the British National Formulary, which is sent to all doctors and pharmacists.

The CSM's overview of alternative analgesic options was communicated though the Chief Medical Officer's public health link to all health care professionals, accompanying the communication on the withdrawal of co-proxamol and is available on the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's website www.mhra.gov.uk. Copies have been placed in the Library.

It has been agreed with the manufacturers to withdraw co-proxamol over an extended period of time in order to allow long term users an opportunity to adopt suitable alternative pain management strategies. At the end of the phased withdrawal and following the cancellation or withdrawal of the Marketing Authorisations for existing products, the provision would remain for the supply of unlicensed preparations to individual patients on the clinical responsibility primarily of a patient's doctor.

Exempted Prescriptions

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes have been made over the last two years to the guidance issued to the NHS Counter Fraud Compliance Unit on *(a)* recovery of incorrectly exempted prescriptions, *(b)* recovery of incorrectly exempted prescriptions from incapacity benefit claimants, *(c)* the bringing of cases to the civil courts and *(d)* the recovery of past debts and costs. [218026]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No changes have been made to guidance issued to the national health service counter fraud and security management service (CFSMS)

compliance unit regarding recovery of funds lost due to incorrect claims to exemption in relation to prescription charges.

Guidance was issued in 2004 regarding incapacity benefit claimants, directing the compliance unit to urge patients to make a claim under the Low Income Scheme where they were found to have made an incorrect claim for exemption, and to only recover the cost of the prescription if their claim to exemption was successful. In cases where claimants are not successful, a penalty charge will be applied.

During the financial year 2003–04, a review of the compliance unit systems was carried out by CFSMS to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the unit.

The process for the compliance unit taking cases to the civil courts for recovery was specifically reviewed to assess whether use of the court represented best value for money to CFSMS in the recovery of debts and whether the costs of the unit could be reduced.

In August 2003, the compliance unit was advised not to take any further cases to the civil courts as the review showed that the process cost 10 times more than the amount that was actually recovered.

Gender Dysphoria

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he has given to primary care trusts on ensuring that patients with gender dysphoria are able to access assessment and treatment on the same basis as other patients with a mental illness. [218731]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Guidance on gender dysphoria was included in the national definitions set for specialised services; this suggests that primary care trusts should commission such services collectively. Specialised services for mental health, including services for people with gender dysphoria, are being reviewed by Professor Louis Appleby, the national director for mental health. A report is due in May.

Heart Disease (Women)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps the NHS takes to encourage women to have regular blood pressure checks; [217955]

(2) what steps the Department is taking to raise awareness of the risks of cardiac disease in women. [217956]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Standards one to four of the national service framework for coronary heart disease, published in March 2000, set out a comprehensive programme of action for the management of risks associated with heart disease including high blood pressure, for both men and women. The Department is working with the national health service, local government, the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders to ensure improved awareness and better management of risks for all patients at risk of cardiovascular illness.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people in England *(a)* have AIDS and *(b)* are HIV positive; [217472]

(2) what the average life expectancy of someone with AIDS is; and what it was in 1990; [217473]

(3) what percentage of new HIV cases in England in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004 were not British citizens. [217475]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In 2003, the latest year for which figures are available, there were 34,103 individuals with diagnosed HIV infection living in England, 8,056 of whom were reported as having AIDS, and a further 246 with a diagnosis of an AIDS defining illness who were reported as having died during that year. Estimates for the total number of adults living with HIV—undiagnosed and diagnosed—are available for the United Kingdom. In 2003, it was estimated that in total 53,000 adults were living with HIV in the UK.

National HIV surveillance figures do not include information about nationality, citizenship or residency status.

Highly active antiretroviral therapies (HAART) became available in the mid-1990s. HIV infection can be well controlled if infection is diagnosed and appropriate treatment with these therapies is given. There is no sign of any decline in the effectiveness of HAART at a population level. Although it is not possible to estimate precisely the life expectancy of individuals whose HIV infections have been diagnosed and who are receiving HAART, the availability of these treatments has greatly prolonged the life expectancy of those diagnosed with HIV (and AIDS).

In 1990 (before the introduction of HAART), and in people today whose HIV infection is not diagnosed or is not treated, life expectancy varies considerably. It is estimated that the average time between HIV infection and developing AIDS is 10 years and from AIDS diagnosis to death is 18 months to two years.

Hospital Funding (Essex)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funds have been allocated to hospitals in Romford and Havering in each year since 1997. [219367]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not make revenue allocations to national health service trusts. Revenue allocations are made to primary care trusts, which are responsible for commissioning services from NHS trusts, such as those provided by Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust, to meet the needs of their local population.

International Recruitment

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many private sector healthcare providers have signed up to the NHS Code of Practice for the international recruitment of healthcare professionals; and how many private sector healthcare providers there are. [218454]

Mr. Hutton: The Code of Practice for international recruitment of healthcare professionals has been signed up to by both the Independent Healthcare Forum and the Registered Nursing Home Association. Both these organisations represent many independent healthcare providers. The number and names of these providers is not collated by the Department.

Data related to the number of independent sector healthcare providers are not held centrally by the Department.

Living Wills

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the policy of Hammersmith and Fulham Hospital is in relation to providing living wills to patients; and if he will make a statement; [218754]

(2) how many NHS hospitals provide living wills to patients. [218755]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on how many national health service hospitals provide living wills to patients is not collected centrally.

Healthcare professionals will discuss possible treatment options with a patient as part of the treatment process and this should, where an individual's condition makes it appropriate, include how they would like to be treated if or when they become incapacitated. Individual trusts will decide what arrangements to have in place locally.

Mental Health Care

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 164W, on mental health, how many NHS trusts *(a)* supplement the income of and *(b)* provide goods in kind for people in hospital for more than a year. [218292]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many trained medical doctors there have been in mental health facilities in Romford and Havering constituencies in each year since 1997. [219366]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the table.

Data held by the Department are not broken down by mental health facilities but by the number of hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) staff within the psychiatry group of specialties for each trust.

Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals National Health Service Trust and East London Mental Health Trust are the two trusts operating in Romford and Havering.

There are no staff in Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust within the psychiatry group of specialities and the Department only has figures dating back to 2001 for North East London Mental Health Trust.

HCHS staff within the psychiatry group of specialties—as at 30 September each year

North East London Mental Health NHS Trust RAT	*Number (headcount)*
2001	102
2002	96
2003	71

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Naltrexone

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if his Department will conduct trials of the use of low-dose naltrexone in the treatment of multiple sclerosis; and if he will make a statement on its availability on the NHS; [215112]

(2) what trials have taken place of low dose Naltrexone (LDN) for the treatment of multiple sclerosis; and if he will make a statement on the availability on the NHS of LDN for sufferers of MS. [217518]

Dr. Ladyman: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, which is responsible for ensuring that all new medicines and medical devices sold in the United Kingdom meet appropriate standards of safety, quality and efficacy, is unaware of any clinical trials having taken place in the United Kingdom using low-dose naltrexone in the treatment of multiple sclerosis. It is aware that a small trial, funded by a charity, is under consideration.

In the UK, naltrexone is currently only licensed for the treatment of opiate dependency. Nevertheless, there is provision in both UK and European legislation, which allows doctors to prescribe, on their own direct personal responsibility, a specially prepared medicinal product for administration on a "named patient" basis where they consider it necessary to meet a special clinical need.

NHS Funding

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his oral statement of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1503–18, on NHS funding, what the total expenditure on the National Programme for IT in England by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* primary care trusts will be in each financial year from 2003–04 to 2007–08. [217072]

Mr. Hutton: The Department's actual/planned expenditure on the national programme for information technology for the years in question is shown in the table. The figures are on a resource accounting basis and therefore include the cost of capital charges and depreciation of fixed assets.

	Amount (£ million)
2003–04	102
2004–05	404
2005–06	1,873
2006–07	1,968
2007–08	1,796

Estimates for primary care trust expenditure are not held centrally.

NHS Performance

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the URL on his Department's website which allows users to view the guide to NHS performance in each parliamentary constituency. [215855]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* The Department publishes on its website information on national health service organisations,

which includes some performance data. This information is in the form of NHS factsheets, which can be viewed by NHS region and by parliamentary constituency. The URL is: www.dh.gov.uk/nhsfactsheets.

NHS factsheets are internal Departmental briefing sheets on individual strategic health authorities and NHS trusts. They contain organisational information, contact details and selected published statistical information. NHS factsheets are updated regularly.

The Department first published these factsheets on its website on 3 December 2004 as part of the Departments commitment to openness under Freedom of Information. They have been available to anybody willing to access the website since then.

Obesity Clinics (West Midlands)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many obesity clinics there are in the West Midlands region; and what the waiting times were for those clinics in the latest year for which figures are available. [218041]

Dr. Ladyman: There is one national health service obesity clinic and one NHS child obesity clinic in the West Midlands. Both are at Heartlands hospital, part of the Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull NHS Trust.

Waiting times data for obesity clinics are not held centrally.

Prisons

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prisons in *(a)* Yorkshire and *(b)* England and Wales have mental health in-reach teams; and if he will make a statement. [218661]

Dr. Ladyman: 13 prison establishments in Yorkshire have mental health in-reach teams and a mental health nurse visits the fourteenth, Askham Grange, on one day a week. Such teams are now in operation at over 100 establishments in England and Wales.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the report of the Health Protection Agency on infection rates for respiratory syncytial virus; and if he will take steps to ensure that a higher priority is given to preventive treatment for the virus in premature babies. [218435]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department receives weekly updates on respiratory syncytial virus incidence from the Health Protection Agency. Recommendations on the use of paluvizumab were made by the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation at its November 2002 meeting. Details can be found on the Department's website at: www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/jcvi/mins01nov02.htm.

Scans (Alliance Medical)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from NHS bodies on time taken to report *(a)* scans and *(b)* incidence of double reporting of scans for a second opinion under the mobile scanning contract with Alliance Medical; what assessment his Department has made of the effect of *(a)* and *(b)* on requirements for hospital consultants to undertake follow-up appointments after scans performed by Alliance Medical; and if he will make a statement. [215715]

Mr. Hutton: The Department has regular contact with national health service bodies through strategic health authority (SHA) cluster leads. As a result, Alliance Medical Ltd. is ensuring that two qualified radiologists read all scans. This high quality oversight of reading is setting best practice.

It is the responsibility of local hospital consultants and general practitioners to ensure that the process of follow up appointments is managed effectively and that patients are seen quickly once their scan has been performed.

Treatment Costs

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the NHS of treating *(a)* fractures of all types, *(b)* multiple sclerosis, *(c)* cancer, *(d)* non-melanoma skin cancer and *(e)* melanoma was in the last year for which figures are available. [217055]

Mr. Hutton: With the exception of cancer, this information is not available centrally. The Department's resource accounts shows gross expenditure on cancer in 2003–04 as £3.4 billion.

Variola Virus Research

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the letter of 6 January from the Minister of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Hutton), to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), on variola virus research, what the outcome was of the meeting of Government Departments to which he refers. [217680]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]*: The meeting is scheduled for 4 March and will be hosted by the Ministry of Defence.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan/Iraq

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of the change in RFR2 Resource relates *(a)* solely and *(b)* mainly to peacekeeping in (i) Afghanistan and (ii) Iraq. [218319]

Mr. Ingram: The amounts included in the MOD's Spring Supplementary Estimates under Request for Resources 2 (Conflict Prevention costs) for Iraq and Afghanistan are as follows:

	£ million
Operations in Iraq	975
Operations in Afghanistan	53

These figures represent a current estimate of the net additional cost of these operations in the current financial year.

Armoured Vehicles

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the operational date is of the Panther armoured reconnaissance vehicle. [208298]

Mr. Ingram: We expect Panther to be introduced into service by November 2007. Panther is not, however, primarily a reconnaissance vehicle. As the original name of the project, the Future Command and Liaison Vehicle, suggests, it will be mainly used for a variety of command and liaison roles.

Bowman System

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when Bowman was first used by British forces in Iraq; and who provided the training for its use. [218132]

Mr. Ingram: The first radios delivered as part of the Bowman project were Personal Role Radios, which have been in service since January 2002. They were used by combat troops and others in March 2003.

The first use of Bowman PRC325 High Frequency manpacked patrol radios in Iraq was in December 2004. Training for the operators of the PRC325s was provided by Harris Comms Plc under contract from General Dynamics UK Ltd.

Casualty Treatment Ship

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to commission the building of a joint casualty treatment ship. [218445]

Mr. Ingram: The Joint Casualty Treatment Ship programme is currently in its assessment phase. No decision has been made concerning the placement of a contract for demonstration and manufacture.

Chinook Crash

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of all memoranda, letters and emails between the Chief of the Air Staff, the Air Officer Commanding No. 1 Group, Air Officer Commander in Chief Strike Command, members of the RAF Directorate of Legal Services, the Inspector of Flight Safety and the President of the Board of Inquiry into the crash of ZD576, between 2 June 1994 and 5 April 1995. [217788]

Mr. Ingram: The documents requested are being collated from four separate branches within the Ministry of Defence and the files will need to be recovered from archive, which will therefore take some extra time to complete. I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there was a meeting between the Chief of the Air Staff, the Air Officer Commanding No. 1 Group, Air Officer Commander in Chief Strike Command, and the Inspector of Flight Safety to discuss the Board of Inquiry into the crash of ZD576. [217790]

Mr. Ingram: A search of available records has provided no evidence that a meeting involving all the named officials took place.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who gave the authorisation for senior anti-terrorist specialists to travel together on the flight in Chinook ZD576, which crashed on 2 June 1994. [217819]

Mr. Ingram: There was no requirement for specific authorisation to be given in respect of the number of senior personnel to be carried on the flight. However, we know from evidence given to the Board of Inquiry that the flight was carried out under instruction from the Joint Air Tasking Operation Cell.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library all special flying instructions that applied to the flight of Chinook ZD576 on 2 June 1994. [219458]

Mr. Ingram: There were no special flying instructions that applied to the flight of Chinook ZD576.

Cooneen Watts & Stone

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people Cooneen Watts & Stone employed in *(a)* December 2003 and *(b)* December 2004. [218497]

Mr. Ingram: Cooneen Watts & Stone (CWS) Ltd. was formed in February 2004 from Watts & Stone Ltd. and Cooneen Textiles Ltd., as a Special Purpose Vehicle for the cut and sew garment contract tender process. The number of people employed by CWS is a matter for the company.

Deaths in Service (Northern Ireland)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assistance he has made available to the Northern Ireland Veterans Association in identifying those who died in the Northern Ireland conflict. [217801]

Mr. Caplin: No request has been received from the Northern Ireland Veterans Association for assistance in gathering such information.

Defence Employment (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 the British Forces Post Office spent in Scotland in (i) monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total personnel budget; and if he will make a statement. [215946]

Mr. Ingram: Expenditure on personnel specifically based in Scotland by the British Forces Post Office was £136,801.92 in financial year 2002–03 and £145,952.75 in 2003–04, representing 1.1 per cent. of the Agency's total personnel costs in each year. Excluding personnel serving overseas and at the BFPO main sorting office, which is based in London due to the proximity of the MOD HQ and Heathrow and Gatwick airports, personnel based in Scotland accounted for 8.5 per cent. and 8.7 per cent. of the total in each of the years in question.

Defence Export Services Organisation

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Defence Export Services Organisation has been asked *(a)* to supply information to and *(b)* to co-operate with the Serious Fraud Office

in respect of its investigation into allegations of bribery and false accounting concerning BAe Systems and Saudi Arabian officials. [207744]

Mr. Ingram: Details of the existence of any such request or inquiry are properly a matter for the Serious Fraud Office. However, the Defence Export Services Organisation co-operates fully with any requests from authorities investigating allegations of bribery and corruption.

Defence Service Agencies (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people work for the Defence Storage and Distribution Agency; how many are employed in Scotland; what the personnel costs of the agency are; and what the figures were in 2003–04. [215432]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Storage and Distribution Agency currently employs 4,160 people of which 660 work in Scotland. In 2003–04 the numbers were 4,530 and 810 respectively.

Personnel costs in 2003–04 were £117.2 million and the forecast for this year is £111.6 million.

Departmental Finances

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of quarterly progress reports provided to the Treasury against Spending Review 2002 Public Service Agreement Targets for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the first three quarters of 2004–05. [217993]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 599–600W.

DESO

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many times in the last 12 months the Defence Export Services Organisation has provided advice to BAe Systems on *(a)* agents and *(b)* agents' commission. [207792]

Mr. Ingram: It is the policy of the Ministry of Defence not to advise companies on agents' commissions. On the selection of agents, if Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) has information likely to assist United Kingdom companies, our policy is to make this available. Provision of such advice is part of normal DESO business and is not centrally recorded.

Disposal Services Agency

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 the Disposal Services Agency spent in Scotland (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total personnel budget; and if he will make a statement. [214249]

Mr. Ingram: The figures are as follows.

Financial year	*Personnel costs for DSA staff based in Scotland (£000)*	*Expressed as a percentage of total DSA personnel costs*
2002–03	100	2.8
2003–04	124	3.3

FRES

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Future Rapid Effects System to be operational. [218138]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Rapid Effect System (FRES) is now in its initial Assessment Phase. Studies being carried out during this phase will enable us to define an appropriate In-Service Date (ISD) in both capability and schedule terms for endorsement at Main Gate.

The ISD will not be formally endorsed until then, but our current planning assumption is that the early variants of FRES will be introduced to service early in the next decade, with a phased approach to achieving full operational capability thereafter.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the viability of Gibraltar as a UK base. [217598]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is fully committed to Gibraltar, its security and its outputs in support of UK military operations. Over the last six months, there has been over a 25 per cent. increase in air and maritime movements.

Helicopters

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many helicopters are in service; and how many he expects will be in service in 2012; [218139]

(2) how many different types of helicopters are in service with UK armed forces; and what the length of in-service life of each is. [218133]

Mr. Ingram: The Department currently operates the following types of helicopter:

Helicopter type	*Fleet size*	*In-service date*	*Planned out of service date*
Attack Helicopter	67	[1] 2001	2030
Chinook Mk 2	34	1993	2015
Chinook Mk 2a	6	2000	2025
Lynx Mk 7	86	1977	2012
Lynx Mk 9	23	1992	2012
Lynx Mk 3	33	1976	2012
Lynx Mk 8	34	1994	2014
Merlin Mk 1	42	1999	2029
Merlin Mk 3	22	2000	2030
Puma Mk 1	45	1971	2010
Gazelle Mk 1	127	1973	2018
Sea King Mk 3	19	1978	2017
Sea King Mk 3a	6	1996	2017
Sea King Mk 4	37	1979	2012
Sea King Mk 5	16	1981	2017
Sea King Mk 6	4	1988	2006
Sea King Mk 6c	5	2004	2008
Sea King Mk 7	11	2002	2017
Agusta A109	4	1984	2008

[1] Initial Operating Capability declared 28 September 2004. Full Operating Capability due 2007.

In addition to the aircraft above, the department contracts for a Commercially Owned Military Registered (COMR) fleet of helicopters. These helicopters are on the Military Register and flown by military aircrew, but are owned and maintained by commercial operators.

Helicopter type and location	*Number*	*Contract let*	*Contract expires*
Bell 412/Shawbury	11	1997	2012
Bell 412/Cyprus	4	2003	2008
Bell 212/Belize	3	2003	2008
Bell 212/Brunei	3	1993	2008
Bell 212/Middle Wallop	1	2004	2007
Dauphin/Plymouth	2	1996	2007
Single Squirrel/Shawbury	27	1997	2012
Single Squirrel/Middle Wallop	10	1997	2012
Twin Squirrel (AS355F)/ Northolt	3	1995	2005
Twin Squirrel (AS355N)/ Northolt[1]	4	2006	2011
Sikorski S61N/Falklands	2	1983	2011

[1] Replacement contract for the AS355Fs based at Northolt.

Although planned out of service and contract expiry dates have been given, no decisions have yet been taken on the shape of the future helicopter programme, or the individual components within it. We hope to have a clearer idea of the way forward later this year. It is not at this stage possible to say exactly how many helicopters will be in service in 2012.

Hercules Disaster

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Defensive Aid Suite on the C130 Hercules lost in Iraq offered protection against medium-range missiles. [219040]

Mr. Ingram: The Hercules C130K that crashed in Iraq on 30 January had an enhanced defensive capability designed to provide protection against a wide range of missile systems.

Iraq

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many trained *(a)* soldiers and *(b)* police his Department estimates are available in Iraq; and if he will give *(a)* the source and *(b)* methodology used to calculate the figures. [218825]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* As at 14 February, the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior forces numbered some 79,000 trained and equipped personnel. This includes the Iraqi Police Service and the Department of Border Enforcement forces. The Iraqi Ministry of Defence forces numbered some 57,500 trained and equipped personnel. This includes the Army, Air Force and Coastal Defence Force.

These figures are collated on a regular basis by the Multinational Security Transition Command—Iraq.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his US counterparts over their plans to set up 14 permanent military bases in Iraq. [218827]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* Ministers at the Ministry of Defence are in continuous dialogue with all of our allies, including the United States, on a range of issues. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has had no discussions with his US counterparts on plans to set up permanent military bases in Iraq.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to the Questions tabled by the hon. Member for Oldham, West and Royton on *(a)* 10 January, reference 207744 and *(b)* 11 January, reference 207792. [218703]

Mr. Ingram: I replied to the hon. Member today.

Swan Hunter Contract

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1515, on the Swan Hunter contract, whether there is legal liability to his Department arising from the unsuccessful bidder referred to; and if he will make a statement. [217833]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence's competitive tendering process was applied equitably in the assessment of each company's bid, against the criteria specified in the Invitation To Tender. In accordance with those criteria the MOD selected the proposals including the design of the ship offered by Swan Hunter. The MOD does not consider that either the selection process or any subsequent variations create a legal liability to the unsuccessful bidders.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1515W, on the Swan Hunter contract, what role he played in finalising the revised programme costs on 8 December 2004; and if he will make a statement. [217909]

Mr. Ingram: The revised programme costs were considered and approved by the Minister for Defence Procurement and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, following approval from the Department's Investment Appraisals Board. The Board considered a Review Note recommendation prepared by departmental officials, outlining the various programme options and costings.

Tornado

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the funding allocation for the Sky Shadow Defensive Aid System for the Tornado aircraft has been changed. [219042]

Mr. Ingram: The required level of support for all Electronic Warfare equipment is kept under regular review and funds are allocated accordingly. In the case of the Tornado Skyshadow Defensive Aid System the Operational priorities, as detailed in the Customer Service Agreement between the Defence Logistics Organisation and the Operational Customer, are being met.

Trident

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether commanders of UK Trident

submarines are empowered to launch a nuclear missile in circumstances other than with the express authority of the Prime Minister. [218341]

Mr. Hoon: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made clear in the answer he gave on 28 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 774W, to the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Mr. Marsden), the use of the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons may be ordered only by the Prime Minister.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of potential risks arising from *(a)* an accident and *(b)* human error in relation to the transportation of nuclear warheads within the naval base on the Clyde; [218348]

(2) what estimate he has made of potential casualties in the west of Scotland arising from a catastrophic malfunction of a Trident nuclear warhead on a submarine based in the Clyde. [218347]

Mr. Hoon: At HM Naval Base Clyde, nuclear warhead handling, storage, transportation and fitting of components is carried out using rigidly controlled and approved procedures, and staff undertaking these activities undergo extensive training before they are designated competent to carry out the work. The potential risks arising from an accident and human error are therefore very low. It is also highly unlikely that a catastrophic malfunction of a nuclear warhead that involved nuclear yield (a high explosion and the release of radioactive material), would occur, whether onboard a submarine or elsewhere within the Naval Base.

Risks to employees, members of the public and the environment are routinely assessed during preparation of the Hazard Identification and Risk Evaluation (HIRE), which is the responsibility of the local authority and which is a requirement of the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 (REPPIR). Such planning is based on a vigorous precautionary approach and the chances of any incident happening, for which the REPPIR emergency plans have been prepared, have been assessed as highly unlikely.

US Defence Department (2006 Budget)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for which types of buildings, and at which locations in the United Kingdom, the US Department of Defense has sought financial appropriation in the fiscal year 2006 budget recently published; and whether permission has been granted for the construction of these structures. [217485]

Mr. Ingram: The US Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2006 budget submission separately identifies funding for: an office complex at RAF Mildenhall; a munitions storage facility and a separate munitions maintenance facility at RAF Lakenheath; and an operations/technical building at RAF Menwith Hill. There is also provision for other potential projects, but none of them are at a stage where internal or external permissions for construction have been sought.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218586]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office have a wide range of policies and support mechanisms in place to support staff who are suffering from serious illnesses. These include a generous occupational sick pay scheme, special leave, alternative working patterns and phased return to work arrangements. Reasonable adjustments which could help the individual are considered on a case by case basis. Where medical retirement is appropriate the individual will receive immediate payment of enhanced pension and lump sum.

All staff have access to the Welfare service and Occupational Health Service for support and advice. Some Departments have also introduced an external counselling service for staff.

Cannabis

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact that the reclassification of cannabis has had in Northern Ireland. [218225]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Government conducted a survey of statutory organisations, including the police, together with the community and voluntary sector, in April/May 2004 after the reclassification of cannabis from Class B to Class C to assess the impact of this change.

While the level of response from the various agencies was disappointing, the general view was that reclassification had had little impact on overall attitudes towards cannabis, both among young people and adults. There was no evidence to suggest that consumption had increased or that adults and young people were more open about their use of cannabis. There was however, a view that young people did not fully understand all the various terminology such as "reclassification", "de-criminalisation" and "legalisation".

Statistics from PSNI indicate that the number of prosecutions taken against younger people for possession of cannabis (both actual and pending) has not reduced since reclassification. While separate figures are not kept in relation to adults, there was a small reduction in the number of arrests for possession of Class C drugs, in the three months after reclassification when compared to the three months prior to this change in status.

As this legislative change took place over 12 months ago officials are currently preparing to undertake a further assessment of the impact.

Coiste na n-Iarchimi

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was given to the Republican ex-prisoners' umbrella group, Coiste na n-Iarchimi and its member groups in each of the last eight years. [214206]

Mr. Spellar: Records indicate the following amounts have been paid to Coiste na n-Iarchimi and its member groups in each year since 1998 by the Departments of the Northern Ireland administration and the Northern Ireland Office:

Financial year	*Amount paid (£)*
1998–99	592,626
1999–2000	1,847,640
2000–01	423,532
2001–02	782,107
2002–03	1,752,873
2003–04	1,207,017
2004–05[1]	553,529

[1] Figures for 2004–05 are from 1 April 2004 to 31 December 2004.

Information prior to 1 April 1998 was not readily available.

Deaf People (Public Service Delivery)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who the *(a)* members and *(b)* chairman is of the inter-departmental group established to oversee the delivery of public services to deaf and hard of hearing people in Northern Ireland; what the group's terms of reference are; whether the minutes of its meetings are published; and what reports it has published. [218666]

Angela Smith: In January 2004, a Sign Language Partnership Group was formed to allow Northern Ireland Government Departments to work with representatives of the Deaf community in Northern Ireland to identify and recommend a course of action to improve respect, understanding and tolerance of British and Irish Sign Languages (BSL and ISL).

The group is chaired by the Head of Cultural and Language Diversity Policy Branch in the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. Other members are from the following organisations:

The British Deaf Association, Royal National Institute for the Deaf, Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People, Hands that Talk, National Deaf Children's Society, Northern Ireland Deaf Youth Association, Deaf Senior Citizens and all Northern Ireland Government Departments.

Minutes of meetings are circulated to attendees.

Reports recommending action *(a)* to enhance the supply of BSL and ISL interpreters and tutors, in line with demand and *(b)* to raise awareness of BSL and ISL, have been prepared and approved.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on *(a)* the Domestic Energy Efficiency Scheme, *(b)* fuel poverty pilot projects, *(c)* the Warm Homes Scheme, *(d)* the Energy Efficiency Levy Programme, *(e)* winter fuel payments and *(f)* cold weather payments in each financial year since 1997–98. [218800]

Mr. Spellar: The level of expenditure in each financial year since 1997 on all such schemes is:

£

	The Domestic Energy Efficiency Scheme	*Fuel Poverty Pilot Projects*	*The Warm Homes Scheme*	*The Energy Efficiency Levy Programme*	*Winter Fuel Payments*	*Cold Weather Payments*
1997–98	2,545,677	0	0	0	5,700,000	0
1998–99	2,582,627	75,000	0	0	5,800,000	0
1999–2000	2,629,238	1,060,000	0	1,003,068	24,000,000	0
2000–01	2,604,302	500,000	0	1,190,132	56,000,000	1,650,000
2001–02	0	800,000	5,200,000	1,433,495	42,000,000	260,000
2002–03	0	500,000	7,952,000	3,043,063	42,700,000	260,000
2003–04	0	480,000	10,650,000	3,938,905	43,000,000	620,000
2004–05[1]	0	279,600	11,850,000	n/a	19,072,100	n/a

[1] The total spend for winter fuel payments and the NIE Energy Efficiency Levy Programme are not yet available for this financial year.

EU Grants

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent representations he has received about mismanagement of EU regional development grants; and if he will make a statement. [217276]

Mr. Pearson: There have been eight representations to Ministers about mismanagement of EU Structural Funds received within the last three months concerning EU Structural Funds Programmes. These representations concerned the decisions taken and procedures followed for the allocation of funding under the EU Programmes. EU funding supports a large number of projects and all such representations are thoroughly investigated and any necessary corrective action taken.

GPs

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many requests for general practitioner appointments there were in Northern Ireland in each of the past 15 years; and what the average waiting time for GP appointments was in each year. [218830]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many general practitioners there are in *(a)* North, *(b)* West, *(c)* East and *(d)* South Belfast per 10,000 population; and what the spending per capita on general practitioner provision is in the current financial year in each case. [218381]

Angela Smith: The information on the number of general practitioners in particular areas of Belfast is as follows:

Belfast locality	*Number of GPs per 10,000 population*
North Belfast	6.2
West Belfast	5.3
East Belfast	6.5
South Belfast	6.4

The information regarding the spending per capita on general practitioner provision in the current financial year will not be available until after the end of this financial year.

High Hedges

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will publish the consultation document on tackling the problems caused by high hedges in Northern Ireland. [218231]

Angela Smith: A consultation paper will be published in September 2005 to collect information about the scale of the nuisance high hedge problem in Northern Ireland. This will enable the Department to produce a regulatory impact assessment, and providing it supports a legislative solution, a policy consultation paper will then issue before Christmas seeking views on proposed legislation.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had about the extension to Northern Ireland of Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 governing nuisance hedges. [218232]

Angela Smith: There have been no recent discussions in relation on extending Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 to Northern Ireland.

Hospital Travel Costs Scheme

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will change the rules of the hospital travel costs scheme in Northern Ireland to enable cancer sufferers to reclaim the costs of travel to hospital. [218762]

Angela Smith: Patients who are also in receipt of certain state benefits, or are on a low income, may be entitled to reimbursement of hospital travel costs. Details are given in leaflet HC 11: "Are you entitled to help with health costs?"

The present scheme is directed towards those patients who do not have a medical need for ambulance transport, but who have difficulty meeting the cost of travel to hospital. It is not considered appropriate under such a scheme, which is based on financial need, to differentiate between patients with different medical conditions. The Department has no plans to amend the current hospital travel costs scheme to enable all cancer sufferers, by virtue of their illness, to recover the cost of travel to and from hospital.

The new cancer centre in Belfast city hospital, which is due to open in 2006, will include a patient hotel with 29 rooms, where cancer patients will be able to stay free of charge. Relatives will also be able to stay for a small fee. This should help reduce the amount of travelling required by some patients during their treatment cycles, with a consequent reduction in costs.

Hospital-acquired Infections

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions at each hospital trust in Northern Ireland in each of the last four years *(a)* an infection control team has recommended that a ward be closed immediately for cleaning and *(b)* that recommendation has been rejected; and if he will make a statement. [217113]

Angela Smith: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety does not collect or record details on hospital wards being closed for cleaning. From information obtained from Trusts there is no evidence of any infection control team's recommendation about closing wards for cleaning being rejected.

Housing

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action is being taken by the Department for Social Development to ensure that *(a)* the expenditure for the Housing Executive is clearly defined and prioritised in light of the recommendation of the Committee of Public Accounts and *(b)* that the Housing Executive undertakes economic appraisals. [219326]

Mr. Spellar: The Department for Social Development requires the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to clearly define expenditure priorities for the funding of homelessness services as part of its Homelessness Strategy, as recommended by the Committee of Public Accounts. The Department monitors Housing Executive performance on a regular basis and the specific recommendations of the Committee are reviewed quarterly as part of the accountability arrangements put in place to ensure that effective housing services are delivered.

With regard to economic appraisals, the Department for Social Development has directed the Housing Executive to carry out economic appraisals in accordance with current guidance, for all relevant investments.

Identity Cards

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he expects the implications of the Identity Cards Bill for the common travel area will be tabled for consideration at a future meeting of the British-Irish Governmental Conference; and if he will make a statement. [218228]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Irish Government raised this matter at the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference held in Dublin on 2 March 2005.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he expects that the implications of the Identity Cards Bill for the common travel area will be tabled for consideration at a future meeting of the British-Irish Council Conference; and if he will make a statement. [218229]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The British Government have no plans to raise this matter at a future meeting of the British-Irish Council.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he expects the implications of the Identity Cards Bill for the common travel area and the land border to be tabled for consideration at a future meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council; and if he will make a statement. [218230]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The North South Ministerial Council cannot meet when Section 1 of the Northern Ireland Act 2000 is in force.

NHS Pension Review

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in the NHS pension review; and if he will make a statement. [219056]

Angela Smith: The National Health Services (NHS) Employer's Organisation has been leading a review of the NHS Pension Scheme for England and Wales in partnership with NHS employer and staff side representatives. The Review Partners have produced a consultation document setting out a number of options for a new NHS Scheme. The NHS consultation started on 10 January 2005, and will run for a period of three months.

The Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) Superannuation Scheme in Northern Ireland operates on a policy of parity with the NHS Scheme for England and Wales. In view of this the Department of Health, Social Services and Public safety is consulting on the proposals contained in the NHS (England and Wales) consultation document. Consultation in Northern Ireland commenced on 24 January 2005 and will run to 30 April 2005. The Department's HPSS Superannuation Branch is arranging presentations for HPSS management and staff representatives within each HPSS Board area.

The information contained in responses submitted to the Department will be published in a summary report of responses and will be passed also to colleagues involved in the NHS Pensions Review for England and Wales for consideration in the final decisions to be taken on the scheme.

Operating Theatres

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes have been initiated within the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety following the publication of the 2003 Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on The Use of Operating Theatres. [218380]

Angela Smith: Since publication of the Report in April 2003, the Department has required all Trusts to submit six-monthly updates on progress being made towards the implementation of the Report's recommendations. The most recent update indicated that 38 of the 43 recommendations in the Report have been fully implemented, and the other five have been partially implemented.

A number of changes have been initiated, in particular:

All Trusts now have a Theatre Manager, Theatre Director, and Theatre Users Committee in place;

A range of measures has been introduced to improve the planning of theatre sessions;

A regional Theatre Managers Forum has been established to develop theatre policies and protocols, and share good practice;

The Department has asked one Trust to take the lead in procuring a new computerised Theatre Management System to be introduced in all Trusts.

The utilisation of planned theatre sessions in Northern Ireland in 2003–04 increased to 95 per cent., exceeding the recommended target of 90 per cent. in the Bevan Report on the Management and Utilisation of Operating Departments.

Paediatric Gastroenterology Service

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in establishing a regional paediatric gastroenterology service for Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [216928]

Angela Smith: Until recently this service was provided on an out-patient basis in Belfast by a consultant paediatric gastroenterologist from Birmingham Children's Hospital. This has now ceased and, in the short-term, patients requiring access to a paediatric gastroenterology service are being referred to hospitals in Great Britain.

The sustainability of vulnerable regional specialties such as paediatric gastroenterology remains a key issue. The Royal Group of Hospitals Health and Social Services Trust has previously attempted to recruit a consultant paediatrician with an interest in gastroenterology, but this has proved unsuccessful.

The Department is continuing to work with Commissioners and the Royal Group of Hospitals Health and Social Services Trust on how best to provide the service in the long-term and is exploring the possibility of a Service Level Agreement with Birmingham Children's Hospital for the 2005–06 financial year.

Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the current full actuarial valuation of the liabilities of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) to be completed; and if he will place a statement on the conclusions of that valuation in the Library. [208660]

Mr. Pearson: At the request of the Department of Finance and Personnel, the Government Actuary carried out an actuarial valuation as at 31 March 2003 of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (PCSPS(NI)).

A statement on the conclusions of the valuation as at 31 March 2003 has not been placed in the Library however a copy of the yearly resource accounts have been, the latest being as at 31 March 2004. The resource accounts are produced in line with the Financial Reporting Standard 17 (FRS17), the accounting

standard for pension scheme liabilities, and contain an actuary report on the liabilities of the PCSPS(NI) as at 31 March 2004.

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Order

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Department of *(a)* Education, *(b)* Finance and Personnel, *(c)* Health Social Services and Public Safety and *(d)* Culture, Arts and Leisure will take to implement the requirements of accreditation contained in the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Order 2003, in relation to (i) non-departmental public bodies, (ii) next step agencies and (iii) grant funding for children's services. [218372]

Angela Smith: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has commissioned the Volunteer Development Agency to develop and pilot a framework of quality standards, which could be used in the accreditation process. The pilot is scheduled to end on 31 March 2005 and findings will be used to inform the Department's view as to how the accreditation agenda should be taken forward. The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety will consult other Departments and relevant key stakeholders on the way ahead.

Small Businesses

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many businesses that employ 60 people or fewer there are in each Northern Ireland constituency; how many people are employed by such small businesses in total; and how many new small businesses have been created in each year since 2000. [218310]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Roy Beggs, dated 2 March 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the number of businesses that employ 60 people or fewer in each Northern Ireland constituency; how many people are employed by such small businesses in total; and how many new small businesses have been created in each year since 2000. (218310)

The latest period for which the total number of small businesses is available is March 2004. The data requested are shown in Table 1, which I am placing in the House of Commons Library.

Further information about the number of businesses in the United Kingdom is available from the National Statistics publication "UK Business: Activity, Size and Location—2004" available free of charge on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pal003

The numbers of small business creations for each year between 2000 and 2003 are shown in Table 2, which I am placing in the House of Commons Library.

The figures presented here differ slightly from those published by the Small Business Service (SBS), as adjustments for birth lags have been applied only to the published data.

For further information on business start-ups please see the National Statistics publication "VAT Registrations and De-registrations: Business Start-ups and Closures" available free of charge on the SBS website at: http://www.sbs.gov.uk/statistics/vatstats.php

All figures have been rounded to the nearest five to avoid disclosure. This means that totals may not necessarily equal the sum of the data in columns, and counts of less than three will be shown as zero. Where counts and employment are released, all figures based on a count of less than 20 must have employment estimates replaced with an asterisk and other employment estimates must be suppressed to ensure that there is no disclosure by difference.

The employment data relate mainly to the 2001 Census of Employment updated for more recent creations and closures.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213827]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of the Cabinet Office on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 957W, which detailed congestion charges and penalty charges incurred by vehicles provided to all Government Departments by the Government Car and Despatch Agency.

In addition to the costs covered by that answer, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has spent a total of £1,425 (this does not include the Government Offices for the Regions which perform functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments) on the congestion charge since its introduction.

Civil servants are personally responsible for meeting the cost of the congestion charge and any penalty charges incurred. Congestion charges incurred by civil servants in the necessary conduct of their business are reimbursed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Departmental Policies (Folkestone)

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Folkstone and Hythe constituency, the effects on Folkestone and Hythe of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215972]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grant funding that benefits the Folkstone and Hythe constituency through a number of programmes.

More broadly, since 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the total amount of government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Shepway district council has received average annual increases in formula grant since 1997 of 2.7 per

cent. Residents of Folkestone and Hythe have also benefited from Kent county council's average annual increase in grant of 4.8 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at Parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at: http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) when the report from the Disabled Facilities Grant Review Group will be made available to the House; and which Government Departments are involved in the review; [218886]

(2) whether he expects that the Strategy Unit's recent recommendation that the disabled facilities grant for disabled children should be reformed will be implemented by the end of the year; [218887]

(3) what percentage of disabled facilities grants are allocated to families with *(a)* disabled children, *(b)* disabled adults and *(c)* pensioners; [218888]

(4) what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the working tax credit on the calculations for the disabled facilities grant means test for families with disabled children; and if he will make a statement. [218889]

Yvette Cooper: The work of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) review group is due to be completed in May. The Government will publish and make available in the Library of the House a consultation document on any proposals for change as soon as possible after this date. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health are represented on the review group. The consultation document will include proposals for what, if any, changes should be made to the means test for disabled facilities grant.

Central records of the type of applicants for DFG by age are not kept by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The latest published evaluation of the DFG system was undertaken by PIED A in 1996. This showed that 5 per cent. of DFG approvals related to disabled children under 18 and 70 per cent. where from disabled persons over the age of 60.

Apart from a disregard in relation to the 30 hour element of working tax credit, this credit is counted as income for the purposes of the DFG means test. This follows the procedures for eligibility for housing benefit and council tax benefit on which the DFG means test is based. The review of DFG is considering the DFG means test and the implications of any changes for the public sector cost of the DFG system will be fully considered.

Fire Service

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the guidance contained in Fire Service Circular No3/1995 has been *(a)* withdrawn and *(b)* replaced. [219350]

Mr. Raynsford: The guidance has neither been withdrawn nor replaced.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 27 January, *Official Report*, columns 462–63W, on the fire service, how many applications for new fire certificates in each brigade requested between 1999 and 2004 remain outstanding; what assessment he has made of the guidance issued by the Chief Fire Officers' Association to fire and rescue authorities regarding the processing of applications for fire certificates; and whether the guidance is publicly available. [219351]

Mr. Raynsford: The numbers of valid applications for fire certificates, and the number of applications outstanding at the end of each of the years requested, is given in Table 1 for England and Wales. Data on the age of outstanding applications is not collected centrally. However, average times taken to issue of fire certificates in England and Wales for the last year for which figures are available are given in Table 2.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister reviewed the guidance promulgated to fire and rescue authorities by the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and made the assessment that it was consistent with the legal obligations of fire and rescue authorities and others concerned.

CFOA are arranging for the guidance to be placed on a publicly available part of the CFOA website as soon as possible. Meanwhile copies of the CFOA guidance circular have been made available in the Library of the House.

Table 1

1 April to 31 March	*Valid applications received*	*Outstanding applications at end of year*
1999–2000	4,932	1,650
2000–01	4,897	1,414
2001–02	4,920	1,348
2002–03	4,224	1,216
2003–04	3,361	1,240

Table 2

BV 14— average time taken by fire authorities to issue fire safety certificates

	Number of certificates issued 2002–03	*Number of days to issue certificates 2002–03*	*Average time in days 2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Shropshire	17	119	7	11	11
Cheshire	34	551	16	34	31
Merseyside	22	480	22	52	16
Staffordshire	34	760	22	19	18
Mid and West Wales	50	1,211	24	25	27
Gloucestershire	129	3,574	28	21	18
Derby shire	40	1,229	31	73	62
Dorset	63	2,006	32	44	44
Warwickshire	25	822	33	27	63
Tyne and Wear	48	1,609	34	52	65

Table 2

BV 14— average time taken by fire authorities to issue fire safety certificates

	Number of certificates issued 2002-03	Number of days to issue certificates 2002-03	Average time in days 2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
West Yorkshire	51	1,842	36	70	54
Humberside	65	2,353	36	39	32
Lincolnshire	5	188	38	37	93
South Yorkshire	46	1,890	41	59	68
Hereford and Worcester	25	1,086	43	82	104
Buckinghamshire	47	2,119	45	82	86
Kent	66	3,018	46	66	53
Cumbria	28	1,316	47	105	80
Essex	99	4,752	48	n/a	143
East Sussex	22	1,120	51	51	51
Cleveland	18	957	53	46	67
Northumberland	6	319	53	25	58
Upper quartile boundary[1]					
Devon	41	2,240	55	84	66
Somerset	14	839	60	160	14
Norfolk	25	1,542	62	30	161
Bedfordshire and Luton	15	985	66	65	63
Suffolk	9	607	67	67	46
Nottinghamshire	22	1,520	69	92	77
North Yorkshire	54	4,093	76	148	60
Lancashire	32	2,474	77	74	131
Cornwall	37	3,143	85	92	97
North Wales	19	1,614	85	84	55
Isle Of Wight	3	255	85	37	76
Cambridgeshire	44	4,084	93	148	74
County Durham and Darlington	18	1,782	99	123	87
West Midlands	71	7,191	101	98	92
Northamptonshire	17	1,748	103	85	145
Royal Berkshire	52	5,470	105	97	106
West Sussex	58	6,641	115	165	175
South Wales	63	7,299	116	55	90
Leicestershire	12	1,392	116	181	136
Hertfordshire	65	7,735	119	209	122
Hampshire	100	12,891	129	86	53
Greater Manchester	108	14,578	135	131	99
Wiltshire	29	4,232	146	103	n/a
Oxfordshire	26	4,456	171	210	77
Surrey	26	5,434	209	136	125
London	226	48,364	214	208	152
Avon	18	5,687	316	214	68

n/a = not available.

[1] The upper quartile boundary is set at 53 using 2000–01 as the base date.

Fire Service Emergency Response

Iain Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average response time of the fire service to 999 calls was in *(a)* Hartlepool and *(b)* England and Wales in each year since 1997. [218508]

Mr. Raynsford: The available information covers fire and rescue service response to primary fires (involving property, casualties or rescues) in England and Wales and Cleveland. Details of response times on other incidents attended by the fire and rescue service are not available centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.Response times for primary fires are collected at fire and rescue authority level, so separate information covering Hartlepool is not available centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Average fire and rescue service response times (primary fires) 1997–2003

	Minutes	
	England and Wales	Cleveland
1997	6.1	4.9
1998	5.9	4.7
1999	6.2	4.9
2000	6.3	4.9
2001	6.3	4.9
2002[1]	6.4	5.2
2003[1,2]	6.6	5.1

[1] Excludes strike periods, November 2002 and January and February 2003.

[2] Provisional figure.

Source:

Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether local authorities will be allowed to use capital receipts generated from right to buy sales after 1 April 2006 to fund investment in new social housing. [219348]

Keith Hill: Under the present regime governing the treatment of capital receipts arising from right to buy sales, all local housing authorities may use 25 per cent. of the receipt for any capital purpose they see fit, including investment in new social housing.

At present, there are no plans to change this regime.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether local authorities will be allowed to use capital receipts generated from right to buy sales between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2006 to fund investment in new social housing through any mechanism other than transitional local authority social housing grant. [219349]

Keith Hill: Under the regime governing the treatment of capital receipts arising from right to buy sales in financial year 2003–04, with-debt authorities could use 25 per cent. of the receipt and debt-free authorities 100 per cent. of the receipt, for any capital purpose they saw fit, not necessarily housing related.

Under the present regime, introduced on 1 April 2004, governing the treatment of capital receipts arising from right to buy sales, all local housing authorities may use 25 per cent. of the receipt for any capital purpose they see fit, including investment in new social housing.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects the North West Housing Board to make a decision on affordable housing in South Lancashire. [218971]

Keith Hill: The North West Regional Housing Board will submit its proposed regional housing strategy, setting out its views on the region's housing priorities, in May 2005. Ministers will make decisions on the allocation of funds for housing investment in 2006–07 and 2007–08 in the light of these recommendations. Detailed allocations to registered social landlords, which will be subject to the usual competitive bidding process, and to local authorities will be announced around the end of the year.

Meden Valley Partnership

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what discussions have taken place between the Meden Valley partnership and *(a)* Nottinghamshire Mental Health Trust and *(b)* Mansfield primary care trust about stress-related health problems due to delays in regenerating housing in the Meden Valley; [214487]

(2) what provision English Partnerships and the East Midlands Development Agency are making for residents who refuse to move and who are not offered refurbished accommodation or low-cost home ownership on completion of the Meden Valley partnership project; [214488]

(3) whether he expects the guarantee given by his Department, the East Midlands Development Agency and English Partnerships that residents will be able to remain in the Royal Estate and Warsop Vale under the Meden Valley partnership housing regeneration programme to be maintained; [214540]

(4) what legal opinion has been sought by English Partnerships in relation to compulsory purchase of properties in the Meden Valley; [213730]

(5) how many repairs orders due to public safety have been issued through the Meden Valley Partnership; [213731]

(6) how many residents have neither requested to move nor opposed compulsory purchase of their home under the Meden Valley Partnership; and how many of these are over 80 years old; [213732]

(7) how many residents of the Royal Estate and Warsop Vale have indicated a wish to remain living in their area under the Meden Valley partnership; [213733]

(8) what meetings have taken place between the Meden Valley partnership and the police about drug dealing and antisocial behaviour in the last two years; [213734]

(9) how many letters of thanks have been received by the Meden Valley partnership from local residents since its inception; [213735]

(10) when English Partnerships expects to build new houses in Warsop as part of the Meden Valley partnership; [213736]

(11) what plans English Partnerships has to meet its commitment to involve residents in the management of housing regeneration projects in Warsop; [213737]

(12) when and under what authority English Partnerships required means testing for existing tenants to buy new homes in Warsop under the Meden Valley partnership; [213738]

(13) how much public money has been spent through the Meden Valley partnership; [213739]

(14) how many homes have been refurbished under the Meden Valley partnership; [213740]

(15) when an employee of the East Midland Development Agency last entered *(a)* a house and *(b)* an area under threat of compulsory purchase from the Meden Valley partnership; [213750]

(16) when an employee of English Partnerships last entered *(a)* a house and *(b)* an area under threat of compulsory purchase from the Meden Valley partnership. [213751]

Substantive answer from Keith Hill to John Mann:

I promised to write to you in answer to your parliamentary questions regarding the Meden Valley Partnership when my Department had looked closely at the issues you raised.

On the important issue of improving communication with residents affected by proposals, you will be pleased to hear that the Meden Valley Board intend to appoint a Community Participation Officer to assist with the consultation process, and that in the short-term Leicester Housing Association will provide a secondee to the project. The Meden Valley Board has also confirmed that it will seek to hold monthly meetings with you, if agreeable, to address the concerns raised by your constituents, and the Community Participation Officer will be involved with these meetings. I hope that you will be able to work closely with this officer who will service the Residents Implementation Groups, which I understand you have played a role in forming through chairing the well-attended public meetings in Warsop Vale and on the Royal Estate. The Community Participation Officer will also help to develop an effective communication strategy with residents affected by the scheme.

I understand that Meden Valley Making Places Ltd are making good progress on the negotiated acquisition of properties, but I can understand the frustration some residents must feel about the length of time to complete the Compulsory Purchase Order process. To mitigate the negative impact of abandonment, Meden Valley Making Places Ltd is prioritising joint working with the Police and Community Safety Officers to help minimise problems for residents who wish to stay.

On the issue of alternative accommodation, I would support the Meden Valley Making Places Ltd's commitment to assisting homeowners and tenants, affected b redevelopment, to secure alternative accommodation on a like for like basis. I am sure that

you would agree with this policy. The various options available to residents can be discussed with either Sarah Streater or Shamus O'Leary (Tel: 01623–847675) at Meden Valley Making Places Ltd.

I hope that you feel we are moving forward in Meden Valley and driving forward the Government commitment to developing sustainable communities.

Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the progress of neighbourhood management pathfinders and their future funding allocations. [217866]

Keith Hill: Funding was made available to 20 round one neighbourhood management pathfinder schemes from 2001–02 and to 15 round two schemes from 2003–04.

Round one schemes have made good progress on working towards mainstreaming interventions and working with service providers so that their services better meet the needs of the local community. Round two pathfinders have successfully submitted their delivery plans and have completed the first stage of implementation. The 2004 National Evaluation says there is evidence of the Pathfinder programme making a real change to people's lives.

Funding for each round of the programme is for seven years with £77.6 million available to round one schemes and £44.4 million available to round two schemes over the life of the programme. The announcement for funding allocations for 2005–06 will be made in the near future.

Pendle

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of his Department's policies and activities since 2nd May 1997. [215011]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grant funding that benefits the Pendle constituency through a number of programmes.

For example over the period 2001–06 Pendle has been allocated £8.3 million Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources to help the local authority, in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership, improve services in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the area.

More broadly, since 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the total amount of government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Pendle council has received an average annual increase in formula grant since 1997 of 6.0 per cent. Residents of Pendle have also benefited from Lancashire county council's average annual increase in grant of 4.4 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at Parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at: http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Right to Buy

Martin Linton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council homes have been sold under the right to buy in Wandsworth since 1990. [218530]

Keith Hill: The local authority has reported 4,276 sales of council dwellings under the right to buy and rent to mortgage schemes in Wandsworth between 1990–91 and 2003–04.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Constitution

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reasoning underlay the decision to describe the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe as the treaty establishing a constitution for the European Union in the question that will be used for the referendum on the constitution. [217451]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

The treaty binds only its signatories, that is, members of the European Union, and not every state geographically in Europe. Although the treaty is said to establish a "Constitution for Europe" it is clear from the very first article that "this Constitution establishes the European Union . . . ". Referring in the question to the "Constitution for the European Union" is likely to be more intelligible to the voter since it reflects more accurately what he or she is being asked to approve.

The Electoral Commission commented in its assessment of the question on 3 February 2005 that the modification of the title of the treaty in the question does not detract from its overall intelligibility.

Falkland Islands

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the date is of the next meeting between officials representing the UK and Argentine Governments to discuss charter flights to the Falkland Islands for the purposes of cruise ship passenger transfers. [219343]

Mr. Rammell: There are no meetings scheduled between the UK and Argentine Governments to discuss the issue of charter flights. The situation on this issue remains unchanged from that given in my statement on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1782W to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mr. Simmonds).

Firecrest

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the cost of his Department's new Firecrest contract, with Hewlett-Packard, signed on 16 February. [218705]

Mr. Rammell: The seven year deal, the largest contract the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has ever signed, will see Hewlett-Packard take on overall responsibility for the FCO's business critical IT infrastructure in partnership with in-house IT providers FCO Services, original developers of the "Firecrest" system. The total cost of the contract over seven years is currently estimated at £320 million based on a contract with Hewlett-Packard UK worth approximately £180 million and FCO internal costs of £140 million, including FCO Services' charges.

Iran/Iraq

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of relations between the Iranian regime and the *(a)* Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, *(b)* United Iraqi Alliance and *(c)* Iraqi National Congress. [218177]

Mr. Rammell: We maintain a close dialogue on Iraq with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others in the Iranian Government. The Iranian authorities have a well-known friendship with many of the Shia groups, including the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq and other component members of the United Iraqi Coalition. They also have good relations with non-Shia groups, including among the Kurdish parties. Iran has stated that it will co-operate with the future Iraqi Government, regardless of its religious preferences.

Iraq

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many contracts for the supply of security and surveillance services and equipment from the private sector have been placed by the UK Government and its agencies in Iraq, broken down by base country of the contracting company; and what the total value of such contracts is. [204613]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office currently has four contracts with two British private sector companies for the provision of security services in Iraq. The annual value of these contracts is approximately £50 million.

I will write to my hon. Friend with details of any other contracts placed by other UK Government Departments and its agencies in Iraq. I will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts regarding the war in Iraq over the last six months. [210588]

Mr. Rammell: Over the last six months, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had continuous discussions on Iraq with his European Union (EU) colleagues. This dialogue has taken place regularly at the monthly EU Foreign Ministerials, in bilateral meetings and in other fora.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people have been registered to vote in northern Iraq *(a)* in numbers, *(b)* as a percentage of the population of the Kurdish area of Iraq, *(c)* as a percentage of eligible voters in Iraq and *(d)* as a percentage of all registered voters in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [213237]

Mr. Rammell: In the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) area, 2,124,181 were registered to vote. This represents an estimated 61 per cent. of the population within the KRG. This figure is 25 per cent. of the overall registered voters in Iraq. In addition a further 280,000 Iraqis registered to vote outside of Iraq. Figures on the number of people who are eligible to vote but not registered are not known. However, a comprehensive registration exercise was carried out in the six week period from 1 November to 15 December.

Nepal

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the political situation in Nepal and its development since January 2004; and if he will make a statement. [214732]

Mr. Alexander: We are deeply concerned by the current political situation in Nepal. The King's recent move to assume direct control of the country is a backward step for democracy. Following the royal takeover I summoned the Nepalese ambassador to express our grave concern and released a public statement in which I said that his action would increase the risk of instability in Nepal and undermine the institutions of democracy and constitutional monarchy in the country. I also called for the immediate restitution of multi-party democracy. A copy of my statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

Immediately after the takeover of power by the King the EU presidency issued a statement on behalf of the EU which expressed our concerns about restrictions on liberty and calling for human rights to be respected. Our ambassador in Kathmandu raised these issues directly with the King in an audience on 8 February. With other EU member states' ambassadors he also raised them with the new Nepalese Foreign Minister on 7 February.

On 14 February my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recalled our ambassador in Nepal to London for consultations. Following those consultations with our ambassador and other key international partners we decided to withdraw the proposal, laid before Parliament in a minute of 20 January 2005, for a further tranche of military assistance to Nepal.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have made to (i) members of the royal family of Nepal and (ii) representatives of the Government of Nepal regarding King Gyanendra's declaration of a state of emergency on 1 February; and if he will make a statement. [214733]

Mr. Alexander: Following the takeover of power by the King I summoned the Nepalese ambassador on 1 February to express our grave concern at developments. I also issued a public statement on 1 February in which I set out our concern that his actions would increase the risk of instability in Nepal and undermine the institutions of democracy and constitutional monarchy in the country. In that statement I called for the immediate restitution of multi-party democracy. A copy of my statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

Immediately after the takeover of power by the king the EU presidency issued a statement on behalf of the EU which explained our concerns about restrictions on liberty and calling for human rights to be respected. Our ambassador in Kathmandu raised these issues directly with the King in an audience on 8 February. With other EU member states' ambassadors he also raised them with the new Nepalese Foreign Minister on 7 February.

On 14 February my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recalled our ambassador in Nepal to London for consultations. Following those consultations with our ambassador and other key international partners we decided to withdraw the proposal, laid before Parliament in a minute of 20 January 2005, for a further tranche of military assistance to Nepal.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to *(a)* seek the release and *(b)* secure the protection of (i) political leaders and (ii) human rights activists following recent actions by King Gyanendra in Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [215933]

Mr. Alexander: Immediately after the takeover of power by the King we issued a statement with our EU partners which expressed our grave concerns about restrictions on liberty and calling for human rights to be respected. Our ambassador in Kathmandu raised these issues directly with the King in an audience on 8 February. With other EU member states' ambassadors he also raised them with the new Nepalese Foreign Minister on 7 February.

Because of media and other restrictions we may not be aware of all those arrested or detained, especially outside Kathmandu. Human rights sources have identified some 270 individuals who are still detained, including students, political activists, journalists and academics.

We are keeping the situation on the various restrictions on liberty in place in Nepal under review. We intend that our ambassador should again raise our concerns about restrictions on civil rights in his next audience with the King.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to seek to secure the independence and integrity of the Nepali National Human Rights Commission and ensure the protection of its premises and documents; and if he will make a statement. [215936]

Mr. Alexander: The UK has been a committed supporter of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in Nepal, whose activities we have part funded, in particular by providing for technical assistance on human rights monitoring. The tenure of the current Commission expires in April and the absence of Parliament will make the appointment of new commissioners problematic. We are particularly concerned about the future independence and integrity of the NHRC following the King's takeover of power on 1 February. Our ambassador has raised our concerns with the new Foreign Minister and we will be considering with international partners how best to press for the continuing independence and integrity of the NHRC.

Immediately after the takeover of power by the King we issued a statement with our EU partners which expressed our grave concerns about restrictions on liberty and calling for human rights to be respected. Our ambassador in Kathmandu raised these issues directly with the King in an audience on 8 February. With other EU member states' ambassadors he also raised them with the new Nepalese Foreign Minister on 7 February.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of the Government of (i) India, (ii) China and (iii) Bhutan regarding the current situation in Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [215988]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed the situation in Nepal during his recent visit to India. Senior officials have also had a number of discussions with Indian officials about the situation in Nepal. Officials have also discussed the situation in Nepal with the Government of China. We have so far had no discussions with the Government of Bhutan regarding recent developments in Nepal.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the number of civilian and military casualties of the Maoist revolt in Nepal per annum since 1997, *(b)* the social and economic impact of the Maoist revolt in Nepal and *(c)* the measures undertaken by the Government of Nepal to address the Maoist revolt since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [215989]

Mr. Alexander: It is very hard to give precise figures for the number of casualties caused by the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. We do not have figures of casualties going back to 1997 on an annual basis.

The social impact of the conflict has been very considerable. Maoist violence, especially in the villages and towns outside the district capitals, has caused widespread fear among the locals. It has caused major disruption to key services, including education and health. Many schools have been forced to close and many locals have been forced to flee their homes to avoid being attacked by the Maoists or forcibly recruited into their ranks. Many thousands of people have been displaced, many are homeless and without access to basic amenities. The security forces' failure consistently to respect human rights has compounded

the situation. The conflict has further damaged the social fabric by increasing ethnic divisions and reducing the rule of law in the rural areas.

The conflict has also done great damage to the Nepalese national economy, which has become one of the prime Maoist targets. The Maoists regularly extort money from local businesses and industries and prevent businesses from running normally. They enforce frequent strikes (bandhs) and seek to prevent the free movement of goods. Hundreds of companies have been forced to close. The Maoists have also attacked the tourism industry infrastructure, so damaging a key contribution to the Nepalese economy. Unemployment is now a serious problem.

The Government of Nepal have employed a mixture of military and diplomatic measures since 1997 to combat Maoist activity and bring about a successful resolution of the conflict. There have been two rounds of negotiations, in 2001 and 2003, both of which broke down.

We continue to advocate the need for an inclusive peace process, involving all of the constitutional forces. We consider that this offers the only way to resolve the conflict in a manner which will lead to a stable Nepal based on a multi party democracy, good government and respect for human rights.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of the Government of Nepal concerning (i) civil rights and (ii) freedom of speech in Nepal since 1 February; and if he will make a statement. [215990]

Mr. Alexander: Following the King of Nepal's assumption of power on 1 February I summoned the Nepalese ambassador to express the UK's grave concern about his actions. In a statement afterwards I set out our real concern at the King's dismissal of his Prime Minister, and warned that his action would increase the risk of instability in Nepal and undermine the institutions of democracy and constitutional monarchy. I called for the immediate restitution of multi-party democracy in Nepal. A copy of my statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

Our ambassador met with the King on 8 February. During this meeting he conveyed to the King the UK's strong concern about the damage the King's actions had done to democracy in Nepal, and about the state of emergency in Nepal, including the continuing suspension of civil liberties, the detention of politicians and the strict media censorship since the palace coup of 1 February. Our ambassador also conveyed our concerns to the new Nepalese Foreign Minister in a meeting on 7 February.

Such is our concern about the King's takeover of power that on 14 February my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recalled our ambassador in Nepal to London for consultations. Following those consultations with our ambassador and other key international partners we decided to withdraw the proposal, laid before Parliament in a minute of 20 January 2005, for a further tranche of military assistance to Nepal. We intend that our ambassador should again raise our concerns about restrictions on civil rights in Nepal in his next audience with the King.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment his Department has made of the political situation in Nepal. [218706]

Mr. Alexander: The UK is deeply concerned by the current political situation in Nepal. We believe that the King's recent move to dismiss the Prime Minister and assume power outside the framework of a multi party democratic system is likely to put back the prospects of a negotiated settlement. Immediately following the King's takeover of power on 1 February I issued a statement in which I said that this action would increase the risk of instability in Nepal and undermine the institutions of democracy and constitutional monarchy in the country. A copy of the statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's website www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases. Such is the level of our concern that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary temporarily recalled our Ambassador in Kathmandu for consultations on 14 February.

The UK has consistently held the view that there can be no military resolution and that a negotiated political settlement involving all parties offers the best way to resolve the ongoing conflict and to create a stable democracy with good governance and respect for human rights. We will continue to press all parties for an early return to negotiations.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had regarding *(a)* the current situation in Nepal and *(b)* the safety of British non-governmental organisations in the area; and if he will make a statement. [219342]

Mr. Alexander: We have held discussions about the current situation in Nepal with both the Nepalese authorities and our international partners. Following the King's takeover of power on 1 February I summoned the Nepalese Ambassador to convey our grave concerns. Our Ambassador in Nepal also had an audience with the King to convey the same message. On 14 February my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recalled our Ambassador to Nepal for consultations, in step with similar action by the US, EU, Indians and others. The Foreign Secretary held discussions on Nepal with his Indian counterparts during his recent visit to India and we have also discussed Nepal with other international parties at official level.

The Government take any threat to the safety of United Kingdom nationals in Nepal, as elsewhere, very seriously. The British embassy in Nepal has been in close contact with British NGOs since the early days of the Maoist insurgency and offers regular briefings on

security to new arrivals as well as making provision for assistance in times of emergency through a system of local volunteer wardens in which representatives of British NGOs take part.

Syria

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of US accusations of Syrian involvement in *(a)* terrorism and *(b)* insurgency in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [216324]

Mr. Rammell: We share the US concerns about terrorism in the region and the insurgency in Iraq. We have made clear to Syria that we expect them to play a constructive role in tackling both of these issues.

In this context we welcome the steps Syria and Iraq have taken to strengthen their co-operation, including the handing over of Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan to Iraq. We encourage them to continue to develop such co-operation.

We have repeatedly told Syria that she must address the problems created by Palestinian rejectionist groups. Closure of their offices in Damascus is a step in the right direction but Syria must exercise her influence over these groups in a positive manner.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the Syrian Accountability Act and *(b)* the US Administration's use of the Syrian Accountability Act since November 2003; and if he will make a statement. [216325]

Mr. Rammell: We assess that in the short-term the impact of the Syrian Accountability Act on Syria will be limited. The use of the Accountability Act is a matter for the US. We regularly discuss with the US Administration our concerns about Syria on a number of issues.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his most recent assessment is of the policy of Syria towards *(a)* Iraq, *(b)* the Lebanon and *(c)* terrorism; and if he will make a statement on UK relations with Syria. [217859]

Mr. Rammell: We have a continuing dialogue with Syria on a number of issues, including Syrian support for the Iraqi Transitional Government; the policing of the Syria-Iraq border; improving security in Iraq; implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559; and support for Palestinian rejectionist groups such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

We encourage Syria to strengthen its support for Iraq. Syria knows that helping to improve security in Iraq will benefit not only the Iraqi people but also the wider region.

Syria is aware that we are seeking full compliance with the demands of Security Council Resolution 1559 and we look forward to discussing with our Security Council Partners in April the UN Secretary-General's report on progress. We welcome the UN Secretary-General's announcement of an investigation into the bombing in Beirut on 14 February, which killed 15 people including former Prime Minister Hariri. My noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean visited Lebanon, 24–25 February, to offer the condolences of HMG on the death of Mr. Hariri and the other victims.

We have repeatedly told Syria that she must address the problems created by rejectionist groups. Closure of their offices in Damascus is a step in the right direction but Syria must exercise her influence over these groups in a positive manner.

Uganda

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Ugandan authorities regarding plans by President Museveni to amend the constitution in order to grant himself an indefinite term in office. [218267]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mr. Simmonds) on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 590W.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide capacity-building assistance to the Forum for Democratic Change in Uganda. [218271]

Mr. Mullin: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is currently funding a project to help build capacity in all Uganda's major political parties as they prepare for the 2006 elections. This includes the Forum for Democratic Change. The project provides small group training focusing on professional skills development for parties. We will seek opportunities to build on this with further cross-party support over the coming year.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made representations to the Ugandan Government regarding the plans by President Museveni to amend the constitution in order to secure an indefinite term in office. [218284]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 590W.

Western Sahara

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Council of Europe's support for the Baker Peace Plan for the Western Sahara. [217223]

Mr. Rammell: The United Kingdom has noted the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe's Resolution 1408 (2004) on the Western Sahara.

The United Kingdom fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and his Special Representative Alvaro de Soto to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Sahara dispute which provides the people of the Western Sahara with an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination.

We believe UN efforts to find a solution to the dispute should be maintained and continue to urge all parties to the dispute to engage constructively with the UN.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had with the EU regarding the situation in Zimbabwe. [218707]

Mr. Mullin: We regularly discuss the situation in Zimbabwe with our EU partners. With our strong support the EU unanimously agreed to renew for a further year its package of targeted measures against the Government of Zimbabwe, starting as of 21 February 2005. These consist of an arms embargo, and a travel ban and assets freeze on leading members of the Zimbabwean Government.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work Scheme

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the cost range of bids made to the Access to Work scheme was in the latest period for which figures are available; and what the average award was; [214626]

(2) by which months of the financial year the Access to Work budget has been spent in each of the last five years; and how often the Access to Work budget has been *(a)* overspent and *(b)* underspent in each of the last five years. [214636]

Maria Eagle: The Access to Work grant paid to individuals is based on their particular need and can range from the cost of a small piece of specialised office equipment to six-figure sums paid to provide Support Workers. Although information is not collected on the cost range of Access to Work grants, the average amount paid to Access to Work beneficiaries during the last full financial year, 2003–04, was £1,607.

Spend on Access to Work has exceeded the baseline funding figure in each of the past five financial years. Funding for Access to Work was spent by March 2000; February 2001; January 2002; February 2003 and February 2004. Expenditure subsequent to those dates in each financial year was funded from underspend on other Departmental budgets.

Total expenditure in each year is in the following table.

Access to work spend

	£ million
1999–2000	24.4
2000–01	32.5
2001–02	42.5
2002–03	50.3
2003–04	56

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.
Source:
DWP Disability and Rehabilitation Division

Age-based Benefits

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many benefit recipients receive *(a)* some and *(b)* all their benefits at a lower rate on the basis that they were aged less than 25 years, broken down by benefit. [211897]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* Incapacity benefit (IB), severe disablement allowance (SDA), disability living allowance (DLA) rates are not normally affected if a customer is under 25.

The information is not available in the format requested; the available information is in the table.

Recipients of income-related benefits aged under 25[1] August 2004[2] and May 2003[2]

	All	Also claiming IB/SDA/DLA[3]	Not claiming IB/SDA/DLA
JSA (including those on HB/CTB)	216,700	3,300	213,400
IS (including those on HB/CTB)	107,500	77,600	29,900
HB only[4]	10,000	[5]—	[5]—
CTB only[4]	[5]—	[5]—	[5]—
HB and CTB (not also IS/JSA)[4]	10,000	[5]—	10,000

[1] Under 18 for lone parents, as lone parents aged 18–24 qualify for the full benefit rates. Couples on JSA where either the claimant or the partner is under 18 also receive a lower rate of benefit.
[2] IS/JSA figures are at August 2004 from 5 per cent. Working Age Client Group data. HB/CTB figures are at May 2003 and from 1 per cent. data.
[3] Claimants of JSA are only entitled to claim DLA as an additional benefit.
[4] Due to the estimation procedure to remove overlaps between housing benefit and council tax benefit recipients, and the collection procedures in Scotland, these figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 thousand.
[5] data is negligible.
Notes:
1. IS/JSA figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Council tax benefit totals exclude any Second Adult Rebate cases.
4. Housing benefit figures exclude any Extended Payment cases.
5. A very small number of housing benefit claimants, where both the claimant and partner are aged under 18, receive a lower rate of benefit. These are not included in the figures but the number is negligible.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. Working Age Client Group sample and 1 per cent. HB/CTB sample.

Benefits

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many under-35 year olds are on lower benefit rates. [218849]

Mr. Pond: Lower rates of income-related benefits are paid to some of those under 25 years of age. Those over 25 years of age receive the standard rate. The available information is in the following table.

Claimants of income-related benefits aged under 25[1]

	Number
Jobseekers Allowance (whether or not also HB/CTB)	216,700
Income Support (whether or not also HB/CTB)	107,500
Housing Benefit (HB) only	10,000
Council Tax Benefit (CTB) only	[2]—
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit	10,000

[1] Under-18 for lone parents, as lone parents aged 18 to 24 qualify for the full benefit rates. Couples on JSA where either the claimant or the partner is under 18 also receive a lower rate of benefit.
[2] Signifies the data is negligible.

Notes:
1. Income support and jobseekers allowance figures are at August 2004; housing benefit and council tax benefit figures are at May 2003.
2. Income support and jobseekers allowance figures are rounded to the nearest hundred; housing benefit and council tax benefit figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 thousand.
3. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
4. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.
5. A very small number of housing benefit claimants, where both the claimant and partner are aged under-18, receive a lower rate of benefit. These are not included in the figures but the number is negligible.

Source:
Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Working Age Client Group sample and 1 per cent. Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit sample.

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed *(a)* income support, *(b)* jobseekers allowance, distinguishing between contribution and income based jobseekers allowance and *(c)* national insurance credits only in (i) each parliamentary constituency in the north east and (ii) each electoral ward of Newcastle upon Tyne in (A) August 1997 and (B) August 2004. [219057]

Mr. Pond: Information for electoral wards is not available prior to 1998; the information for 2004 has not yet been published. The parliamentary constituency information is in the tables.

Income support claimants by parliamentary constituency in the North East:

August 1997 and August 2004 Parliamentary constituency	*August 1997*	*August 2004*
Berwick-upon-Tweed	4,100	2,000
Bishop Auckland	6,800	4,000
Blaydon	5,900	2,200
Blyth Valley	5,700	3,700
City of Durham	4,400	2,500
Darlington	6,700	4,100
Easington	7,800	5,200
Gateshead, East and Washington, West	8,100	4,200
Hartlepool	8,500	4,800
Hexham	2,800	1,300
Houghton and Washington, East	7,700	4,400
Jarrow	6,900	3,600
Middlesbrough	10,600	7,000
Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland	6,700	4,000
Newcastle upon Tyne, Central	7,700	4,100
Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend	9,300	5,500
Newcastle upon Tyne, North	6,800	3,800
North Durham	6,400	3,800
North Tyneside	8,300	4,700
North West Durham	6,900	3,100
Redcar	8,700	5,200
Sedgefield	6,600	3,800
South Shields	8,600	4,800
Stockton, North	7,200	5,000
Stockton, South	5,500	2,900
Sunderland, North	8,500	4,600
Sunderland, South	10,500	4,900
Tyne Bridge	12,400	6,900
Tynemouth	7,100	2,700
Wansbeck	5,400	2,700

Jobseeker's allowance claimants by parliamentary constituency in the North East and type of jobseeker's allowance

	All claimants	*Contribution based only*	*Contribution and income based*	*Income-based only*	*Nil benefit*[1]
August 1997					
Berwick-upon-Tweed	1,400	[2]100	[3]—	1,000	[2]300
Bishop Auckland	2,700	[2]300	[2]100	2,000	[2]300
Blaydon	2,500	[2]300	[3]—	1,900	[2]300
Blyth Valley	2,800	[2]200	[2]100	2,000	[2]400
City of Durham	2,300	[2]200	[3]—	1,700	[2]300
Darlington	3,000	[2]400	[3]—	2,200	[2]300
Easington	2,200	[2]100	[2]100	1,900	[2]100
Gateshead, East and Washington, West	2,600	[2]400	[2]100	1,800	[2]400
Hartlepool	3,900	[2]300	[2]100	3,200	[2]300
Hexham	1,200	[2]200	[3]—	900	[2]200
Houghton and Washington, East	2,700	[2]300	[2]100	2,000	[2]300
Jarrow	3,000	[2]400	[3]—	2,100	[2]400
Middlesbrough	5,500	[2]300	[3]—	4,900	[2]200
Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland	3,200	[2]300	[2]100	2,400	[2]400
Newcastle upon Tyne, Central	3,700	[2]300	[3]—	3,000	[2]400
Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend	3,900	[2]300	[3]—	3,300	[2]300
Newcastle upon Tyne, North	2,900	[2]300	[2]100	2,300	[2]300
North Durham	2,800	[2]300	[3]—	2,100	[2]400
North Tyneside	3,400	[2]300	[3]—	2,700	[2]400
North West Durham	3,100	[2]400	[3]—	2,300	[2]500
Redcar	4,000	[2]300	[3]—	3,100	[2]500
Sedgefield	1,600	[2]200	[3]—	1,100	[2]200
South Shields	4,300	500	[2]100	3,300	[2]400
Stockton, North	4,700	500	[2]100	3,700	[2]400
Stockton, South	3,100	[2]300	[3]—	2,300	[2]400
Sunderland, North	3,400	[2]300	[3]—	2,600	[2]500
Sunderland, South	3,900	[2]200	[2]100	3,300	[2]300
Tyne Bridge	5,300	[2]300	[3]—	4,800	[2]200
Tynemouth	2,600	[2]400	[2]100	1,700	[2]400
Wansbeck	2,300	[2]100	[3]—	1,900	[2]300

Jobseeker's allowance claimants by parliamentary constituency in the North East and type of jobseeker's allowance

	All claimants	Contribution based only	Contribution and income based	Income-based only	Nil benefit[1]
August 2004					
Berwick-upon-Tweed	600	[2]100	[3]—	[2]400	[2]100
Bishop Auckland	700	[2]100	[3]—	500	[2]100
Blaydon	900	[2]200	[3]—	700	[2]100
Blyth Valley	1,300	[2]200	[3]—	1,000	[3]—
City of Durham	1,300	[2]300	[3]—	800	[2]200
Darlington	1,200	[2]300	[3]—	900	[2]100
Easington	1,000	[2]300	[3]—	600	[2]100
Gateshead, East and Washington, West	1,200	[2]300	[3]—	800	[2]100
Hartlepool	1,900	[2]300	[2]100	1,400	[2]100
Hexham	800	[2]200	[3]—	[2]400	[2]200
Houghton and Washington, East	1,300	[2]300	[3]—	800	[2]100
Jarrow	1,600	[2]200	[3]—	1,300	[2]100
Middlesbrough	3,000	[2]300	[3]—	2,400	[2]300
Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland	1,700	[2]200	[3]—	1,200	[2]300
Newcastle upon Tyne, Central	1,400	[2]100	[3]—	1,200	[2]100
Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend	2,000	[2]100	[3]—	1,700	[2]100
Newcastle upon Tyne, North	900	[3]—	[3]—	800	[2]100
North Durham	1,100	[2]200	[3]—	800	[2]100
North Tyneside	1,700	[2]200	[3]—	1,400	[2]100
North West Durham	800	[2]200	[3]—	600	[3]—
Redcar	1,900	[2]200	[2]100	1,400	[2]200
Sedgefield	1,200	[2]200	[3]—	800	[2]200
South Shields	2,500	[2]300	[3]—	1,900	[2]200
Stockton, North	2,000	[2]200	[3]—	1,700	[2]100
Stockton, South	1,700	[2]300	[3]—	1,300	[2]100
Sunderland, North	1,800	[2]300	[3]—	1,400	[2]100
Sunderland, South	1,700	[2]200	[3]—	1,400	[2]200
Tyne Bridge	2,600	[2]200	[3]—	2,300	[2]100
Tynemouth	1,100	[2]200	[3]—	700	[2]200
Wansbeck	1,600	[2]300	[3]—	1,100	[2]100

[1] Nil benefit claimants are those claimants receiving National Insurance Credits
[2] Figures are subject to a high degree of sampling variation and should be treated as a rough guide to the situation only.
[3] denotes nil or negligible.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source:
Information Directorate, 5 per samples

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218591]

Maria Eagle: The Department has a range of policies in place to support all staff who are ill, whatever the cause. This includes extensive sick pay arrangements, special leave for staff attending medical appointments, the opportunity for a phased return to work following an absence and the advice and support of an Occupational Health Provider. In addition, the Department's staff can make use of the facilities of an Employee Assistance Provider, who can provide advice and support to individuals who have an illness themselves or who are affected by the illness of a friend or relative. For those who are unlikely to be able to return to work, there is also the opportunity of ill health retirement via the civil service pension scheme.

In the last 12 months nearly 400 people have had time off work due to cancer.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency centres there are in the West Midlands region. [218039]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Jim Cunningham, dated 2 March 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Support Agency centres there are in the West Midlands region.

Within the West Midlands Government Office Region there is 1 main Child Support Agency centre this is based at Dudley, Pedmore House. In addition we have 3 Satellite Processing Centres at Birmingham, Litchfield & Shrewsbury.

Gaelic Language

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's policy is on the use of the Gaelic language; and what plans his Department has to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme. [217100]

Maria Eagle: Action to support the Gaelic language is primarily the responsibility of Scottish Ministers.

The Department for Work and Pensions attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of the Gaelic language in line with the UK's obligations under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill currently before the Scottish Parliament does not extend statutory obligations on UK public bodies in Scotland in relation to the preparation or implementation of Gaelic language plans. However, UK departments and public bodies which operate in Scotland may—like comparable Scottish public bodies—have a role to play in facilitating the use of the language.

The Department for Work and Pensions has been working closely with colleagues in the Scotland Office and the Scottish Executive on the role we can play, voluntarily, in securing the status of Gaelic.

Housing allowance

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the findings of the comprehensive evaluation of the local housing allowance pathfinders will be published. [218909]

Mr. Pond: We published the baseline stage of the evaluation of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) pathfinders in September 2004. Copies of these reports covering the views and experiences of tenants, landlords, pathfinder local authorities and other stakeholders prior to the start of the Local Housing Allowance scheme, are available in the Library. All these publications can also be found on the DWP's website at www.dwp.gov.uk/housingbenefit/lha/evaluation/index.asp

Further publications covering the first six months of the new scheme are due to be published during spring 2005. The evaluation will then provide a further series of interim publications, based on experience at the 15 month stage, followed by a final evaluation in 2006.

The full titles and dates of publications of the reports and summaries published to date are:

"Evaluating the LHA Pathfinders"

This introductory paper sets out the policy context for the LHA and the evaluation strategy for the pathfinders (published September 2004)

"The nine LHA Pathfinder areas: a summary of the baseline position before the introduction of the LHA"

This sets the scene for the introduction of the policy and provides a benchmark for future reports. It brings together the evidence gathered from the key stakeholders and captures the later stages of the preparation for 'go-live' in the nine authorities (published September 2004)

"Claiming Housing Benefit in the Private Rented Sector: the baseline experience of claimants in the nine LHA Pathfinder areas"

This looks in detail at the household, housing and financial characteristics from a survey of housing benefit claimants before the introduction of the LHA (published September 2004)

"Landlords and Agents in the nine LHA Pathfinder areas: a summary report"

This provides initial top-line findings from the baseline survey of landlords and letting agents (published September 2004).

"Landlords and Agents in the private rented sector: the baseline position in the LHA Pathfinders"

This follows on from the summary and completes the series of reports from the baseline stage of the evaluation. This is the full report of findings from a survey of landlords and agents, carried out prior to the introduction of the LHA (published February 2005).

Income Support

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many families with children have been in receipt of income support for more than one year in Coventry. [218040]

Mr. Pond: As at August 2004, 6,100 families with dependant children up to the age of 19 had been in receipt of income support for more than one year in the Coventry local authority area.

Notes: 1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and quoted in thousands.2. Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.

Source: DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

New Deal for Lone Parents

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people living in Lancashire have gained work through the new deal for lone parents. [217580]

Jane Kennedy: 8,060 people in Lancashire have gained work through the new deal for lone parents since the start of the programme in October 1998.

Data for Lancashire are the total for the Jobcentre Plus districts of East Lancashire and Lancashire West.

Pension Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his written statement of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 68WS, on pension credit, if he will place in the Library a copy of the analysis from which the take-up estimates were derived. [216899]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 22 February 2005]:* National Statistics on take-up of major DWP benefits are published annually by the Department in Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up. These are based on the Family Resources Survey (FRS) for the relevant year and take account of both entitled non-recipients and non-entitled recipients. However, they are published significantly in arrears and the 2004-05 statistics will not be available for some time.

In the interim, indicative take-up figures may be calculated by comparing estimates of entitlement with actual numbers of claimants in the administrative data.

Projections from the Department's Policy Simulation Model, based on the 2002–03 Family Resources Survey, have yielded estimates of entitlement. This methodology suggests an initial view that in 2004–05 take-up is over 80 per cent. for those on the guarantee element, and could be as high as 90 per cent. for single women pensioners entitled to the guarantee element.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total value of pensioner credit paid in Chorley constituency to date is; and what the average sum paid in Chorley is. [218973]

Malcolm Wicks: Between 1 October 2003 and 31 December 2004 an estimated total of £9.4 million, rounded to the nearest £100,000, was paid in pension credit in the Chorley constituency. The average award in Chorley at 31 December 2004 was £38.32.

Sources:

Programme Accounting Computer System and IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions.

Pension schemes

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of pension schemes which were wound up while the sponsoring employer remained solvent between 1 May 2004 and 4 November 2004. [219453]

Malcolm Wicks: No such estimate has been made.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners receive attendance allowance; and what proportion this represents of all pensioners. [216760]

Maria Eagle: At August 2004, the latest date for which figures are available, 1, 403,000 pensioners received Attendance Allowance. This represents 15 per cent. of the total population aged 65 and over (eligibility for attendance allowance begins at age 65).

Staff Surveys

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library staff surveys for *(a)* the Department of Work and Pensions, *(b)* the Department of Social Security and *(c)* the executive agencies of each for the last seven years for which figures are available. [218911]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2002. The results for the staff surveys completed in 2002, 2003 and 2004 have been placed in the Library.

The available results for the staff surveys conducted within the predecessor departments and agencies have been placed within the Library. This includes the Employment Service in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001; Child Support Agency in 1999 and 2001; Benefits Agency in 1998 and the Appeals Service in 2001.

Winter Fuel Allowance (Battersea)

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each ward of Battersea constituency received the winter fuel allowance in 2003–04. [218528]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in each ward of Battersea constituency who received the winter fuel payments in 2003–04 is in the following table.

Parliamentary constituency: Battersea

Ward name	*WFP claimants 2003–04*
Balham	1,475
Fairfield	1,215
Latchmere	1,815
Northcote	1,205
Queenstown	1,485
Shaftesbury	1,425
St Mary's Park	1,665
Wandsworth Common	1,490

Notes:

1. All Wards based on Census Wards—those current as at April 2003.
2. The wards of Fairfield and Wandsworth Common are included as they are partially in the Battersea parliamentary constituency.
3. WFP data is the latest currently available, winter 2003–04.
4. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of 5.

Source:

IAD Information Centre.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 3 March 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Air Pollution

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the overall change in UK carbon dioxide emissions has been since 1997, taking 1997 as a base figure of 100; and what the change in carbon dioxide emissions from *(a)* industry, *(b)* domestic sector, *(c)* transport, *(d)* road transport and *(e)* air transport have been since 1997, taking 1997 as a base figure of 100. [218908]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* The following table contains the rebased carbon dioxide emission from 1997 to 2002. The figures are based on the 2004 official inventory ("UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory, 1990 to 2002") using new factors for Gas and Power Station Coal (Scenario 2 and 6) to be in line with the "Review of the UK Climate Change Programme Consultation Paper". The total decrease in carbon dioxide from 1997 to 2002 is 1.1 per cent.

	1997	*2002*
(a) Industry[1]	100	102.6
(b) Domestic sector	100	105.2
(c) Transport[2]	100	98.8
(d) Road transport	100	100.7
(e) Air transport[3]	100	113.6
(f) Other sources[4]	100	88.7
Total	100	98.9

[1] Includes energy industries and industrial processes
[2] Includes all domestic transport (incl. domestic aviation and domestic shipping only)
[3] Domestic aviation only (excl. international aviation)
[4] Includes businesses and land use change emissions (excl. landuse change removals)

Avian Flu

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what safeguards she has put in place to prevent the importation and spread of avian flu; and if she will make a statement; [219285]

(2) what steps she has taken to ensure that imports of poultry from countries with known outbreaks of avian flu are safe; what inspections are made of foodstuffs imported from such countries; and if she will make a statement. [218465]

Mr. Bradshaw: If there is an outbreak of disease in an exporting country, Community legislation allows member states to take appropriate emergency safeguard action, which may include a ban on imports of animal products from all, or parts, of that country, pending emergency action at Community level. Once Community measures are put in place the safeguard measures will reflect them. Safeguard measures are currently in place to ban or restrict imports of meat and other animal products of susceptible species in respect of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, including the Territory of Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and South Africa and Newcastle disease in Bulgaria

All poultry meat and products derived from birds imported from third countries must be accompanied by veterinary certification. As laid down in Community law.

All live birds, poultry meat and poultry meat products imported from third countries must be accompanied by a licence and/or veterinary certification. This confirms that the birds are not derived from an area where there has been an outbreak of avian influenza or Newcastle disease; it also confirms that live birds have not been vaccinated against Newcastle disease; show no clinical signs of disease and are fit to travel.

Post imports of live poultry, or eggs once hatched, must be held in quarantine for six weeks in an approved establishment.

All poultry meat and birds imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated border inspection posts where they are subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks. At least 20 per cent. of consignments of animal products undergo physical checks, and a number of animals in each consignment are physically checked. These checks ensure import conditions are met.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many incidents of avian flu have been reported in the UK in the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [219287]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since February 2004, five reports of suspected avian influenza have been notified to the State Veterinary Service. None were subsequently confirmed. The results of the UK survey for avian influenza in farmed poultry required by Commission Decision 2004/630/EC and carried out between August and December 2004 were all negative.

Defra has produced risk assessments on avian influenza in other countries and these are available on the Defra website.

The Diseases of Poultry (England) Order 2003 provides powers to control avian influenza and a contingency plan for avian influenza and Newcastle disease was laid before Parliament in March 2004 in line with provisions of the Animal Health Act of 1981 (as amended). The plan outlines Defra's objectives for disease control in terms of emergency preparedness, mobilisation of the response effort, and outbreak management. The contingency plan is currently being reviewed and is due to be laid before parliament in July this year.

Beef Market

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment

she has made of the impact of the withdrawal of *(a)* the over-30-month scheme and *(b)* other beef subsidies on the UK beef market. [217821]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows:

(a) Defra commissioned a report from the MLC entitled "Impact of OTM Exit on the UK Market" which is regularly updated as market conditions change. This describes the expected impact on the market of over-30-month cattle, cattle born after August 1996 when they return to the food chain after the OTM rule is replaced by a robust system of BSE testing.

(b) Defra has commissioned a number of reports examining the impact of the change in the support arrangements for agricultural production as a result of CAP reform. These are collated on Defra's website. The impact on the UK beef production industry is covered in these reports.

Biofuels

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has commissioned on steps to encourage the production of biofuels and bioethanol to meet the EU biofuels directive of May 2003. [217531]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are currently carrying out a feasibility study on the possible introduction of a Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation. In parallel, the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership are preparing advice for the Government on how a carbon certification scheme might operate. Cambridge University has been commissioned to review the economics of energy crops, including those used for biodiesel and bioethanol. In the light of these studies, the Government will consider the way forward for biofuels.

Cattle

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1653W, on bovine passports, if she will list the reasons for the successful appeals of the 8,196 bovines initially refused applications for passports: [218859]

Alun Michael: Cattle passports are issued by the British Cattle Movement Service which is part of the Rural Payments Agency.

Successful appeals in respect of the 8,196 cattle initially refused passports can be broken down as follows:

External circumstances outside the control of the farmer for example floods or industrial action—6 per cent.

Exceptional personal circumstances for example the bereavement of a close relative—11 per cent.

Exceptional postal delay—15 per cent.

Actions of officials for example mistakes or removal of farm records during inspection—12 per cent.

An illness or malady affecting the keeper which prevented the application being made on time—21 per cent.

Other reasons—including problems with the use of home computers or unavoidable delays in obtaining ear tags from manufacturers—35 per cent.

In all these cases, evidence of the exceptional circumstance was demonstrated.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will publish a Government strategy for the *(a)* control and *(b)* eradication of bovine TB from the British herd. [218326]

Mr. Bradshaw: The "Government Strategic Framework for the Sustainable Control of Bovine Tuberculosis in Great Britain" was published on 1 March.

The strategic framework focuses on what is achievable in the control of bovine TB in a 10 year timeframe. Whilst eradication is desirable we believe it is not achievable in 10 years.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the first results are expected from the Bourne/Krebs triplet trials. [218769]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 575W to the hon. Member for North-West Leicestershire (Mr David Taylor).

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her latest estimate is of the number of live cattle kept in the UK which were born *(a)* before and *(b)* after August 1996 which would be eligible for compensation payments under the over-30-month-scheme; and what records her Department has maintained of these cattle. [218366]

Alun Michael: At 24 February 2005 the Cattle Tracing System (CIS) database shows there to be 846,530 cattle alive that were born before 1 August 1996 and 3,166,935 cattle born after this date, all of which are potentially eligible for compensation under the over-30-month-scheme if they meet the scheme requirements.

The CTS is a computer based system to register cattle in Great Britain. CTS records the:

identification and death of cattle,

movements from birth to death of cattle issued with passports from 28 September 1998, and

movements of older cattle since 29 January 2001.

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what policies her Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218674]

Alun Michael: Support for employees with cancer is the same as support for employees with any long term (and possibly terminal) illness, through the following policies and services:

Welfare Services provide individual support.

Reduced working hours for medical reasons.

Reasonable adjustments to the workplace.

Special leave arrangements (including disability leave).

Retirement on medical grounds.

In each case the Department takes account of the wishes of the individual.

Committee on Radioactive Waste Management

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she has received from the Chairperson of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) concerning *(a)* the suspension of Dr. Keith Baverstock from the Committee and *(b)* the current status of Professor David Ball on CoRWM; and if she will make a statement on progress made to date by CoRWM in meeting its planned timetable. [217827]

Mr. Morley: CoRWM's sponsoring Ministers in Defra and the devolved administrations have jointly commissioned a review with the terms of reference:

"To consider (i) concerns identified by Dr. Keith Baverstock concerning the operation of the CoRWM Committee and (ii) the role and personal contribution of Dr. Baverstock in delivering the corporate aims and objectives of CoRWM. To report the outcome of this review, and to provide recommendations to CoRWM's sponsoring Ministers".

This follows receipt of representations from both the CoRWM Chair, Gordon MacKerron, and Dr. Keith Baverstock. Dr. Baverstock has been suspended from the Committee pending the outcome of this review.

The review is being carried out by the independent assessor, approved by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA), who was involved in the CoRWM appointments process. The assessor will be considering the information provided by relevant parties in arriving at his recommendations to Ministers.

Subsequent to the commissioning of this review, Professor David Ball informed Defra that he has voluntarily suspended himself from CoRWM's activities while the situation giving rise to Dr. Baverstock's suspension is resolved.

In the meantime CoRWM's work continues unchanged from the programme set out in its First Annual Report 2004, available on its website—www.corwm.org.uk. This will lead to the Committee publishing its short list of options and proposed assessment methodology for public and stakeholder consultation during the course of March 2005.

Climate Change

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funding was allocated to programmes dealing with *(a)* the risk of human-induced climate change, *(b)* assessment of the impact of climate change on the environment and *(c)* identification of mitigation and adaptation options for climate change since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [217553]

Mr. Morley: The Department's climate change science research programme analyses the risk of human-induced climate change, assesses its potential impacts, and means of adaptation and mitigation. The following table details this research programme's spend over the last three financial years.

£

Financial year	*Cost of research assessing the risk of human-induced climate change*	*Cost of research assessing the impact of climate change and identification of mitigation and adaptation options*
2002–03	9,780,160	3,143,938
2003–04	10,484,174	3,562,397
2004–05	11,732,070	3,947,992

Information for the financial year 1996–97 to 2001–02 is not available without disproportionate costs of retrieval. It is impossible to separate climate change impacts and adaptation research as these are complementary. An aggregate figure, therefore, describing research spend on both impacts *(b)* and adaptation/mitigation *(c)* has been presented. Data presented for the financial year 2004–05 are estimates of expected annual spend.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list government-funded *(a)* organisations and *(b)* projects whose sole duty is (i) to analyse and (ii) to combat the effects of climate change in the UK; how much funding was allocated to each in 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [217554]

Mr. Morley: Information on all of the Government's spending on addressing the impacts of climate change is not held centrally—work to analyse these impacts and then to build in adaptation is rightfully carried out by many Departments in the course of their policy planning and implementation.

The Department supports a broad climate change science research programme, which includes funding a number of organisations to undertake projects to assess the impacts of climate change in the UK, and potential adaptation responses. It is not possible to separate the funding into discrete categories of that which supports analysis of the impacts of climate change, and that which supports the investigation of adaptation responses to tackle these impacts, since in almost all cases, projects address both.

The following table provides a breakdown of the relevant research projects, giving the project title, the organisation contracted to carry out the research, and the Department's allocated funding for this financial year, 2004–05.

Project	*Contractor*	*Cost (£)*
Climate Prediction Programme	Met Office	10,793,000
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group 2 Technical Support Unit	Met Office	341,700
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group 2 Co-chair	Parry Associates	46,875
Stabilisation Scoping Study	University of East Anglia	35,190
Climate Impacts LINK Project	Climate Research Unit (University of East Anglia)	98,006

Project	Contractor	Cost (£)
UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) 2002	Environmental Change Institute (University of Oxford)	644,812
Climate Change and the Visitor Economy in England's Northwest	Sustainability Northwest	70,000
Review of the UK Climate Impacts Programme (2004)	ESYS	39,972
UK Cross-Regional Research Programme: Project A—Adaptation Responses To Climate Change for New Development in the Growth Areas	Land Use Consultants	24,521
UK Cross-Regional Research Programme: Project B—Climate Change and Business	Risk Solutions	73,550
UK Cross-Regional Research Programme: Project C—Climate Change and Water Resources	HR Wallingford	29,108
UK Cross-Regional Research Programme: Project D—Countryside and the Rural Economy	Land Use Consultants	31,820
UK Cross-Regional Research Programme: Project E—Costs of Impacts and Adaptation	Metroeconomica	13,500
UK Cross-Regional Research Programme: Project F—Linking Adaptation Research and Practice	Tyndall Centre (University of East Anglia)	25,808
Development of a Metamodel Tool for Regional Integrated Climate Change Management	Cranfield University	165,000
Publication of outputs arising from Agriculture—Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Programme and related programmes	Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research	13,000
Re-assessing Drought Risks for UK Crops Using UKCIP02 Climate Change Scenarios	Rothamsted Research	18,000
The development of a soil properties database for England and Wales for climate change impact studies	Cranfield University	68,000
Spatial Temporal Rainfall Modelling with Climate Change Scenarios	University of London: Imperial College and University College	45,141
Marine Biodiversity and Climate Change (MARCLIM)	Marine Biological Association	10,000
Assessing Climate Change Effects on Land Use and the Ecosystems (ACCELERATES)	University of Oxford	4,831
Climate Change And Migratory Species	British Trust for Ornithology	41,700
Marine Biodiversity and Climate Change: Assessing and Predicting the Influence of Climate on the Marine Environment	Marine Biological Association	10,739
The Impacts of Climate Change on Soil Functions	National Soils Resources Institute	29,981
Total		12,674,254

The implementation of adaptation actions falls to a wide range of organisations in both public and private sector.

The figures provided here do not cover the Government's funding for organisations and projects that analyse the causes of climate change and contribute to its mitigation through reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

Cormorants

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely impact on the UK breeding population of cormorants of her Department's change of policy on cormorant control. [217969]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* Modelling by Defra's Central Science Laboratory (CSL) has examined the likely consequences of the new policy on winter cormorant numbers. The focus on winter numbers is appropriate since this coincides with the period when licensed shooting occurs; wintering counts are also recorded annually, unlike counts of breeding birds which are only conducted infrequently at the national level. CSL have explored the limits within which the licensing system may operate without risking the conservation status of the cormorant population. The aim has been to identify prudent upper limits for shooting and not to recommend levels of population reduction. To further safeguard the conservation of cormorants Defra will monitor the national winter population and if necessary reduce or stop the granting of licences should the population not respond in the manner predicted.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of fish refuges in reducing predation by cormorants; and how much her Department has spent on research into the effectiveness of fish refuges in the last two years. [217970]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* Mr Bradshaw Defra's Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science is currently undertaking research into the use of fish refuges to reduce damage to inland fisheries by cormorants. Early results are encouraging and suggest that the technique has considerable potential for reducing fish losses at some sites, such as smaller stillwater coarse fisheries. Currently, fish refuges do not offer a solution for all fisheries. However, work is continuing to further evaluate the benefits of introducing refuges in a range of fisheries and to assess any effects of the refuge structures on anglers. Over the past two years this research has cost the Department £260k.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many licences to control cormorants have been issued in each English county since 16 September 2004; and how many birds are permitted to be killed under each licence. [217971]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* Up until 9 February 2005 the Department granted 274 licences. The minimum number of birds which have been licenced to be killed is 1800. This equates to an average of almost seven birds per licence. The analysis of licences per county involves a disproportionate cost and has not been supplied.

Countryside Agency

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria she is using to determine the location of the new headquarters of the Countryside Agency; and whether premises in Cheltenham are under consideration. [214714]

Alun Michael: The Secretary of State announced in Rural Strategy 2004 that the 'new' Countryside Agency would in due course be located in a "lagging" rural area. For these purposes, "lagging" rural areas will be defined by reference to those local authority districts demonstrating poor economic performance in their rural economies, as set out in Annex B to Defra's Public Service Agreement 2004 (see www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/busplan/tn.pdf). As Rural Strategy 2004 sets out, poor economic performance is both affected by, and affects, social exclusion.

The annex above lists the geography of poor economic performance in rural England as follows:

Region	*1. Rural districts with consistently poor rural economic performance*	*2. Other urban or rural districts containing significant poor rural economic performance*
1.SE	1. Shepway	1. New Forest
	2. Isle of Wight	2. Wealden
	3. Swale	—
	4. Dover	—
	5. Rother	—
2.SW	1. Kerrier	1. West Somerset
	2. Penwith	2. West Dorset
	3. Carrick	3. Sedgemoor
	4. Caradon	4. Teignbridge
	5. Restormal	—
	6. North Cornwall	—
	7. Torridge	—
	8.North Devon	—
	9. West Devon	—
	10. Forest of Dean	—
3.EoE	1. North Norfolk	1. Great Yarmouth
	2.Fenland	2. Peterborough
	3. Breckland	3. Forest Heath
	4. Tendring	4. Waveney
	5. Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	—
4.WM	1. Oswestry	1. Staffordshire Moorlands
	2. Herefordshire	2. North Warwickshire
	3. South Shropshire	3. Wychavon
	4. North Shropshire	—
5.EM	1. East Lindsay	1. Bassetlaw
	2. West Lindsay	2. Newark and Sherwood
	3. High Peak	3. Derbyshire Dales
	4. South Holland	—
	5. Bolsover	—
6.NW	1. Copeland	1. Lancaster
	2. Allerdale	2. Carlisle
	3. Eden	3. Pendle
	4. West Lancashire	4. Crewe and Nantwich
	—	5. South Lakeland
	—	6. Ribble Valley
7.YH	1. Scarborough	1. Craven
	2. East Riding	2. Barnsley
	3. North Lincolnshire	3. Wakefield
	—	4. Doncaster
	—	5. Harrogate
	—	6. Selby
	—	7. Hambleton
8.NE	1. Sedgefield	1. Redcar and Cleveland
	2. Wear Valley	2. Tynedale
	3. Derwentside	3. Castle Morpeth
	4. Alnwick	4. Darlington
	5. Berwick	
	6. Teesdale	

We are looking forward to receiving proposals shortly from the agency, taking into account the Government's policy priorities set out in Rural Strategy 2004 and the objectives of the 'new' Countryside Agency, that will enable an early decision to be made on the new location.

Dairy Herds

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many dairy herds had an average size of *(a)* less than 20, *(b)* 21to 40, *(c)* 41 to 60, *(d)* 61 to 80, *(e)* 81 to 100, *(f)* 101 to 120, *(g)* 120 to 140, *(h)* 141 to 160, *(i)* 161 to 180, *(j)* 181 to 200 and *(k)* more than 200 in (i) 1995, (ii) 2000 and (iii) the last year for which figures are available. [219310]

Alun Michael: The figures in the table show dairy herd and holding numbers in England by dairy cow size group in (i) 1995, (ii) 2000 and (iii) 2003. The dairy herd are all cows and heifers that have calved and including cows in calf, cows in milk and cull cows.

Dairy cows in England by dairy cow size group in (i) 1995, (ii) 2000 and (iii) 2003

	Holdings	*Dairy Cattle*	*Average herd size*
(i) 1995			
0: < 20	2,963	27,021	9
20: < 40	4,033	121,984	30
40: < 60	4,868	237,568	49
60: < 80	3,972	273,603	69
80: < 100	2,993	265,273	89
100: < 120	2,029	219,785	108
120: < 140	1,319	169,267	128
140: < 160	875	129,718	148
160: < 180	526	88,528	168
180: < 200	334	62,912	188
200 and over	766	213,623	279
Total	24,678	1,809,282	73
(ii) 2000			
0: < 20	3,060	18,493	6
20: < 40	2,511	76,371	30
40: < 60	3,269	160,974	49
60: < 80	3,064	211,324	69
80: < 100	2,417	214,458	89
100: < 120	1,785	194,020	109
120: < 140	1,271	163,015	128
140: < 160	872	129,178	148
160: < 180	588	98,811	168
180: < 200	393	74,202	189
200 and over	864	234,474	271
Total	20,094	1,575,320	78
(iii) 2003			
0: < 20	2,404	17,073	7
20: < 40	1,739	65,185	37
40: < 60	2,505	137,125	55
60: < 80	2,333	173,823	75
80: < 100	1,836	172,989	94
100: < 120	1,411	159,952	113

Dairy cows in England by dairy cow size group in (i) 1995, (ii) 2000 and (iii) 2003

	Holdings	*Dairy Cattle*	*Average herd size*
120: < 140	1,089	143,971	132
140: < 160	807	122,970	152
160: < 180	546	94,068	172
180: < 200	393	75,669	192
200 and over	964	271,902	282
Total	16,027	1,434,727	90

Notes:
(a) Figures prior to 2000 are for main holdings only, from 2000 onwards main and minor are included.
A holding is defined as minor if it meets all of the following conditions:
1. the total area is less than 6 hecatres
2. the labour requirement is estimated to be less than 100 standard person-days
3. there is no regular full-time farmer or worker
4. the glasshouse area is less than 100 square metres
5. the occupier does not farm another holding

Source:
June Agricultural Census

Deer

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of wild deer in the UK, broken down by breed. [218931]

Mr. Bradshaw: The following are mid-1990s estimates of wild deer numbers in Britain by species[1].

Species	*Number*
Red deer	360,000
Roe deer	500,000
Fallow deer	100,000
Sika Deer	11,500
Muntjac	40,000
Chinese Water deer	480–650

[1] From Harris S, Morris P, Wray S, and Yalden D. (1995) A review of British Mammals. JNCC, Peterborough. Quoted in "Current and Future Deer Management Options," Defra December 2003.

Disability Discrimination Act

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the application of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to access to the countryside, with particular reference to the use of gates and stiles. [218382]

Alun Michael: The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 ensures that private or public landowners, who are "service providers", will be subject to the provisions of the Act. Service providers are required to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide a reasonable means of avoiding physical features.

As far as rights of way are concerned, we believe that this will apply to features such as stiles and gates—which might act as barriers to disabled people accessing their services—since the provision and maintenance of these is the landowner's responsibility. However, it is not clear at this stage what "reasonable steps" would mean in practice and this will probably only be established by case law.

Section 69 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides for the Secretary of State to issue guidance on how the powers to authorise works are to be exercised. We plan to issue this guidance later this year and will consider using this opportunity to issue guidance on the application of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

As regards access to open country under Part I of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, we believe that landowners are unlikely to be service providers under the Disability Discrimination Act just because their land has been designated under this part of the Act. Landowners may become service providers if they voluntarily provide signs, gates, stiles or other infrastructure to support the right of access, but there is no case law in this area. If the courts decide that the Disability Discrimination Act does apply in these circumstances, then we would expect "reasonable steps" to take account of factors like cost, land management, privacy and the level of demand from local disabled people

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the Adaptation to Technical and Scientific Progress of the Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds (ORNIS) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217816]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress of the Directive on conservation of wild birds (the ORNIS Committee) met twice during the Irish and Dutch residencies on 18 March 2004 and 20 September 2004 in Brussels. The ORNIS Committee did not meet during the Italian presidency. UK representation on 18 March 2004 comprised one official from my Department together with a scientific adviser from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and on the 20 September 2004 an official from the Scottish Executive attended together with a scientific adviser from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Gambia) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217823]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Greenland) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217824]

(3) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Guinea) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217825]

(4) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Guinea Bissau) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217826]

(5) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Cape Verde) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217828]

(6) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Comoros) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217829]

(7) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Côte d'Ivoire) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217830]

(8) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Estonia) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217831]

(9) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Angola) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217883]

(10) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Argentina) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217884]

(11) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch residency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EC-Russia) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217926]

(12) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-São Tomé and Principe) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217927]

(13) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Senegal) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217928]

(14) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Seychelles) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217929]

(15) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Madagascar) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217932]

(16) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Morocco) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217933]

(17) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Mauritania) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217934]

(18) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EC-Poland) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217935]

(19) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch residency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC- Equatorial Guinea) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement;[217936]

(20) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Mauritius) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217937]

(21) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Latvia) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217938]

(22) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Fisheries Joint Committee (EEC-Lithuania) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [217939]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK did not attend any of the Joint Committees (except that for EU-Greenland) listed in these questions as we have no fishing interest in these waters. Records about these meetings are not held by my Department. The meetings of the EU/Greenland Joint Committee took place on 28 September 2004 and 1–2 February 2005. The discussions were about the operation of the Fourth EU/Greenland Protocol. The UK was represented by a Defra official.

There are no bilateral fisheries agreements between Estonia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Argentina and Morocco.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Oils and Fat met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217847]

Alun Michael: Meetings of the Oils and Fats Management Committee were held on the following dates:

Presidency	*Date of meeting*
Italian	16 July 2003
	28 August 2003
	10 September 2003
	24 September 2003
	8 October 2003
	19 November 2003
	10 December 2003
Irish	21 January 2004
	19 February 2004
	24 March 2004
	15 April 2004
	27 May 2004
	1 June 2004
	25 June 2004
Dutch	23 July 2004
	26 August 2004
	15 September 2004
	29 September 2004
	20 October 2004
	12 November 2004
	10 December 2004

All meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by a Defra official.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004, and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Natural Fibres met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217848]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows.

Italian presidency—July to December 2003

The committee met on the 28 November 2003 when one UK expert attended.

Irish presidency—January to June 2004

The committee met on 24 March and 28 May 2004. On each occasion one UK expert attended.

Dutch presidency—July to December 2004

The committee met on 7 September when one UK expert attended, and on 30 November 2004, when two UK representatives attended.

The meetings provide an opportunity to exchange market information and to discuss the regulation of natural fibres.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217855]

Alun Michael: Meetings of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Management Committee were held on the following dates:

Presidency	*Date of meeting*
Italian	3 July 2003
	22/23 July 2003
	4 September 2003
	16/17 September 2003
	14 October 2003
	12 November 2003
	15 December 2003
Irish	13 January 2004
	10 February 2004
	9 March 2004
	25 March 2004
	21 April 2004
	11 May 2004
	18 June 2004
Dutch	23 July 2004
	8 September 2004
	14 September 2004
	6 October 2004
	19 November 2004
	8 December 2004

All meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by Defra officials.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004, and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Products Processed from Fruit and Vegetables met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217856]

Alun Michael: Meetings of the Processed Fruit and Vegetables Management Committee were held on the following dates:

Presidency	*Dates of meetings*
Italian	22/23 July 2003
	16/17 September 2003
	14 October 2003
	12 November 2003
	15 December 2003

Presidency	*Dates of meetings*
Irish	13 January 2004
	10 February 2004
	9 March 2004
	21 April 2004
	11 May 2004
	27 May 2004
	18 June 2004
Dutch	23 July 2004
	8 September 2004
	14 September 2004
	6 October 2004
	19 November 2004
	8 December 2004

All meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by Defra officials.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004, and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Wines met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217857]

Alun Michael: The Wine Management Committee met nine times during the Italian presidency, 10 times during the Irish presidency and six times during the Dutch presidency. The meetings took place on the following dates: 8 and 23 July 2003, 9 and 23 September 2003, 15 and 28 October 2003, 12 and 25 November 2003, 10 December 2003, 13–14 and 27 January 2004, 10 and 24 February 2004, 9 and 23 March 2004, 20 April 2004, 11 May 2004, 9 and 15 June 2004, 13 July 2004, 17 September 2004, 12 and 26 October 2004, 24 November 2004 and 16 December 2004. All meetings were held in Brussels.

UK Government representation consisted of one Defra official for the majority of these meetings, although on several occasions, two Defra officials attended in view of the nature of the agenda items. In each case the representatives were from the Department's Food and Drink Industry Division.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Raw Tobacco met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217858]

Alun Michael: Meetings of the Raw Tobacco Management Committee were held on the following dates:

Irish presidency

28 January 2004

26 February 2004

6 May 2004

25 May 2004

27 May 2004

17 June 2004

25 June 2004

Dutch presidency

29 July 2004

22 September 2004

27 October 2004

30 November 2004

The Raw Tobacco Management Committee did not meet during the Italian presidency.

All meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by a Defra official.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004, and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Hops met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217861]

Alun Michael: Meetings of the Hops Management Committee were held on the following dates:

Presidency	*Date of meeting*
Italian	2 October 2003
Irish	No meeting
Dutch	11 November 2004

All meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by Defra officials.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004, and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Seeds met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217862]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Management Committee for the common organisation of the market in seeds did not meet during the Italian presidency. During the Irish and Dutch presidencies the Committee met in Brussels on the following dates, with UK representatives as noted:

	Representative from:
Irish Presidency	
28 January 2004	The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Dutch Presidency	
29 September 2004	The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU (Cm 6174 laid in April 2004, Cm 6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm 6450 laid in February 2005), which covers the periods of the above presidencies, is available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Live Plants and Floriculture Products met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217863]

Mr. Bradshaw: There were no meetings of the Management Committee for Live Plants and Floriculture Products during the period covered by the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies.

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm 174 laid in April 2004, Cm 6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm 6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Bananas met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217864]

Alun Michael: Meetings of the Bananas Management Committee were held on the following dates:

Presidency	*Date of meeting*
Italian	16 July 2003
	5 November 2003
Irish	11 February 2004
	26 February 2004
	1 April 2004
	6 April 2004
	11 May 2004
Dutch	17 June 2004
	25 June2004
	23 July 2004
	13 October 2004
	22 October 2004
	18 November 2004

All meetings were held in Brussels and were attended by Defra officials and on occasions a representative from the Rural Payments Agency .

A series of Command Papers on developments in the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Implementation Committee for spirit drinks met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217868]

Alun Michael: The Spirit Drinks Implementation Committee (SDIC) met once during the Italian presidency, three times during the Irish presidency and twice during the Dutch presidency. The meetings took place on the following dates: 29 October 2003, 9 and 23 March 2004, 15 June 2004, 27 September 2004 and 24 November 2004. All meetings were held in Brussels.

UK representation at all these meetings consisted of one Defra official, apart from that held in November 2004, when two Defra officials attended. In each case the representatives were from the Department's Food and Drink Industry Division.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Implementation Committee on aromatised wine-based drinks met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217869]

Alun Michael: The Aromatised Wine Implementation Committee meets very infrequently. There have been no meetings of the Committee since 2002.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the joint meetings of management and/or regulatory committees in the field of agriculture—agrimonetary questions met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217871]

Alun Michael: The committees dealing with these issues met irregularly over the period specified.

The meetings took place in Brussels and were attended by officials from Defra only.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the joint meetings of management and/or regulatory committees in the field of agriculture—trade mechanisms met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217872]

Alun Michael: Meetings of the Directorate General (DG) Agri Trade Mechanisms Management Committee usually take place on a monthly basis in Brussels. The Committee met five times during each of the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies.

During the Italian presidency, the committee met on 15 July, 16 September, 14 October, 11 November and 9 December 2003.

During the Irish presidency, the committee met on 20 January, 17 February, 16 March, 20 April and 25 June 2004.

During the Dutch presidency, the committee met on 20 July, 21 September, 19 October, 16 November and 14 December 2004.

The United Kingdom's delegation to the DG Agri Trade Mechanisms Management Committee is led by officials from the Rural Payments Agency, with HM Customs in attendance depending on the agenda.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Standing Forestry Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217874]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Standing Forestry Committee met twice during the Italian presidency, on 1 July 2003 and 4 November 2003; it met four times during the Irish presidency, on 12 January 2004, 31 March 2004, 28 May 2004 and 22 June 2004; and it met twice during the Dutch presidency, on 28 September 2004 and 22 October 2004. All the meetings took place in Brussels and were attended by Forestry Commission officials.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund Committee and working party on irregularities met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217881]

Alun Michael: The European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund Committee and related working parties met on average about once a month during the lifetime of each presidency.

All meetings were held in Brussels. The UK was represented by officials from Defra, and, depending on the agenda and their availability, officials from the UK Co-ordinating Body, the Treasury, the Devolved Administrations, and the Rural Payments Agency also attended some meetings.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the committee on supply of agricultural products to the population of the former Soviet Union met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217882]

Alun Michael: The Department has no record of such a committee and is not aware that any such meetings have taken place.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Standing Committee on Propagating Material and Plants of Fruit Genera and Species met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215918]

Alun Michael: The Standing Committee on Propagating Material and Plants of Fruit Genera and Species met once during the Italian presidency on 14 October 2003; once during the Irish presidency on 2 April 2004; and once during the Dutch presidency on 18/19 October 2004. All the meetings took place in Brussels and were attended by an official from the Department's Plant Health Division and also, in the case of the meeting on 18/19 October 2004, a scientific adviser from the Central Science Laboratory.

The mandate of the Committee is to consider and adopt measures to facilitate implementation of Council Directive 92/34/EEC on the marketing of fruit propagating material and fruit plants intended for fruit production. The UK's priorities are to secure arrangements which are proportionate and facilitate access to a wide range of healthy propagating material, and provide increased opportunities for UK trade while ensuring co-ordination with the parallel EU plant health regime. The Committee's agendas and meeting reports are available on the European Commission's website at http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/rc/scpfgs/index_en.html.

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods for the above presidencies are available on the FCO website at http://www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Standing Committee on Seeds and Propagating Material for Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215919]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Standing Committee on Seeds and Propagating Material for Agriculture, Horticulture and Forestry met in Brussels on the following dates with UK representatives as noted:

Presidency	*UK representatives*
Italian	
2003	
24/25 July	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
22 September	Defra, and the UK Permanent Representation to the EU
25/26 September	Defra (including the Central Science Laboratory) and the Forestry Commission
15 October	Defra
27/28 October	Defra
11 November	Forestry Commission
26 November	Defra
15 December	Defra
Irish	
2004	
26/27 January	Defra
2 February	Defra

Presidency	*UK representatives*
23 February	Defra (including the Central Science Laboratory) and the Forestry Commission
8/9 March	Defra
6/7 May	Defra
25 June	Defra and the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Dutch Presidency 2004	
6 July	Defra
13/14 September	Defra and the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
21 October	Defra
12 November	Defra
16/17 November	No UK representative

UK representation at these meetings depended upon the agenda for each meeting.

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU (Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005), which covers the periods of the above presidencies, is available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for Community protection of plant variety rights met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215920]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Standing Committee on Community Plant Variety Rights did not meet during the Italian and Irish presidencies. The Committee met once during the Dutch presidency on 24 November 2004 in Brussels and was attended by representatives from the Plant Variety Rights Office in my Department.

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU (Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005), which covers the periods of the above presidencies, is available on the FCO website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

EU Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what lessons have been learned from the deadline for the implementation of phase I of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in the UK for phase II. [219339]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* The directive specifies the dates by which National Allocation Plans in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) should be submitted to the European Commission, final allocation decisions should be made and the date by which allowances should be issued. For phase I these deadlines have proved extremely challenging to meet for all member states.

One of the key lessons learned from phase I is with regard to the volume of analysis, negotiation and decision making required to develop a robust and effective NAP within a demanding timeframe. In light of this we have already started work on phase II in particular focussing on analytical work to inform the decision making process.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many member states have implemented Phase 1 of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [219340]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* The Commission has approved 21 National Allocation Plans (NAPs) (eight on 7 July 2004, eight on 20 October 2004 and five on 27 December 2004). The Commission has yet to announce decisions on NAPs from Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy and Greece.

To date only Denmark has begun spot trading, although the Netherlands are expected to start shortly. A number of member states have announced installation level allocations (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Slovenia and Ireland) but are not yet in a position to issue allowances, either as a result of the registry not being approved or because a final allocation decision has not yet been made.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the European Commission to make a decision on the UK's application for an opt out from Phase 1 of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [219341]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* We aim to make an application to the Commission for temporary exclusion from the EU Emissions Trading Scheme for Climate Change Agreement participants before Easter, after operators have made their applications to Defra by 4 March. We do not know when the Commission will make a decision on the application, but there is no guarantee that they will approve it.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent developments there have been on the application to the European Commission for exemption from phase one of the Emissions Trading Scheme; and if she will make a statement. [218612]

Mr. Morley: Installation level allocations for the National Allocation Plan were published on 14 February. Operators of Climate Change Agreements were asked to decide whether they wished to apply for temporary exclusion by 4 March. Defra aims to make an application to the Commission before Easter.

Fallen Stock Scheme

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what threshold has been set for the number of farmers who need to sign up to the Fallen Stock Scheme in order to make it viable; and if she will make a statement. [218471]

Mr. Bradshaw: In its business projections for the Scheme the National Fallen Stock Company estimated that it would need 40–50,000 members to ensure the Scheme was viable in the longer term. However, no threshold has been set and the number which would ensure viability may differ from this depending on how closely actual Scheme costs and income match those that had been projected.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what safeguards she has put in place to ensure that contamination does not take place between farms when animals are transferred through the Fallen Stock Scheme; and if she will make a statement; [218472]

(2) what research she has conducted of the risks of bio-contamination occurring due to the Fallen Stock Scheme; and if she will make a statement. [218473]

Mr. Bradshaw: Animal By-Products legislation, which applies equally to fallen stock collected outside and inside the Scheme, already controls the collection, storage and transportation of animal by-products, including animal carcases. It also requires records to be kept of any consignment of animal by-products to assist in the auditing and traceability of this material. General guidance on biosecurity is also available on the Defra website.

Although no formal assessment has been made of the biosecurity risks of the National Fallen Stock Scheme, Scheme rules require that fallen stock are collected and disposed of according to strict biosecurity guidelines and is available on the Defra website. The National Fallen Stock Company has engaged the State Veterinary Service to inspect collection premises and vehicles to ensure compliance with these rules.

Farm Income

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total estimated income for the farming industry was in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [218470]

Alun Michael: Information on total income from farming for the years 1995 to 2004 is given in the following table:

Total income from farming (real terms at 2004 prices)

	£ million
1995	6,599
1996	5,962
1997	3,508
1998	2,432
1999	2,424
2000	1,805
2001	2,037
2002	2,521
2003	3,281
2004	3,014

Total income from farming is income generated by production within the agriculture industry, including subsidies. It represents business profits plus remuneration for work done by owners and other unpaid workers.

Fisheries

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in which other EU member states the fishing industries are subject to full cost recovery for their management costs; how many have partial cost recovery; and how many do not charge their industries management costs. [218140]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department does not hold information on all other EU member states in relation to cost recovery for fisheries management. However, we are making enquiries in order to complete the information and will respond in writing once we have the complete picture.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received about the withdrawal of designated port status for haddock landings from Warkworth Harbour, Amble, Northumberland; and if she will reconsider the decision. [219077]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* The Fisheries Department has received three representations regarding the withdrawal of designated port status for haddock landings from Warkworth Harbour, Amble, Northumberland.

The purpose of designating ports is to assist Defra inspectors in the monitoring of landings of fish. Amble was designated in 2004 following the introduction of the haddock permit scheme which made it compulsory for vessels with haddock permits to land into designated ports. It was made clear at the time that designation would only remain while the haddock permit scheme remained. The scheme has now ended.

Under current rules, landing into a designated port is not compulsory except for vessels with more than two tonnes of cod on board. Vessels landing into Amble do not normally catch such quantities and they are therefore free to continue landing there, subject to requirements for advance notification in certain circumstances. I therefore do not propose to reconsider the decision.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what proportion of the management costs of the UK fishing industry was borne *(a)* by her Department and *(b)* by the industry in the last year for which figures are available; [218116]

(2) what proportion of the management costs of the UK fishing industry was borne by her Department in the last year for which figures are available. [218117]

Mr. Bradshaw: The costs of the Fisheries Directorate within the Department was £53 million in financial year 2003–04. This included expenditure on enforcement, regulation, quota management, licensing, European negotiation, research and policy development. All of these activities contribute to management of the industry. Devolved administrations bear their own costs.

The industry bears the cost of Producer Organisations (PO) which play a part in quota management. The Department does not have information on the sums involved.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was spent by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* departmental sponsored bodies on research into aquaculture and fish farming at sea in the last year for which figures are available. [218127]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra spent £1,907,488 on aquaculture related research including fish health and welfare in 2004–05. The Sea Fish Industry Authority have allocated £190,000 to fund aquaculture research and development projects in 2004–05. They also contribute about £150,000 to the research work of the Scottish Association of Marine Science in 2004–05.

FOI Requests

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how many occasions when her officials have been processing requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 it has been necessary to extend the statutory 20 working day limit for response due to the need to assess whether the public interest in disclosing the information requested outweighed the public interest in witholding the information requested. [214644]

Alun Michael: It must be remembered that officials are dealing within an entirely new set of requirements and we expect these processes to be much easier to follow once they are bedded in. To date our central tracking system records that there have been a total of 14 requests for information where a reply has had to be extended past the statutory 20 working day limit due to the need to apply the Public Interest Test. Of these requests nine were under the Freedom of Information Act and five were under the new Environmental Information Regulations.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her contingency plans are for dealing with a future foot and mouth epidemic. [217535]

Mr. Bradshaw: The measures that the Government would take in the event of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease are set out in the Defra FMD Contingency Plan, the latest version of which was laid before Parliament at the end of March 2004. These include the immediate imposition of movement controls on all susceptible livestock, strict bio-security requirements and enhanced options for controlling the disease. Vaccination would be considered from the outset of an outbreak in addition to the culling of all susceptible animals on infected premises and those that have been exposed to infection, as required by EU law.

We are engaging with operational partners and with stakeholders to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and the measures that would be taken in an outbreak. Plans are also in place in the event of an outbreak to enable a rapid increase in resources and for the implementation of contingency contracts, including that for emergency vaccination. We have revised the instructions for staff and are ensuring that they are trained and equipped to deal with an outbreak of disease. A revised version of the contingency plan, incorporating the lessons learned from the national foot and mouth disease exercise held last June, will be issued for public consultation shortly.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has evaluated on whether wild birds can spread the foot and mouth virus, with particular reference to geese. [218662]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department commissioned and published a risk assessment to consider the risks of importation of contaminated meat and meat products and the subsequent exposure of GB livestock. Several viral pathogens were included in this work, among them Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD).

As part of this work the risk of transfer and spread of contaminated material, by scavengers (including wild birds), from an infected site to livestock holdings was considered.

Foot and mouth disease virus has been recovered from the plumage and feet of birds in contact with affected livestock, however, there is a lack of evidence that birds play a significant role in the spread of the disease. In those cases where wild geese were possibly implicated in 2001 UK outbreak of FMD, other more likely sources were usually found.

Greenhouse Gases

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the levels of greenhouse gases emitted by the UK were in each of the last 10 years; and what levels were emitted during that period by other EU countries. [218290]

Mr. Morley: The following table contains the most recent greenhouse gas emissions estimates, in million tonnes of carbon equivalent per year, for each of the EU-15 countries and for the ED-15 collectively from the European Environment Agency.

Member state	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*
Austria	21.27	22.36	20.45	20.45	20.73	21.55	22.64
Belgium	39.82	40.64	40.36	40.09	41.45	42.27	43.36
Denmark	18.82	21.55	19.91	20.73	21.82	21.00	24.55
Finland	21.00	20.45	19.64	19.64	21.55	20.73	22.36
France	154.09	160.64	157.91	151.64	150.55	152.73	157.09
Germany	340.64	326.18	312.55	308.45	302.18	300.27	305.18
Greece	28.64	28.64	28.91	29.18	29.73	30.00	31.09
Ireland	14.45	14.73	15.00	15.00	15.55	15.82	16.09
Italy	138.82	139.36	138.00	136.36	134.45	143.18	141.00
Luxemburg	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	2.73	2.73
Netherlands	57.55	59.45	59.45	60.27	60.55	61.36	63.82
Portugal	15.82	16.36	17.45	16.91	17.18	18.27	17.73
Spain	77.73	79.36	81.82	78.82	82.91	86.18	84.55
Sweden	19.64	19.64	19.64	19.64	20.45	20.18	21.00
United Kingdom	202.64	202.91	196.64	191.18	189.82	187.09	193.09
EU-15	1,153.91	1,156.09	1,131.00	1,111.64	1,112.45	1,123.36	1,146.27

Member state	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Austria	22.36	22.36	21.82	22.09	22.91	23.18
Belgium	40.91	42.27	40.36	40.91	40.64	40.91
Denmark	22.09	20.73	19.91	18.55	18.82	18.55
Finland	22.09	21.27	21.00	20.45	22.09	22.36
France	154.91	159.00	153.82	152.18	153.27	151.09
Germany	295.09	288.00	278.18	277.09	280.09	277.09
Greece	32.73	33.82	33.82	35.45	36.82	36.82
Ireland	16.91	17.45	18.00	18.55	19.09	18.82
Italy	142.64	145.91	147.27	148.36	151.09	151.09
Luxemburg	2.45	2.18	2.45	2.73	2.73	3.00
Netherlands	59.45	61.09	58.09	58.09	58.91	58.36
Portugal	18.55	19.64	21.82	21.27	21.27	22.36
Spain	90.27	93.00	100.91	105.00	104.45	109.09
Sweden	19.91	19.91	19.09	18.55	18.55	19.09
United Kingdom	186.55	185.18	176.73	176.73	178.91	173.18
EU-15	1,126.91	1,131.82	1,113.27	1,116.00	1,129.64	1,125.00

The data, expressed as million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent per year, are published in the "Annual European Community greenhouse gas inventory 1990–2002 and inventory report 2004", which is available from the European Environment Agency (http://www.eea.eu.int/main html).

The estimates differ a little from those published in the Consultation Paper for the Review of the Climate Change Programme because the latter contain estimates for emissions due from land use change, which are not included in the comparative data from the European Environment Agency, and because of revisions to the emission factors for coal used in power stations and for natural gas, as described in the Consultation Paper.

Marine Protection

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to protect coral reefs and seamounts in UK territorial waters. [208419]

Mr. Bradshaw: Reefs are included in annex I of the EC Habitats Directive and the UK has designated 33 Natura sites in territorial waters under article 4 of the directive which have reefs listed as a feature of interest. These are biogenic and rocky reefs rather than coral reefs given available data on the nature and distribution of reefs in UK territorial waters. However, the UK's statutory nature advisers will be investigating whether there are further occurrences of marine habitats listed in annex I that meet the criteria in annex III of the directive as part of a wider exercise in which EC member states are working with the European Commission to extend the Habitats Directive into the marine environment.

In 1999 a habitat action plan for *Lophelia pertusa* reefs was published as part of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP). The objectives of the action plan are to protect the distribution and status of the *Lophelia pertusa* reefs to enhance their density and community richness.

The UK is also working through OSPAR's Biodiversity Committee to identify species (and habitats) in need of protection. *Lophelia pertusa* reefs have been classified as a priority habitat, OSPAR is currently investigating possible management measures.

There are no known occurrences of seamounts in UK territorial waters.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will answer the question from the hon. Member for Portsmouth South, ref 200297. [216500]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1660W.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the projects being undertaken by her Department in respect of which information cannot be given in answer to parliamentary questions as a result of commercial confidentiality. [216634]

Alun Michael: Requests for information on projects currently being undertaken by the Department would be considered on their merits in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act governing disclosure or exemption(s) from disclosure.

Single Farm Payments

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to assist farmers with cashflow difficulties arising from switching from IACS to Single Farm Payments; and if she will make interim payments to them. [217537]

Alun Michael: The Rural Payments Agency has announced that payments are planned to start from February 2006. I have asked my officials to look at any mitigating actions that might be possible to speed up any payments.

Soil

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the work of the task force on soil guidance values; and when she expects this group to report formally on the outcomes of their work and meetings. [218927]

Mr. Morley: The Soil Guideline Values Task Force is an initiative of the Cabinet Office Business Regulation team and the Government Departments and agencies most involved in the publication of the Defra/ Environment Agency soil guideline values and related materials. This technical guidance help in assessing risk

to human health in connection with land contamination, for example when considering regulatory action or proposals for development of land.

In the interests of better communication with ail stakeholders the group now includes representatives from both local authorities and the private sector. It is looking at a number of issues including, training and awareness raising, timetables for further publications, and approaches to elevated ambient levels of some substances. We currently expect formal proposals from the group later in the year.

UN Environment Programme

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by whom her Department was represented at the annual ministerial planning meeting for the United Nations Environment Programme, held in Nairobi, on 21 to 25 February; what issues were on the agenda; what matters were agreed; what papers were submitted to the meeting by the United Kingdom; and if she will place a copy of the final agreement and papers submitted in the Library. [217832]

Mr. Morley: I represented the United Kingdom during the 23 governing council, global ministerial environment forum of the United Nations Environment Programme. The UK delegation also included officials from Defra, DfID,

FCO and the UK mission in Nairobi.

The ministerial consultations considered UNEP's contribution to the following themes:

Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (millennium development goal one) within the context of environment;

Ensuring environmental sustainability (millennium development goal seven) together with policy issues related to water, sanitation and human settlements;

Promoting gender equality and empower women (millennium development goal three) within the context of gender and environment.

A non-negotiated president's summary was produced to capture the key elements of the ministerial consultations, which will form UNEP's contribution to the UN commission on sustainable development and the UN millennium review summit.

In parallel discussions formal decisions were taken on the following issues:

Chemicals;

Water policy and strategy of UNEP;

International environmental governance;

Gender equality and the environment;

Green procurement practices for UNEP;

Poverty and environment;

Strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning in the aftermath of the Indian ocean tsunami disaster;

Keeping the world environmental situation under review;

2006–07 budget and work programme of UNEP;

Trust funds;

Administrative and other budgetary matters;

Agenda and location of the nine special session of the UNEP governing council, global ministerial environment forum.

The United Kingdom worked closely with its EU colleagues in all areas on the basis of papers tabled by the secretariat of UNEP and others, but did not table any papers of its own. The outcomes of the meeting highlighted that environmental sustainability underpins the achievement of the millennium development goals and the world summit on sustainable development targets in line with EU and UK objectives.

A copy of the decisions and the president's summary will be made available in the Library once formally issued.

Wheat

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effects of the two metre-wide strip on wheat farmers with regard to contamination from ergot and other weeds; and if she will make a statement. [218469]

Alun Michael: This cross compliance requirement allows regular cutting to control the growth of vegetation, it also includes an exemption which allows the spot application of herbicide for the control of weeds in the 2-metre protection zone. In cases of severe weed infestations, farmers can also seek the Rural Payments Agency's approval to use more rigorous weed control measures.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Renewable Energy Manufacturing Industry

12. **Ian Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to support the renewable energy manufacturing industry. [219473]

Nigel Griffiths: We are spending almost half a billion pounds from 2002–08 on emerging technologies. Money that has already been allocated from this includes: £117 million in capital grants for round 1 offshore wind farms; approximately £66 million for biomass capital grants; £33 million for solar; £12.5 million for the Clear Skies Programme; over £50 million for Renewables; around £[illegible]/year for industry led R and D: £4 million for research under the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's Supergen programme.

Globalisation

13. **Mr. MacDougall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to assess the impact of globalisation on UK manufacturing. [219474]

Mr. Alexander: The White Paper "Trade and Investment: Making Globalisation a Force a Good" published in July 2004 analyses the growth of globalisation and the challenges it poses. In the same month we published a review of the Manufacturing Strategy setting out a framework for action to address

this and other challenges facing manufactures in the UK. It focuses on support for innovation and skills, and helping industry to produce smarter, higher value-added products. This message is reinforced in The DTI Five Year Programme, published in November 2004, which sets out the Government's approach to help British companies succeed in today's challenging global economy.

Energy Supply (Security)

14. **David Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the security of energy supply for the UK. [219475]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The market is delivering secure energy supplies, and we expect it to continue to do so.

For example, we are seeing plans being brought forward for new gas import pipelines and infrastructure to import liquid natural gas.

There are also signs that the market is already thinking about the need for new build to meet future demand. For example, E-On recently announced plans for an upgrade of its generating facility on the Isle of Grain.

Competition

15. **David Cairns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to assist UK-based companies in competing against companies in China. [219476]

Ms Hewitt: The DTI Five Programme and Manufacturing Strategy Review set out a framework for action to help British companies succeed in today's global economy, including responding to challenge from emerging economies such as China.

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister chairs the China Task Force, set up following the Prime Minister's visit to China in 2003, which has produced a range of recommendations to strengthen our commercial performance in China.

16. **Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she is taking to assist UK companies in competing with companies in emerging economies, with particular reference to India and China. [219478]

Mr. Alexander: The Government are fully aware of the challenges from emerging economies. That is why in 2002 we brought together industry and other stakeholders to develop the Manufacturing Strategy, the first from any Government in over 30 years. We are building a consensus on the challenges that lie ahead and have set out a framework for action to address them in the original Strategy document and the Strategy review published in July last year. This message is reinforced in The DTI Five Year Programme, published in November 2004, which sets out the Government's approach to help British companies succeed in today's challenging global economy.

Minimum Wage (Coventry)

17. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the effect of the proposed increase to the minimum wage in October on workers in Coventry. [219479]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We do not have information on the number of workers specific to Coventry who will be guaranteed a pay rise from the recently announced increases in the minimum wage for 2005. For the West Midlands region as a whole, we estimate this will guarantee a pay rise for 140,000 workers.

Manufacturing (West Bromwich)

18. **Mr. Bailey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she is taking to help small and medium UK manufacturing companies in West Bromwich West. [219480]

Nigel Griffiths: DTI support to small and medium UK manufacturing companies is in the main accessed via the Black Country Business Link and the West Midlands Manufacturing Advisory Service.

Over the last two year the Business Link has provided a range of support to more than 300 small and medium manufacturing companies with 66 receiving significant assistance. The West Midlands Manufacturing Advisory Service has worked with 96 companies since September 2002 with approximately 12 receiving significant assistance of approximately £75,000 after referral to other programmes.

EU Regulations

19. **Jim Sheridan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she takes to ensure that EU regulations do not conflict with the competitiveness of UK industry and to encourage uniform application within the EU. [219481]

Nigel Griffiths: DTI has taken a strong lead in the Government drive for better EU law, in line with Lisbon goals. Ensuring that impacts on competitiveness are properly considered for all new EU proposals is a key priority and will continue to be during the UK Presidency. DTI is fully supportive of the European Commission's actions to ensure consistent application of EU law.

Corporate Responsibility

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what duty of care there is on corporate directors to take account of the consequences to *(a)* communities, *(b)* the environment, *(c)* health and safety of employees and *(d)* shareholders of decisions they take. [218999]

Jacqui Smith: Directors owe fiduciary duties and duties of care and skill to the company.

In fulfilling these duties, a director will need, where relevant, to consider the impact of the company's operations on the community and on the environment. Directors can, in certain circumstances, be personally guilty of a health and safety offence (under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974).

The Company Lay Reform Bill, draft clauses of which will be published this session, will include a statutory statement of director's general duties. This will require each director to act in the way that he or she concludes is most likely to achieve the success of the company for the benefit of its members as a whole. The director's duties will be owed to, and enforceable by the company.

Ellington Colliery

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the safety of Ellington Colliery; and if she will make a statement. [219071]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Assessment of the safety risks associated with activities at any coal mines is principally a matter for the operator. UK Coal will have taken safety into account when considering the viability of Ellington Colliery.

Manufacturing

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of actual output related to manufacturing *(a)* at the latest date for which figures are available, *(b)* five years ago and *(c)* 10 years ago. [219477]

Jacqui Smith: The percentage of UK GDP accounted for by manufacturing in *(a)* 2003 was 15.7 per cent. The corresponding figure for *(b)* was 20.2 per cent. and for *(c)* 1993 was 21.0 per cent.

Nuclear Power

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her policy on nuclear power. [219466]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Our policy remains as set out in the 2003 Energy White Paper. The Government has no specific proposals but does not rule out the option.

Premium Telephone Numbers

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will refer the operators of premium telephone numbers *(a)* 09061 260000, *(b)* 09058 091165 and *(c)* 09011 332222 to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services. [219290]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ICSTIS can investigate Premium Rate Numbers only if it receives full written details of how the service or the promotional literature for it has failed the consumer. The hon. Member should write to ICSTIS with details of the complaint. I understand that the numbers 09058091165 and 09011332222 have been turned off. ICSTIS presumes that this has happened for commercial reasons.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will refer the operators of premium telephone numbers *(a)* 09064 069447, *(b)* 09061 222823 and *(c)* 09066 650440 to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services. [219292]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ICSTIS can investigate Premium Rate numbers only if it receives full written details of how the service or the promotional literature for it has failed the consumer. The hon. Member should write to ICSTIS with details of the complaint. I understand that the number 0906660440 has been turned off. ICSTIS presumes this has happened for commercial reasons.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will refer the operators of premium telephone number *(a)* 09064 037022, *(b)* 09064 038500 and *(c)* 09064 037811 to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services; [219293]

(2) if she will refer the operators of premium telephone numbers *(a)* 09065 701933, *(b)* 09050 090990 and *(c)* 09063 490192 to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services; [219289]

(3) if she will refer the operators of premium telephone numbers *(a)* 09065 706214, *(b)* 09066 650458 and *(c)* 09065 706725 to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services. [219291]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ICSTIS can investigate Premium Rate Numbers only if it receives full written details of how the service or the promotional literature for it has failed the consumer. The hon. Member should write to ICSTIS with details of the complaint.

Radioactive Emissions

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons no filter was fitted to the discharge outlet at Dounreay to prevent the discharge of radioactive particles into the sea prior to 2004. [218377]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* Regulation of radioactive discharges from nuclear sites is a devolved matter for the Scottish Executive.

A principle objective of the system used for the management of radioactive effluent at Dounreay has been to prevent particulate getting into the effluent at source. UKAEA recognises that the methods used to achieve this during the early years of the plant's operation were not wholly effective and would not be acceptable by today's standards.

Over many years, improvements have been carried out to improve the control of particulate in liquid effluent. These improvements include the replacement of the low-active drain in the late 1970s and the installation in the early to mid 1980s of filters to the discharge outlets of facilities where particles are known to have originated. A new sea discharge pipeline was installed circa 1990 and a new Low Level Liquid Effluent Treatment Plant was commissioned in 2003. The new effluent treatment plant is designed to facilitate the settlement and removal of solids from the site's active liquid effluent. In parallel with the construction and commissioning of the new effluent treatment plant, a wide range of investigations were carried out to determine whether there were still particles in the site's

active liquid effluent system. These investigations failed to find any evidence that particles were still being discharged from the site.

The installation of final filtration at the point of discharge to sea from the new effluent treatment plant is currently being undertaken and will provide additional reassurance that particles are not being discharged from the site.

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what reports she has received on levels of contamination arising from radioactive emissions in Sandside Bay in Caithness and the surrounding seabed in the period since 1977. [218378]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* Environmental monitoring and regulation of radioactive discharges are devolved matters for the Scottish Executive.

However, I understand that information about radioactive emissions from Dounreay has been published in the annual reports of UKAEA, the Statistical Bulletin Series published the Scottish Office and the Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) Series published by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. All particle finds at Sandside are reported to the regulator. Information about all particles found on Sandside is published on the UKAEA website which is updated as soon as analytical results are available and SEPA have been notified (normally the following working day).

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons the levels of radioactive emissions into Sandside Bay and the surrounding area were not accurately reported by the UK Atomic Energy Authority in the period from 1977. [218379]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 28 February 2005]* Environmental monitoring and regulation of radioactive discharges are devolved matters for the Scottish Executive.

There are no emissions directly into Sandside Bay. However, discharges of radioactivity to the environment from Dounreay have been regulated since 1977 by the former HM Industrial Pollution Inspectorate and, since 1996, by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. UKAEA calculates the impact of these discharges on the local environment and compares this with the effects measured on local fauna and flora in its statutory environmental monitoring programme. SEPA undertakes independent monitoring and publishes their findings in the annual Radioactivity In Food and the Environment (RIFE) report.

All finds of particles at Sandside (including the offshore, foreshore and beach) are fully reported on UKAEA's website. UKAEA have recently checked the accuracy of this information against all the historical records available and tell me they are confident that they have been accurately reported.

Steel Industry

Helen Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on prospects for the steel industry. [219462]

Ms Hewitt: After a period of very difficult trading conditions, prospects for the UK steel industry are now good. Deliveries by UK producers increased by 9.6 per cent. over the last year. In September 2004, Corus announced that it had made a profit for the first time since the company was formed in 1999.

Tuvalu (Trojan Diallers)

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make representations to the Government of Tuvalu concerning UK citizens facing charges from trojan diallers operating from Tuvalu. [218420]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government have no plans to make representations to the Government of Tuvalu concerning UK citizens facing charges from Trojan diallers operating from Tuvalu. UK telecoms companies regularly bar access to the specific numbers dialled. The volume of complaints about Tuvalu numbers is currently declining.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Equal Pay

23. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Minister for Women if she will make a statement on progress towards equal pay for men and women doing the same job. [219486]

Jacqui Smith: Since 1998 the median gender pay gap has closed from 17.4 per cent. to 14.4 per cent. To close the pay gap further we set up the Women and Work Commission to investigate the causes. I look forward to their interim statement, due to be published later this month.

25. **Mr. Sarwar:** To ask the Minister for Women what steps the Government are taking to close the pay gap between men and women; and if she will make a statement. [219488]

Jacqui Smith: As well as setting up the Women and Work Commission, the Government have led by example with all 88 Government Departments and Agencies having conducted equal pay reviews. This is reinforced by our target of 45 per cent. of large organisations having carried out equal pay reviews by 2008.

I am pleased that the Equal Opportunities Commission in Scotland have recently launched into occupational segregation.

Commission on Equality and Human Rights

24. **Mr. Lazarowicz:** To ask the Minister for Women what progress is being made towards the establishment of a Commission on Equality and Human Rights. [219487]

Ms Hewitt: I am very pleased that the Government have today published a Bill to establish the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, which will play a key part in realising our vision of a fair, cohesive and prosperous society based on opportunity for all, respect for all and good relations between communities.

Career Sexism

26. **Mrs. Anne Campbell:** To ask the Minister for Women what steps she is taking to tackle career sexism. [219489]

Ms Hewitt: I was delighted to launch a cross-Government plan to tackle career sexism at the Equal Opportunities Commission's Gender and Productivity Summit in October. Further work on tackling occupational segregation is being taken forward in the context of the Women and Work Commission, and I look forward to their interim statement, which is due to be published later this month.

PRIME MINISTER

Ministerial Visits (Expenses)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister what proportion of the costs of his visits to UK towns and cities since 1 January have been met from public funds; and what the total sum spent from public funds has been. [212342]

The Prime Minister: Since 1 January I have made official visits to 17 UK towns and cities. The cost to public funds of these visits, for which figures are available, is £13,350. The Labour Party meets any costs incurred on party political business.

I travel making the most efficient and cost-effective arrangements. My travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in Chapter 7 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers".

Royal Marriage

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Prime Minister of (i) Canada, (ii) New Zealand and (iii) Australia and *(b)* other heads of government of countries where Her Majesty the Queen is Head of State about legislating in accordance with the Statute of Westminster 1931 for His Royal Highness Prince Charles to effect a morganatic marriage; and if he will make a statement; [212387]

(2) what advice the Government have given to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales regarding whether his proposed marriage to Mrs Camilla Parker-Bowles would constitute a morganatic marriage; [212389]

(3) what advice the Government have given to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales regarding the basis on which Mrs Camilla Parker-Bowles would not become Queen following her proposed marriage to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on his accession to the throne; and if he will make a statement. [212390]

The Prime Minister: It is not the practice of the Government to make public details of all discussions with foreign Governments.

Discussions with the Royal Household are not disclosed.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of Somali asylum seekers have claimed asylum *(a)* at an airport and *(b)* having travelled first through other countries in the past 24 months. [218524]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* The number of asylum applications received from nationals of Somalia, excluding dependants, was 5,090 in 2003 and 2,590 in 2004. Internal management information shows that between nine and 10 per cent. of Somali asylum applications are made at an airport.

There are no direct flights to the United Kingdom from Somalia. All those asylum applicants who claimed that they were Somali nationals and who had travelled from Somalia will therefore have travelled through other countries in order to reach the United Kingdom.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate web site at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Biometric Data

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what ways his proposal for biometric data on UK identity documents *(a)* exceeds and *(b)* fails to meet the standard required by the United States for non-visa entry into that country; and if he will make a statement. [218296]

Mr. Browne: The US requirements for non-visa entry currently apply only to the British passport. US legislation requires that by 26 October 2005 all countries participating in the Visa Waiver Programme must have a programme in place to include biometric identifiers into their machine readable passports that meet International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards.

The UK is fully engaged with the US in meeting the requirements to remain part of the visa waiver programme (VWP). The UK has established an implementation programme to enable it to begin the issue of UK biometric passports (ePassport) by 26 October 2005. The design of the ePassport meets the current set of requirements demanded by the United States for non-visa entry. It will incorporate identifiers that meet ICAO standards for biometric authentication, including a photographic image of the bearer, held digitally in the chip of the ePassport.

Crime Figures

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the recorded crime figures published in July 2004. [214827]

Ms Blears: The recorded crime figures showed an increase of 1 per cent. in the number of crimes recorded by the police in 2003–04 compared with 2002–03. There were falls of 9 per cent. in both offences of theft of and theft from a vehicle. Domestic burglary also fell by 8 per cent.

Overall violent crime rose by 12 per cent. though much of this increase is due to the impact of changes in recording and the introduction of new offences.

Police recorded crime statistics provide a good measure of trends in well-reported crimes, and are an important indicator of police workload. For the offences it covers, and the victims within its scope, the British Crime Survey gives a more complete estimate of crime in England and Wales since it covers both unreported and unrecorded crime and provides more reliable data on trends. 2003–04 BCS interviews showed a reduction of 5 per cent. compared with 2002–03 interviews.

Latest quarterly figures were published on 25 January and both recorded crime and BCS results showed crime falling. BCS interviews during the 12 months ending September 2004 found an 11 per cent. fall compared with the preceding 12 months. There was a 6 per cent. reduction in the overall level of crime recorded by the police in July to September 2004 compared with the same period in the previous year.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* thefts, *(b)* burglaries, *(c)* robberies, *(d)* property crimes, *(e)* violent crimes and *(f)* all crimes there were in (i) England, (ii) north Yorkshire and (iii) City of York in each of the last 10 years according to the British Crime Survey. [217625]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* Results from the British Crime Survey (BCS) on the number of incidents of crime in England and Wales are available in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 10/04 (2004) 'Crime in England and Wales 2003–04', which is published at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds

Detention Centres

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many detainees under the age of 18 years were held in detention centres in each year since 1997; [218809]

(2) what the average detention time of each individual under the age of 18 years held in detention centres was in each year since 1997. [218810]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of children held in detention centres and the average time for which they were there in each year since 1997 is not available. It would only be available by examination of individual case files at disproportionate cost.

Information is only available on a quarterly snapshot basis since December 2003. As at 27 December 2003, 10 people who were detained solely under Immigration Act powers were recorded as being under 18-years old; as at 25 December 2004, there were 25 people recorded as being under 18-years old. However, information on the number of children detained on 27 December 2003 excludes minors detained with their families at Oakington Reception Centre. These children were included in the published statistics for 2004; for this reason the figures are not comparable. Information on the average time these children had been detained is not available.

Feltham Young Offender Institution

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners at Feltham Young Offender Institution are held on remand awaiting deportation having completed their sentences; how many prisoners were held on that basis in 2004; and for what periods such prisoners were held. [208522]

Mr. Browne: With effect 19 February there was one person detained in Feltham after completion of sentence and a total of 194 in the prison estate.

Information on the numbers held during 2004 and the period persons are detained following completion of prison sentences is not available.

Work is ongoing to improve the quality of data held on those people detained under Immigration Act powers in prison establishments.

Fresh Talent Initiative

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has held with the Scottish Executive concerning the implementation of the Fresh Talent initiative. [219765]

Mr. Browne: The Scottish Executive is responsible for its broader Fresh Talent Initiative but we hold regular discussions with them on various aspects of it. In respect of the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme, which will be launched in summer 2005, Home Office and Scottish Executive officials last held discussions on 1 February 2005.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* changes to existing legislation and *(b)* new legislation will be required to allow for introduction of the measures proposed in Fresh Talent; what the timetable is for the introduction of such (i) changes and (ii) legislation; and if he will make a statement. [219766]

Mr. Browne: The Scottish Executive's Fresh Talent Initiative is a wide-ranging initiative, not confined to immigration matters. We are working with them on a range of measures, such as ensuring that Scottish employers have full information on the existing immigration routes to the UK. These require no changes to legislation.

One aspect which requires changes to the Immigration Rules is the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme. This scheme will enable overseas students who have successfully completed an HND, degree, Masters or PhD in Scotland to apply for leave to seek and take work in Scotland for up to two years. The scheme will be launched in summer 2005 and a specific date will be published in due course. The necessary amendments to the secondary legislation will be laid before Parliament 21 days before the scheme comes into effect, as is customary practice.

Judicial System

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of running the justice system was in *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 1997, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2001 and *(e)* 2003; and what the expected cost is in 2005–06. [209490]

Paul Goggins: Three Government Departments, the Home Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Office of the Attorney General (including the Crown Prosecution Service) are jointly responsible for the justice system.

HM Treasury regularly publish statistics on public expenditure which are freely available via the HM Treasury's website at http://www.hmtreasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/finance_ spending_statistics/pes_publications.

The three Departments also publish annual departmental and other reports, which give comprehensive information about delivery and service improvements.

The overall cost of the "justice system" as a whole, including the administration of justice, policing and offender management was:

£ million

	Overall cost
1995–96	13,352
1997–98	14,318
1999–2000	15,099
2001–02	18,340
2003–04 (estimate)	22,227

The figures presented are a mix of cash and accruals. All outturn figures up until 1997–98 are on a cash accounting basis. Outturn figures for 1999–2000 and 2001–02 are on an accruals basis, as is the estimated outturn data for 2003–04.

The expected costs of the "justice system" in 2005–06 have not yet been finalised and are subject to central and local government financial planning rounds.

Note:

The historical figures used in this answer are taken from the HM Treasury Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2004 and 2001–02.

Personation

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department takes to prevent fraud against private enterprises by people impersonating individuals known to be dead. [218453]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office-led Identity Fraud Steering Committee, which comprises public and private sector organisations that are committed to reducing identity fraud, began a project in November 2004 to explore the benefits, feasibility and legal impediments of sharing public sector deceased person information with private sector organisations involved in fraud prevention. The organisations involved are the Home Office, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and CIFAS—the UK's Fraud Prevention Service. CIFAS membership includes more than 200 companies covering sectors such as financial services, utilities and insurance.

The first phase of the project involved a sample of 50confirmed impersonation of deceased (IOD) cases. These were processed against ONS data on deceased people to establish whether the fraud could have been detected and prevented had the ONS data been available to CIFAS members when the fraudsters' applications were processed. The project found that sharing this data would not have a significant impact on reducing this type of fraud.

The second phase of the project is exploring the benefits of sharing deceased person data held by DWP to reduce deceased person fraud. This includes confirming whether the data held by DWP would help to reduce IOD fraud; running the same cases of IOD fraud (as used in the first phase) against the information held by DWP; and establishing whether any "showstoppers" or legal impediments exist that would prevent DWP data on deceased people from being shared with the private sector.

Initial results suggest that sharing DWP data may help to reduce IOD fraud, but further work is needed to evaluate the benefits that could be obtained. This work is now under way along with an examination of any possible legal impediments to sharing the data.

Police

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will draw on best practice within the public and private sector to ensure that the skills and abilities of women and ethnic minorities within the police force are developed to their full potential; and if he will make a statement. [213769]

Ms Blears: The Government are committed to professionalising the whole police workforce. A central plank of our workforce modernisation programme is to develop and implement improved learning and development for everyone in the service and ensure, in particular, that women and people from ethnic minorities have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Core Leadership Development Programme will ensure that officers of all levels can develop the important leadership skills that they need to carry out their duties effectively. This programme will be open to officers from sergeant to chief inspector level. It will also be open to police staff—6 per cent. of whom are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 62 per cent. of whom are women—at equivalent levels.

We intend to strengthen the Senior Careers Advisory Service to support those with potential for senior leadership. In doing so, we will learn from other organisations' experience and explore joint development opportunities with them, including secondments and exchanges.

A career in the police service should be an opportunity for life long learning and development. We want all those working in the police service to have clear career pathways in which to develop their professional skills and have these accredited. We will develop a formal qualifications framework and are considering developing professional registers for the service in line with practice in other professions.

Officers and staff will be given the opportunity to keep their skills up to date as they progress through more structured careers. We will put in place mechanisms for continuously developing the operational skills of

constables. Officers will be assessed against national occupational standards and we will award those who achieve the standards with a qualification which will be recognised outside the service.

We are also considering changes to regulations so that officers will no longer be required to have spent a specific number of years in a particular rank before being eligible for promotion. This will remove barriers to promotion and widen the pool of those who are eligible. We are also keen to identify members of police staff with potential for development and we will look to develop arrangements for a high potential development scheme for police staff similar to that available to officers.

Police staff play an increasingly important role in the police service and we are keen to attract more women and people from ethnic minorities into the police service from outside. We intend also to draw on practice elsewhere and encourage members of ethnic minorities with successful careers in other professions to apply for lateral entry to the police service.

We will review our promotion and progression procedures to ensure they are fair, transparent and have no adverse impact on women or minority ethnic officers. Any barriers identified will be removed.

We will also work closely with the British Association of Women Police to ensure women have the support and opportunities to reach their potential. Part of this will be ensuring that the working environment for women is professional and supportive and that police training will be available on a non- residential and part time basis. More opportunity for flexible working patterns, should provide greater opportunity to gain experience in a wider range of roles.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Council Funding

Ann Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of the total grant in aid to the Arts Council in England was provided to theatres in each financial year since 1997. [218499]

Estelle Morris: The table shows the Arts Council's funding commitments to theatres over the last three years as a percentage of their total grant-in-aid spending.

Theatre spend as a proportion ACE spending

	Percentage
2002–03	33
2003–04	35
2004–05	34

Information on funding for theatres as a proportion of total grant-in-aid between 1997–2002 could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, it is clear that the increase in funding that took place after the 2001 theatre review has dramatically improved funding to theatre. The increase in funding between 2000–01 and 2003–04 represents a 72 per cent. increase in ACE funding for theatre.

Departmental Policies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Islington, South and Finsbury constituency, the effects on Islington, South and Finsbury of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [218974]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Islington, South and Finsbury since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. There are two school sport partnerships based in Islington south and Finsbury, involving three school sport co-ordinators and 27 primary link teachers. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Islington, South and Finsbury have benefited from four Sport England community capital lottery grants totalling £4,792,287, and a further two awards worth £875,736 in total from the £108 million investment in innovative sports facilities through the Active England programme.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–5. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04, funding to Arts Council England, London increased from £13.6 million to £133.8 million, including from 1 April 2003, funding to major national arts organisations in London. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England, London investment in regularly funded organisations will be £151.6 million. Islington south and Finsbury has benefited from grants to arts organisations and individuals, including the Almeida theatre and the Union Chapel Project: "Ten Feet Away".

Schools in Islington, South and Finsbury were included in the first phase of the Creative Partnerships programme which began in 2002. Creative Partnerships aims to give school children and their teachers the opportunity to explore their creativity by working on sustained projects with creative organisations and individuals, including artists, theatre companies, dance studios, museums, orchestras, film-makers and historic buildings. Funding of £65 million was allocated for the period 2002–05 to develop creative partnerships, and the programme will receive at least a further £86 million in 2005–08.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived

communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Islington, South and Finsbury will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity in the Islington, South and Finsbury area. The UK Film Council's First Light initiative for young film-makers aged between 11 and 18 has supported a number of initiatives in Islington, including providing a grant of £30,000 to the "All Change Arts" organisation for the making of five films in which 95 young people were involved. Film London provided a £10,000 lottery grant to the Film and Video Workshop. The Human Rights Watch Festival, also based in Islington, received £5,000.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in the Islington south and Finsbury constituency with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–4 was 3,505.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11pm on new year's eve to 11am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Islington south and Finsbury, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism across London has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and its successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Islington, South and Finsbury. Responsibility for the promotion of tourism in London was devolved to the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority (GLA) under the Greater London Authority Act 1999. Since 2000–01, DCMS has worked with the Mayor and the GLA to fund marketing and tourism development activities in London. Data on the precise effect of this support for tourism in Islington south and Finsbury is not held centrally.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £1,567,929 to Islington, South and Finsbury since 2 May 1997, including £1,121,654 to the London borough of Islington for the Keystone Crescent Conservation Area Partnership Scheme (£159,691 in 1997), the Caledonian Road and Chapel Market Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (£459,698 from 1997 to 2004) and funding for specialist conservation posts (£502,265 from 1997 to 2003).

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Islington, South and Finsbury are connected to the Internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the museums, libraries and archives council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Islington, South and Finsbury constituency has benefited from 868 awards totalling over £189 million. Of these, 55 awards worth over £44 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to Sittingbourne and Sheppey constituency, the effects on Sittingbourne and Sheppey of the Department's policies and actions since 1997. [218758]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence

and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Sittingbourne and Sheppey since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. A school sports partnership in Sittingbourne and Sheppey is scheduled to begin in the autumn of 2005. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Sittingbourne and Sheppey have benefited from six Sport England lottery grants totalling £1,286,628.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 funding to Arts Council England, South East increased from £2.6 million to £12.1 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England, South East investment in regularly funded organisations will be £12.7 million. Sittingbourne and Sheppey has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals in the South East Department including the Stour Valley Arts Project and the Sheppey Community Theatre.

Young people in Sittingbourne and Sheppey have benefited from the South East Youth Music Action Zone, known as Rhythmix. Rhythmix became a Youth Music Action Zone in 2000 and has so far been awarded three grants totalling £1,150,000. 21,431 young people have taken part in local music projects and events run by this action zone.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Sittingbourne and Sheppey will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Sittingbourne and Sheppey with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 4,885.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on new year's eve to 11 am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Sittingbourne and Sheppey, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Sittingbourne and Sheppey has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including the South East Regional Development Agency. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £512,984 to Sittingbourne and Sheppey since 2 May 1997, including £169,900 to SS Mary and Sexburgha Church, Minster on Sea in 1998 and £185,000 to Swale borough council for the Sheerness Town Centre Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme from 2001 to 2003.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Sittingbourne and Sheppey are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community and informal learning value of public libraries. Kent county council has recognised this value and has undertaken initiatives such as giving access to automated services of information in 12 of Kent's

libraries, including Sheerness, and training library workers to deal with the particular needs of asylum seekers and refugees across the county of Kent. These two projects were allocated DCMS/Wolfson Foundation funding of £224,000 and £75,000 respectively.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Sittingbourne and Sheppey has benefited from over 128 awards totalling over £6.1 million. Of these, 27 awards worth over £3.3 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Licensing

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what powers the police have to object to the licensing of a night club. [219432]

Mr. Caborn: There is no legal definition of a "nightclub". Under the current licensing regime the police may object to the licensing justices about the grant or renewal of a justices' licence authorising the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises. They may also object to the grant of a special hours certificate by the justices which authorises sales of alcohol outside of normal permitted hours until 2.00 a.m. in most of the country and until 3.00 a.m. in the west end of London. In order to obtain a special hours certificate, a nightclub must first obtain a public entertainment licence which authorises music and dancing and which is granted by the local authority. The police may also object to grant or renewal of this licence.

The Licensing Act 2003 provides that responsible authorities, including the chief officer of police, may make representations about applications, including those by nightclubs, for provisional statements and about the grant or variation of premises licences. Responsible authorities may also apply for a review of a licence at any time as well as make representations about a review after it has been granted.

Representations must be about the effects of the application on the promotion of the licensing objectives. Where a simple conversion of an existing licence is made under the grandfather rights provisions in schedule 8 of the Act then the chief officer of police may make representations based on crime and disorder grounds.

National Lottery

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list each of the programmes that have been funded by the New Opportunities Fund since 1997, broken down by amounts *(a)* allocated and *(b)* distributed. [218570]

Estelle Morris: The table shows the total funding target for each of the New Opportunities Fund's policy direction initiatives, together with amounts committed, since 1997. Several of these programmes are long-term initiatives which were not intended to be completed by 2005 or where planning and design of facilities was expected to take time. For example, the Big Lottery Fund are on target to comply with the direction to commit all the Fund for New Opportunities for PE and Sport before the end of this year.

£000

Initiatives	*Total funding target*	*Amount committed as at 31 December 2004*	*Amount distributed as at 31 December 2004*
Health Programmes			
Healthy Living Centres	300,000	267,775	124,536
Cancer prevention detection treatment and care	149,530	145,193	135,295
Reducing the burden of CHD, stroke and cancer	213,500	199,088	102,819
Palliative Care	84,470	78,616	30,063
Education Programmes			
Out of school hours learning	258,900	214,906	167,794
Out of school hours childcare and childcare	418,500	372,785	279,386
Community access to lifelong learning	200,000	188,218	169,279
ICT training and content creation	301,000	287,361	255,540
Opportunities for young people—PE and sport in schools	852,050	597,968	82,385
Opportunities and activities for young people	67,200	64,549	60,913
Young People's Fund	174,120	0	
Environment programmes			
Green spaces and sustainable communities	130,000	116,727	94,251
Transforming communities	159,000	138,062	29,381
Small scale grants scheme	54,840	44,519	38,367
Fairshare	50,000	50,000	50,000
Veterans[1]	5,160	10,723	9,074

[1] Remaining Veterans budget to be allocated from ICT underspend

National Trust

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether *(a)* she and *(b)* her Ministers discussed the proposed administrative changes at the National Trust at the meeting with the director general of the National Trust on 2 February. [219684]

Mr. Caborn: The meeting on 2 February 2005 was an informal discussion with a number of representatives from the heritage sector. The proposed administrative changes at the National Trust were not discussed.

Sports (Access)

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what plans she has to expand access to sports and fitness services for young people on low incomes; [218796]

(2) what plans she has to expand access to sports and fitness services for elderly people on low incomes; [218797]

(3) what plans she has to expand access to sports and fitness services for disabled people on low incomes. [218798]

Mr. Caborn: My Department has a Public Service Agreement target to increase, by 2008, the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by people aged 16 and above from priority groups. The Department's Funding Agreement with Sport England sets a target to increase the proportion of the population engaged in regular physical activity by 1 per cent. per annum, and focuses on developing participation among specific sections of the population, including young people and the most economically disadvantaged groups in society.

The Equality Standard for Sport, launched last year, is a framework to guide sports and community organisations towards achieving equality. Its aim is to widen access and increase the participation and involvement in sport and physical activity from under-represented individuals, groups, and communities. It will assist organisations in developing structures and processes, assessing performance, and ensuring continuous improvement in equality. Progress through The Standard is a mandatory condition within the national funding agreements involving Sport England, National Governing Bodies of Sport, and national and regional sports organisations in England.

TREASURY

Air Ambulance Charities (Tax)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much tax has been collected from air ambulance charities in VAT in respect of pilot costs since January 1989. [219052]

John Healey: HM Customs and Excise do not collect data on VAT from individual goods and services. The amount of VAT paid by air ambulance charities on pilot costs is therefore unavailable.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions Customs and Excise has had with the British Air Ambulance charities with respect to zero rating fuel supplies since January 2004. [219054]

John Healey: There is no provision in law for the supply of fuel to charities to be zero-rated for VAT. HM Customs and Excise have, however, met with representatives of British Air Ambulance charities and agreed to review the VAT liability of air ambulances and related supplies.

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213826]

Mr. Timms: I refer to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Milburn) on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 957W. The Treasury has no cars other than those supplied by the Government Car and Dispatch Agency. Where officials incur congestion charges or penalty charges on their own cars used travelling to work or on business, they are personally responsible for meeting the cost.

Research and Development Tax Credits

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value was of research and development tax credits awarded in each year since their introduction, broken down by *(a)* industry and *(b)* size of firm. [219437]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 908W.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Election Participation

Mr. Evans: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission how much has been spent by the Commission since 1 February 2004 on measures designed to increase participation by young people at elections. [218449]

Mr. Viggers: I am informed by the Electoral Commission that young people (18 to 24-year-olds) are the most likely of all age groups not to be registered to vote, and are among the least likely to turn out to vote. A significant element of its public awareness work is therefore aimed at improving voter engagement in this group. The Commission anticipates spending up to £705,000 in the current financial year for programmes aimed at raising young people's awareness of democratic processes in the United Kingdom, and encouraging them to get involved.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of the total additional costs to the construction industry of meeting the requirements of the changes to building regulations that are being planned by his Department. [219658]

Phil Hope: As part of the consultation process on proposals for amendments to the Buildings Regulations the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister publishes a draft regulatory impact assessment with estimated costs, including where relevant costs to the construction industry, of the various options for change. Until final decisions are taken the costs cannot be regarded as definitive.

At the moment the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is consulting on proposals to amend Parts F (ventilation) and L (conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations. The consultation documents, including the draft regulatory impact assessments, are available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website www.odpm.gov.uk/building-regulations and in the Library of the House.

Council Tax (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council tax payers have registered in Southend in each year since 1997. [219430]

Mr. Raynsford: Local authorities are not required to maintain or register individuals who are liable for council tax because council tax is a property-based tax.

Numbers of dwellings in the Southend-on-Sea unitary authority area that were chargeable for council tax purposes are tabled as follows:

November	*Number*
1997	72,505
1998	72,937
1999	72,900
2000	73,555
2001	73,673
2002	73,671
2003	73,875
2004	74,022

Source:
CTB1 returns to ODPM

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215044]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The information is not available in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

For spending figures for catering, hospitality and official entertainment, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 1 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1124W.

Fire Control Rooms

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's estimate is of the total cost to public funds of delivery of the proposed eight new English regional fire control rooms. [218256]

Mr. Raynsford: The estimated total net cost to public funds of delivering a national network of nine regional control centres (RCC) for England is approximately £72 million. This covers the costs of setting up the new fire control centres from the start of the project in January 2004 until the last RCC goes live during FY 2008–09.

This information is drawn from the draft Outline Business Case, which is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. This estimates that there will be net annual savings from FY 2009–10 onwards. The project will pay for itself within five years of the last regional control centre going live.

Planning Application (South Devon)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will call in the Planning Application 17/2235/04/CU Sports Motorbiking in South Devon Area of Outstanding National Beauty granted by South Hams district council on 23 February subject to conditions under a Section 106 Agreement. [219682]

Keith Hill: I thank the hon. Member for drawing this to our attention. An Article 14 direction was issued on 1 March 2005 to the local planning authority preventing any decision notice being issued until the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has had an opportunity to look at the application. The hon. Member will be aware that the Government's policy is to leave the control of day-to-day planning matters, as far as possible, in the hands of locally accountable planning authorities. Normally, the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister would intervene and use his powers to 'call in' applications for his own decision only if the issues raised were of regional or national significance. Once papers have been received the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will be in a position to determine whether he should exercise his power in this case, and take the decision himself, following a public inquiry. To comment now could risk prejudicing the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's future decisions.

Right-to-buy Regulations

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has made personal calls to housing campaigners regarding changes in the right-to-buy regulations. [217784]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister holds no record of any personal calls made by Ministers to housing campaigners regarding changes in the right-to-buy regulations.

Ministerial colleagues and I have made reference to the changes to the right-to-buy scheme brought about by the Housing Act 2004 on a number of occasions in the fulfilment of relevant speaking engagements since the Act gained Royal Assent. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 644W, which dealt with the steps that the Government have taken to alert tenants to these changes to the right-to-buy rules.

CABINET OFFICE

EU Intelligence Sharing and Co-ordination Service

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 13W, on EU intelligence sharing and co-ordination service, if he will list those documents, with security grading and caveat, that have been supplied to the EU intelligence sharing and co-ordination service by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy regarding the nature of departmental material that may be supplied. [216511]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe (Mr. McShane) on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 355W.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the payments and grants made by the Government to each local authority in Northern Ireland to reimburse the costs of supporting asylum seekers in each year from 1996–97. [217880]

Angela Smith: The following table details the monies paid by the Government through the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to Health and Social Services (HSS) Trusts to reimburse the costs of supporting asylum seekers since 1996–97 is as follows:

Reimbursement of costs to HSS trusts

	Health and Social Services Trust	*Amount paid (£)*
1996–97	—	0
1997–98	—	0
1998–99	—	0
1999–2000	—	0
2000–01	—	0
2001–02	North and West Belfast Community	37,937.00
	South and East Belfast Community	67,649.00
	Causeway	2,087.00
	Homefirst	3,245.00
	Foyle	1,302.00
2002–03	North and West Belfast Community	44,644.00
	South and East Belfast Community	95,063.00
	Causeway	7,972.00
	Craigavon and Banbridge Community	2,316.00
2003–04	North and West Belfast Community	76,295.00
	South and East Belfast Community	176,002.00
	Causeway	9,968.00
	Homefirst	13,852.00
	Foyle	780.00
	Ulster community and hospitals	3,169.00
2004–05	North and West Belfast Community	33,452.00
	South and East Belfast Community	162,255.00
	Causeway	10,398.00
	Homefirst	7,723.00
	Foyle	10,000.00
	Ulster community and hospitals	6,686.00

Education Funding

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills regarding funding formulas for schools. [218623]

Mr. Gardiner: The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has not discussed the funding formulas for schools with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Ferry Services

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 566W, on ferry services, if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter from his Department's Minister to the Ministers for Transport in the Scottish Executive. [212388]

Mr. Gardiner: This issue remains the subject of ongoing discussions. It is a policy matter and therefore it would not be appropriate to make available this piece of ministerial correspondence.

Global Point International Business Park

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public money has been invested in Global Point International Business Park at Corr's Corner, Newtownabbey; and over what period. [219685]

Mr. Gardiner: The total investment between 1971 and 2004, including land purchase, is £7.2 million.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the main strategic objective is of Global Point International Business Park. [219686]

Mr. Gardiner: The strategic objective for Global Point is to create a modern quality business park which would be attractive for both inward and indigenous investment.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many companies are in discussion with Invest Northern Ireland with a view to locating at Global Point International Business Park. [219687]

Mr. Gardiner: There are no live negotiations with companies at this time.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the first operational company is expected to be located at Global Point International Business Park. [219688]

Mr. Gardiner: The first operational company is not expected in Global Point International Business Park until the Public Inquiry into the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan is completed.

Hearing Screening Programme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety moratorium will affect the start date for the newborn hearing screening programme; when he expects the programme to commence; and if he will make a statement. [216253]

Angela Smith: The moratorium imposed in October 2004 on health and social services boards recruiting new staff was lifted in a letter dated 23 December 2004 from the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to board chief executives.

Boards and trusts, which have not yet recruited screening and co-ordinator staff, are now in the process of doing so. As a result, the date for full implementation of the neonatal hearing-screening programme, which was 31 March 2005, has slipped to September 2005. However, screening has been introduced in a number of trusts with about one third of babies currently being screened.

Housing

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements are in place to ensure that housing associations under the direction of the Housing Executive reinvest their operation profits back into the provision of housing. [219325]

Mr. Spellar: Housing associations are not under the direction of the Housing Executive. They are regulated by the Department for Social Development. As such, they are restricted in their permissible purposes or objects by the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. They are not for profit organisations and generate reserves from their surpluses and all such reserves have to be employed in the business. Their boards of management are accountable for the stewardship of the reserves and are duty bound to use them effectively in the pursuit of the associations' objectives. Reserves are used to:

(i) subsidise the development of properties and diversified activities;

(ii) enable future major repairs requirements to be met;

(iii) satisfy the loan covenant requirements of lenders, (who often require surpluses to be generated to develop services to meet rising customer expectations); and

(iv) provide a cushion against uncertainty regarding assumptions in medium to longer term business plans.

Their expenditure is subject to scrutiny by internal and external auditors, the Department for Social Development and the Northern Ireland Audit Office to ensure that the association's behaviour is proper and regular.

Homelessness (Intimidation)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action is being taken by the Housing Executive to tackle homelessness caused by sectarian intimidation. [219327]

Mr. Spellar: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) assists those who have become homeless as a result of sectarian intimidation by providing temporary accommodation and arranging for storage of possessions, as necessary. If the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) can confirm that intimidation has taken place, the Housing Executive will award the applicant the highest level of priority for re-housing. Owner-occupiers who have become homeless as a result of intimidation have the facility to sell their homes under the Housing Executive's Scheme for the Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings and tenants of rented property are entitled to an emergency grant of £692 when they are re-housed.

While homelessness caused by sectarian intimidation is not a problem that can be tackled solely by the NIHE, the Housing Executive works, through its Community Cohesion Unit, to prevent such intimidation by promoting good relations between communities. The Housing Executive's strategic objective to promote good relations is linked to the following aims:

to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of people in danger as a result of community conflict;

to work in partnership with others to address the complex housing needs of a divided society;

to respect the rights of people who choose to live in single identity neighbourhoods, and

to facilitate and encourage integrated housing as far as this is practicable, desirable and safe.

Interface Schools Initiative

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much each school in North Belfast has received under the Interface Schools Initiative in each year since it was introduced. [218799]

Mr. Gardiner: Additional funds under Interface Programmes have been allocated to schools in North Belfast as follows:

Financial year/Schools	£
Recurrent funding	
2001–02	
Holy Cross Girls' Primary	75,000
Wheatfield Primary	46,000
(From December 2001)	
Ballysillan Primary	5,000
Cliftonville Primary	5,000
Currie Primary	5,000
Grove Primary	5,000
Holy Cross Boys' Primary	5,000
Holy Family Primary	5,000
Lowood Primary	5,000
Mercy Primary	5,000
Our Lady's Deanby Gardens Primary	5,000
Sacred Heart Primary	5,000
St. Mary's Star of the Sea Primary	5,000
St. Patrick's Primary	5,000
(From March 2002)	
Ben Mhadagain Prep	5,000
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	5,000
Carr's Glen Primary	5,000
Cavehill Primary	5,000
Cedar Lodge Special Primary	5,000
Edmund Rice (Christian Bros) Primary	5,000
Ligoniel Primary	5,000
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary	5,000
Seaview Primary	5,000
St. Gabriel's College	5,000
St. Therese of Lisieux Primary	5,000
St. Vincent de Paul Primary	5,000
Star of the Sea Girls' Primary	5,000
2002–03	
Ballysilian Primary	20,000
Ben Mhadagain Prep	5,000
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	20,000
Carr's Glen Primary	20,000
Cavehill Primary	20,000
Cedar Lodge Special Primary	20,000
Cliftonville Primary	20,000
Currie Primary	20,000
Edmund Rice (Christian Bros) Primary	20,000
Grove Primary	20,000
Holy Cross Boys' Primary	20,000
Holy Cross Girls' Primary	185,000
Holy Family Primary	20,000
Ligoniel Primary	20,000
Lowood Primary	20,000
Mercy Primary	20,000
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary	20,000
Our Lady's Deanby Gardens Primary	20,000
Sacred Heart Primary	20,000
St. Gabriel's College	5,000
St. Mary's Star of the Sea Primary	20,000
St. Patrick's Primary	20,000
St. Therese of Lisieux Primary	20,000
St. Vincent de Paul Primary	20,000
Seaview Primary	20,000
Star of the Sea Girls' Primary	20,000
Wheatfield Primary	206,000
2003–04	
Ballysilian Primary	5,000
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	5,000
Carr's Glen Primary	5,000
Cavehill Primary	5,000

Financial year/Schools	£
Cedar Lodge Special Primary	5,000
Cliftonville Primary	5,000
Currie Primary	27,850
Edmund Rice (Christian Bros) Primary	5,000
Grove Primary	5,000
Holy Cross Boys' Primary	5,000
Holy Cross Girls' Primary	127,010
Holy Family Primary	125,000
Ligoniel Primary School	5,000
Lowood Primary	5,000
Mercy Primary	5,000
Our Lady's Deanby Gardens Primary	5,000
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary	5,000
Sacred Heart Primary School	5,000
St. Mary's Star of the Sea Primary	5,000
St. Patrick's Primary	5,000
Sea view Primary	5,000
St. Therese of Lisieux Primary	5,000
St. Vincent de Paul Primary	5,000
Star of the Sea Girls' Primary	5,000
Wheatfield Primary	84,350
2004-05	
Currie Primary	37,742
Holy Cross Girls' Primary	91,618
Holy Family Primary	106,083
Ligoniel Primary	10,000
Our Lady of Mercy Secondary	78,500
Wheatfield Primary	88,900
Capital funding	
2002-03	
Holy Cross Girls' PS—2 buses	120,000
Wheatfield Primary	100,000
2003-04	
Currie Primary	37,000
Wheatfield Primary	45,000

Schools (Funding)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the projected outcome is of the new Common Funding Formula in each school sector in Northern Ireland. [218316]

Mr. Gardiner: All grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland, covered by the Common Funding Scheme, have now received notification of their budget shares for the 2005–06 financial year. The information on allocations by management sector is shown in the following table:

£000

Allocations by sector	Total funding in 2004-05[1]	Total common funding 2005-06[2]
Education and Library Board—Controlled	350,659	380,830
Education and Library Board—Maintained	318,380	347,753
Voluntary grammar	168,017	182,112
Grant-maintained integrated	38,719	43,205
Total	875,775	953,900

[1] Figures taken from 2004–05 Budget Statements plus the Chancellor's ('Budget Addition') funding

[2] Figures from Common Funding budget share allocations, including the Budget Addition.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what procedures he has put in place to measure the educational outcomes of the allocations made under the new Common Funding Formula system. [218317]

Mr. Gardiner: The introduction of a Common Funding Formula does not change the fundamental principles of local management of schools (LMS) arrangements: that the decisions on the relative priorities and use of allocated funds are taken by principals and governors of schools. What it does is ensure that schools with similar characteristics receive similar levels of funding, regardless of the area or sector in which they are located.

The Department already uses a wide range of measures of educational outcomes. These measures will continue to be used to inform judgments on educational priorities and the allocation and distribution of resources.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Information Technology

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Solicitor-General how the £600 million set aside for case management information technology in the Crown Prosecution Service referred to in the document Justice For All (2002) has been spent. [218854]

The Solicitor-General: The £600 million in paragraph 9.47 of the White Paper "Justice for All", was allocated for modernisation of all Criminal Justice System information technology, not for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) alone. The CPS has paid £56.41 million since 1 January 2002 under its 10-year public finance initiative for its Case Management System COMPASS and for legacy system support.

COMPASS was delivered on time, to specification and within budget. It has improved the way the Crown Prosecution Service works by:

- reducing paper handling, increasing focus on operational priorities;
- providing an infrastructure which facilitates enhanced communication with other criminal justice agencies.

Over two million cases are registered on COMPASS with over 4,000 users accessing the system daily. It has delivered its contribution to the CJS IT targets and is the IT system selected to support the No Witness, No Justice initiative.

TRANSPORT

A74 (Improvement Scheme)

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the projected costs of the road improvement scheme for the A74 from Carlisle to Guardsmill were in 1998–99; and what the latest estimate is of the costs. [219528]

Mr. Jamieson: The projected total outturn cost for the original scheme, as designed in 1998–99 was approximately £50 million. That scheme was substantially redesigned to include replacement of the Mossband viaduct. The latest projected total outturn cost for the redesigned scheme is approximately £174 million, including allowances for risk and inflation which were not reflected in the 1998–99 estimate.

Crossrail

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the Superlink proposals for connecting Crossrail to other networks in the South East, with particular reference to Guildford station. [219388]

Mr. McNulty: The environmental statement deposited with the hybrid Crossrail Bill contains details of the analysis that has been undertaken of the Superlink proposals. In summary, we have concluded that Superlink presented significant operational, environmental and consent risks, that it did not appear consistent with planning policies for the South East, and that its costs appeared to be underestimated. We are confident that the scheme in the Crossrail Bill is the best way forward.

Driving Instruction

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent in each of the last 10 years to promote and provide information about Pass Plus courses to *(a)* newly qualified drivers and *(b)* those who apply for a provisional driving licence; and if he will make a statement. [218564]

Mr. Jamieson: Driving Standards Agency receives around £22,000 per year in contributions donated by members of the Association of British Insurers.

This budget, along with the money generated from selling Pass Plus packs and re-fill packs, is used for printing leaflets which are distributed to road safety officers, driving test centres and universities and are available at major events. The Agency does not directly target provisional and newly qualified drivers.

The budget for printing takes into account the cost of having the packs and certificates printed as well as any promotional leaflets. The Agency is unable to extrapolate figures solely for advertising.

Gaelic Language

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's policy is on the use of the Gaelic language; and what plans his Department has to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme. [217098]

Charlotte Atkins: Action to support the Gaelic language is primarily the responsibility of the Scottish Executive.

The Government attach great importance to the promotion and protection of the Gaelic language in line with the UK's obligations under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill currently before the Scottish Parliament does not extend statutory obligations on UK public bodies in Scotland in relation to the preparation or implementation of Gaelic language plans. However, UK departments and public bodies which operate in Scotland may—like comparable Scottish public bodies—have a role to play in facilitating the use of the language.

We have been working closely with colleagues in the Scotland Office and the Scottish Executive on the role we can play, voluntarily, in securing the status of Gaelic.

Hauliers (Working Time Restrictions)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that hauliers employing non-EU nationals operating in the UK comply with working time restrictions. [219283]

Mr. Jamieson: Any mobile workers employed by UK hauliers will be subject to the new working time rules, regardless of their nationality. The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency will be responsible for enforcement of the new rules.

Newly-qualified Drivers

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has conducted into the driving performance of newly-qualified drivers; and if he will make a statement. [218773]

Mr. Jamieson: Details of the Department's programme of research on driver behaviour can be found on-line in the "Compendium of Road Safety Research Projects 2002/2003" at:

www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_022211 .hcsp.

A number of projects have established that newly qualified drivers have a higher risk of collisions than older, more experienced drivers. Relevant research published recently includes:

"Monitoring and evaluation of safety measures for new drivers" (TRL525) published in 2002 (www.trl.co.uk/static/dtlr/pdfs/TRL525.pdf),

"Novice driver accidents and the driving test" (TRL527) published in 2002 (www.trl.co.uk/static/dtlr/pdfs/TRL527.pdf); and

"In-depth accident causation study of young drivers" (TRL542) published in 2002 (www.trl.co.uk/static/dtlr/pdfs/TRL542.pdf).

Copies of these documents are available in the Libraries of the House.

The Department also has under way a "Cohort Study of Young and Novice Drivers" looking at the methods used by learners to organise their training and the results of that training in terms of test outcome, accidents and attitudes, aimed at further improving standards of new drivers'. The study updates and extends an earlier Cohort Study, carried out in the late 1980s, and the results will begin to be published from autumn 2005.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on postage by the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [215028]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002.

The recorded cost of postage in the central Department comprising DfT HQ in London and Hastings, the Air Accidents and Marine Accident Investigation Branches and Mobility Advice and Vehicle Information Service was £926,772 in 2003–04

and in 2004–05 (until 31 January 2005) £576,246. Comprehensive postal costs for 2002–03 are not available as the costs allocated against DfT were affected by the machinery of government changes during that year and do not provide an accurate picture of departmental postal activity.

For the six Departmental Agencies the total costs were £15,992,915 in 2002–03 and £18,819,755 in 2003–04. The majority of these costs (84 per cent. in 2002–03 and 83 per cent. in 2003–04) were incurred by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in the course of their business.

The costs set out include general postage items such as standard postal charges, franking units, business reply post, and courier services etc. However, there may be other postal costs relating to mailing arrangements set up by individual units for a specific purpose such as distributing reports or other information which are not covered in the figures given but to identify these separately would involve disproportionate cost.

In terms of using postal services the Department's approach towards using postal services is to employ the most economical and effective arrangements that are conducive to meeting both business and customer needs.

Public Consultations

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the public consultations undertaken by his Department and its predecessors since 1997. [218635]

Mr. Darling: The Department consults widely with stakeholders and customers to assist in policy development. Since it was established in May 2002 the Department has made written consultations available on its website at:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_about/documents/page/dft_consultation_page. hcsp

Current and closed consultations can be accessed from this site.

Consultations are also undertaken by the Department's Executive Agencies and can be found on their own websites:

Driving Standards Agency (DSA)

http://www. dsa.gov.uk/Category.asp?cat = 328

Highways Agency(HA):

http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/consult.htm

In addition to these consultations the Highways Agency consults on Road schemes. Details of these can be found on the Road Projects section of their site:

http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)

http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga-guidance-regulation/mcga-consultations.htm

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA)

http://www. vosa.gov.uk/vosa/consultations/consultations.htm

Vehicle Certification Agency (VGA)

All consultations relate to Departmental initiatives and as such are included on the Department site.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)

http://www. dvla.gov.uk/public/corporat.htm

The DVLA website is being restructured so not all consultations are currently available. A list of all consultations since May 2002 is included in the following list:

Consultations conducted by DVLA since May 2002

Exchange of Republic of Korea driving licences

Future of driver licensing arrangements for drivers of invalid carriages (NHS trikes)

Reducing motorcycle evasion of vehicle excise duty (VED)

Consultation on a harmonised vehicle registration document

DVLA consultation on fee proposals—driving licences and vehicle registration

DVLA consultation on fee proposals—driving licences and vehicle registration (follow up consultation)

The establishment of a trading fund

Consultation on Vehicle Number Plate Security

International driving permit fees and driving licence charges

Consultation on regulating the supply of number plates in Northern Ireland

The future of the counterpart to the photocard driving licence

Consultation on fees for the issue of digital tachograph cards

Review of the registration of number plate suppliers—10 December 2004 Purpose and scope

DVLA/Driver Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI) consultation document on the convenience charge for credit card payments of vehicle excise duty (VED)

DVLA consultation on fee proposals

DVLA consultation on access to goods vehicle test record database for purposes of vehicle relicensing

A review of the vehicle inspection procedures of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland

Road Haulage Industry

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of prospects for the road haulage industry. [218921]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government have undertaken no formal assessment of prospects for the road haulage industry. But continued demand for drivers and waiting lists for new trucks suggests that the industry is buoyant and with the continued strong performance of the UK economy the prospects for the road haulage industry should be very good.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met representatives of the Road Haulage Association. [218922]

Mr. Jamieson: I last met representatives of the Road Haulage Association at the road haulage forum meeting on 9 December 2004.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department has taken *(a)* to reduce regulation in the road haulage industry and *(b)* to reduce on-costs on road haulage client businesses; and if he will make a statement. [218923]

Mr. Jamieson: Much of my Department's activity is non-regulatory. We have a significant programme of research into best practice, and we disseminate this knowledge to the industry. The last impact assessment concluded that companies involved achieved annual savings of £65 million of which £42 million was attributed to the best practice programme.

In the last two years we have funded a major programme to train truck drivers to drive in a more fuel-efficient way. Savings of up to 9 per cent. are possible on fuel bills, typically worth £2,100 per year per driver. We have funded a similar programme to advise on fuel-efficient operating practices, for example advice on aerodynamic equipment and tyres that optimise fuel-consumption. Again substantial fuel and cost savings have been shown to be possible.

We will be consulting later in the year on proposals to streamline the operator licensing system, building on the successful computerisation for the Traffic Area Network, which is already saving time and money for both operators and Government.

Our Road Safety Bill contains proposals for a system of graduated fixed penalties for offences relating to the operation of commercial vehicles, and a deposit scheme to ensure hauliers from abroad who commit offences to not escape unpunished, as happens too often now. This will provide a more effective deterrent to those who compete unfairly by operating outside the law, to the benefit of legal operators.

South Hampshire Rapid Transit Project

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 36W, on South Hampshire Rapid Transit Project, what his timetable is for dealing with the application when the necessary documentation is received. [219700]

Mr. McNulty: The Department is currently working closely with the promoters of South Hampshire Rapid Transit on the appraisal, procurement and financing aspects of the application. Once the Department has received all of the necessary information, a decision will be made as soon as possible.

Strategic Rail Authority

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the Function Mapping Report and Directorate Capability statements commissioned by his Department on Strategic Rail Authority responsibilities. [211085]

Mr. McNulty: The Department commissioned a report from KPMG on SRA and DfT Rail functions and business activities. The report was concluded in July 2004, and since then the SRA has re-organised. I will arrange for a copy to be placed in the Library of the House.

Street Works

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Answer of 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 214W, on street works, if he will place in the Library copies of the documents to which reference is made. [212386]

Charlotte Atkins: Copies of the report "Estimation of the Cost of Delay from Utilities' Street Works", carried out for the Department for Transport by Halcrow, were placed in the Libraries of the House on 14 October 2004.

Copies of a report carried out for the National Joint Utilities Group on the same subject can be found at: http://www.transport.uwe.ac.uk/research/projects/njug-congestion.htm.

Working Time Directive

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish the regulations implementing the Working Time Directive for Transport. [218618]

Mr. Jamieson: I expect to be able to table the implementing regulations before Parliament very shortly.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many representations he has received about the implementation of the road transport working time directive; and if he will make a statement. [218917]

Mr. Jamieson: Following our consultation on the draft implementing regulations and guidance we received over 50 responses. I will shortly be announcing the Government's conclusions following the consultation, together with a summary of the responses received.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons the road transport working time directive is being incorporated in domestic law. [218918]

Mr. Jamieson: Unlike EU regulations, which are directly applicable, EU directives are addressed to member states, and it is for member states to transpose the legislation into national law.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect of the road transport working time directive on road safety. [218919]

Mr. Jamieson: Our partial regulatory impact assessment, published alongside our consultation, estimated the road safety benefits of the directive, in terms of accident costs avoided, at between £15–30 million per year.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of the road transport working time directive on the profitability of *(a)* road haulage firms and *(b)* road haulage client businesses. [218920]

Mr. Jamieson: Our partial regulatory impact assessment, published alongside our consultation, estimated the costs to road haulage firms, in terms of need for additional staff costs of between £250-£500 million per year. No judgments were made about how much of this cost would be passed on to client business. Nor has any quantification been made of the possible commercial benefits of the directive, for example in reduced costs from lower driver turnover if the directive makes the job more attractive.

DEFENCE

BAE Systems/Finmeccanica

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of whether the proposed restructuring of BAE Systems and Finmeccanica may lead to the loss of key technologies and classified information from the UK. [218935]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 1 March 2005]*: BAE Systems and Finmeccanica's proposed restructuring of their communications, avionics and system integration businesses (Eurosystems) is currently being considered by the Regulator (Office of Fair Trading (OFT)). The Ministry of Defence's submission on the proposed restructuring has been passed to the OFT. The submission seeks to ensure that our national security interests are protected as a result of the restructuring.

Departmental Finances

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force Institute accounts for financial years 1997–98 to 2003–04. [217994]

Mr. Ingram: Arrangements will be made for a copy of these, and future annual Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) Accounts, to be placed in the Library of the House.

Dyslexia

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many and what percentage of personnel in each of the armed services have been diagnosed with dyslexia; what studies have been undertaken to investigate the *(a)* welfare and *(b)* operational impact of dyslexics in the armed forces; and what special measures are available to (i) identify and (ii) assist soldiers who may be dyslexic. [217798]

Mr. Caplin: The armed forces do not screen recruits for dyslexia, nor are personnel obliged to disclose that they are dyslexic. Nonetheless, dyslexia may emerge during initial training or in service; 394 RN and 144 RAF personnel have been identified. The Army intends in the future to capture the number of dyslexic learners receiving support.

While no studies have been undertaken to investigate the welfare and operational impact of dyslexics in the armed forces, every service unit has access to guidance on dyslexia. All three services have specialists which administer the dyslexia adult screening test (DAST) to assess personnel once an instructor or trainee, line manager or member of the services suspect dyslexia. The DAST result will determine whether further specialist assessment by an educational psychologist is required and also provide a profile of strengths and weaknesses which will support the remedial training programme.

The armed forces assist personnel with dyslexia during their training and throughout their service career; for example, dyslexic personnel can attend funded training at local colleges. As a result of assessment, extra time may be given in some service examinations with the approval of the appropriate examination authority. Notwithstanding this allowance, all service personnel must achieve the training performance standard. Following learning support, if an individual is unable to meet the operational performance standard they will, where possible, be retrained or moved to another trade.

Falklands Anniversary

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 117W, on the Falklands anniversary, if his Department will have talks with the Royal British Legion concerning the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War. [219036]

Mr. Caplin: I should be happy to meet representatives of The Royal British Legion, but to date they have expressed no wish for a meeting.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are for the role of the *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Air Force and *(c)* Royal Navy in Gibraltar; and what spending plans there are for each service's role in Gibraltar. [218620]

Mr. Ingram: Plans for the role of the armed forces in Gibraltar are unchanged. Commander British Forces' mission is to secure and maintain key sites and air and sea ports of disembarkation, which allow reinforcement, in order to ensure Gibraltar's security and territorial integrity, and provide staging and mounting facilities for UK and coalition operations elsewhere. Cascading from this, the Royal Navy's role, in conjunction with the Royal Gibraltar police, is to maintain the security and integrity of British Territorial Waters with a visible maritime presence.

The Royal Gibraltar Regiment contributes to the protection of key facilities in Gibraltar and provides immediate military support to the governor. The RAF's role is to sustain the airfield and associated facilities as an operational airhead, and to facilitate the safe use of the airfield by civilian operators. Linked together, these components provide a collective capability that, together with other local agencies, is charged with providing for the defence and security of Gibraltar. This also provides the capacity for British armed forces to use Gibraltar in support of other operations outside of the territory.

As a result of a recent review into its structure and tasks, the Royal Gibraltar Regiment will be reconfigured, resulting in a small increase in regular soldiers.

Future spending plans have not yet been set. We have yet to complete our planning round and the budget will be set in due course.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much land in Gibraltar is held by his Department; and what plans he has for such landholding. [218621]

Mr. Ingram: As at 25 February 2005, British Forces Gibraltar hold 153.364 Hectares. Once the transfer of land to the Government of Gibraltar under the Lands

Agreement is complete, British Forces Gibraltar will hold 119.43 hectares. In addition, the Government of Gibraltar has asked for a further 0.363 hectares for their new power station and the land at Windmill Hill parade ground. This land will be transferred to the Government of Gibraltar in due course, in accordance with the Land Transfer Agreement.

The 119.43 hectares of land that the Commander British Forces, Gibraltar will retain following the transfer of land under the lands agreement, will be used to fulfil Commander British Forces Gibraltar's mission. His mission is to secure and maintain key sites and air and sea ports of disembarkation, which allow reinforcement, in order to ensure Gibraltar's security and territorial integrity, and provide staging and mounting facilities for UK and coalition operations elsewhere.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* date and *(b)* nature was of each of the occasions, which are not currently before a court or a court martial but for which investigations have been launched into incidents where the actions of UK service personnel may have led directly to the death or injury of Iraqi civilians; what the status is of each investigation; what the name of the victim was in incidents where the victim is deceased; how many officers were reported or charged in connection with the incident; whether compensation or ex gratia payments were made in connection with the incident; and in relation to which of these incidents there is evidence of the deliberate abuse of Iraqis in British military custody. [211460]

Mr. Ingram: As at 21 February 2005, 164 investigations had been launched into the death, injury or alleged abuse of Iraqi civilians. The majority of these incidents occurred when UK forces returned fire after being attacked. The information requested is shown in a table which has been placed in the Library and excludes those cases which are currently or have recently been before a Court-Martial. Ex gratia payments were made in three cases, those of Waleed Sayay Muzban, Baha Musa and Hanan Matrud.

Maritime Coherence Study

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the purpose is of the Maritime Coherence Study; who has been commissioned to write it; when he expects it to be published; and if he will make a statement. [218446]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Soames) on 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 655W.

Military Bands

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many military bands in *(a)* the Royal Navy, *(b)* the Army, *(c)* the Royal Air Force and *(d)* the Royal Marines are fully funded by his Department. [204944]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is shown as follows:

Service	*Number of bands*
Royal Navy	0
Army	29
RAF	3
Royal Marines	5

I also refer the hon. Member to the statement my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence made to the House on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1799, about the future structure of the Army.

Military Museums

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to which military museums the Department makes grants; and how much the grant for each was in the last year for which figures are available. [218141]

Mr. Caplin: The Department provides grant in aid funding for the six principal service museums, detailed for financial year 2003-04 in the following table. In addition, there are 66 regimental and corps museums that receive public funding, through the provision of staff costs, property maintenance, etc.

Funding from Department financial year 2003-04

Museum	*£ million*
Royal Naval Museum	0.923
Royal Marines Museum	0.689
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	0.510
Fleet Air Arm Museum	0.556
National Army Museum	4.442
RAF Museum	6.811

Near Air Misses (Worcestershire)

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the number of near air misses between RAF aircraft and the Air Ambulance helicopters at Strensham, Worcestershire. [219546]

Mr. Caplin: There have been two airprox reports made to the Civil Aviation Authority's UK Airprox Board concerning incidents near Strensham Heliport on 14 December 2004 and 9 February 2005. It would be inappropriate to comment while the investigations into these incidents are still in progress.

Orion Laser Programme

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he is taking to ensure that the proposed Orion Laser programme at the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston does not contravene Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. [218217]

Mr. Ingram: A key objective of the proposed Orion Laser project is to have the ability to conduct our nuclear warhead assurance programme in compliance with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the project will achieve this. The use of the Orion Laser would not conflict with Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Procurement Costs

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the current forecast cost is of the *(a)* Nimrod MRA4 and *(b)* Type 45 destroyer projects. [217962]

Mr. Ingram: The current forecast cost for the procurement of 12 Nimrod MRA4 aircraft as provided in Major Project Report 04 is £3.6 billion. The current forecast cost of the Type 45 Destroyer project is £5.8 billion based on the approved six ship programme.

Reservists

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists were deployed overseas as at 1 February, broken down by country. [219045]

Mr. Caplin: As at 1 February 2005 the number of Reservists deployed overseas by country was:

	Number
Afghanistan	31
Bahrain	1
Bosnia	69
Cyprus	2
Dubai	3
Iraq	811
Kosovo	11
Kuwait	<1
Netherlands	<1
Oman	<3
Qatar	<6

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists have been sent overseas without an annual classification on personal weapons in the last 12 months. [219046]

Mr. Caplin: No reservists have been deployed overseas without a Weapons Handling Test.

Shoeburyness Ranges

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of *(a)* contamination which may have occurred as a result of the work carried out for the original nuclear weapons programme at the Shoeburyness ranges and *(b)* residual radioactive contamination at the site. [218572]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has just started a land quality assessment (LQA) of the entire site at Shoeburyness, which will include areas formerly used for research in support of the development of nuclear weapons. The LQA process is a step-by-step investigation into historic contamination and, as they become known, the results will be made available to the public. The initial report should be available by May, although it is likely that, at that stage, the report will simply highlight areas where more intrusive investigations will be required.

Tornado

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the implications for defence of the Tornado aircraft from missile attack of not fitting the Tornado advanced self-protection system. [219041]

Mr. Ingram: Full operational analysis is conducted when evaluating the military requirement and considering future equipment capability. The Tornado GR4 relies for its protection on a combination of defensive aids and use of appropriate tactics, concepts of operation and employment appropriate to the threat.

Trafalgar Submarines

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many of the Trafalgar class nuclear powered submarines are in active service and at sea; [216811]

(2) how many of the Trafalgar class submarines are in dock for *(a)* scheduled repairs and *(b)* refuelling; [216812]

(3) how many of the Trafalgar class submarines are not in service *(a)* undergoing and *(b)* awaiting unscheduled (i) inspection and (ii) repairs; [216813]

(4) what the nature is of the defect in the nuclear propulsion system of those Trafalgar class submarines undergoing *(a)* inspection and *(b)* repair; and when the boats of the Trafalgar class flotilla will be back to normal operating strength. [216814]

Mr. Ingram: There are seven Trafalgar Class submarines in active service of which four are currently available for FLEET programming. Of the remaining boats, two are in dock: one is undergoing a scheduled Long Overhaul Period, which includes a refuel (LOP(R)) and the other is undergoing a scheduled Revalidation and Assisted Maintenance Period (RAMP). A further boat is awaiting the start of Her LOP(R).

Two boats are currently subject to unscheduled operating restrictions, due to an emergent issue that was identified during routine reviews of their safety cases. Further safety justification work is under way and, while there has been no failure of components, until a robust safety case has been re-established the safest course of action is to limit their operation.

For the purposes of FLEET programming, no distinction is made between the Swiftsure and Trafalgar Class submarines. Consequently, there is not actually a full operating strength for the Trafalgar Class. A generic SSN Readiness Profile is used, but to release details of this would prejudice the capability, effectiveness and security of the SSN force, so this data is being withheld under exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Basic Skills

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will deposit in the Library a copy of her Department's segmentation of the market for basic skills. [219436]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In 2003 the Department published the "Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills" (DfES, October 2003). The survey provides the latest estimates [mapped to the National Standards] of literacy, numeracy and ICT levels for adults aged 16 to 65 in England.

While the Skills for Life programme offers high quality, free learning opportunities to all adults who want to improve their skills to Level 2, the survey findings have helped the Department to identify and target some key groups with low skills, including: unemployed people and benefit claimants; low-skilled people in employment; young adults who leave school and begin work with low skills; parents with low skills; and people who live in disadvantaged communities.

A copy of the survey report has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Departmental Policies

Geraint Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the Croydon, Central constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on the Croydon, Central constituency. [219297]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Croydon, Central constituency lies within Croydon local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents Achievement for pupils attending schools in Croydon, Central are given in the following tables:

Key Stage 2 Achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Croydon, Central constituency

Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above

	1997	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2004*
Croydon, Central			
English[1]	60	79	19
Maths[1]	58	70	12
National average			
English[2]	63	78	15
Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Croydon, Central constituency
[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools)

GCSE and equivalents[1] Achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Rochdale constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement*
Croydon, Central			
5+ A*–C	38.8	46.5	7.7
5+ A*–G	81.4	90.1	8.7

GCSE and equivalents[1] Achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Rochdale constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement*
National average			
5+ A*–C	45.1	53.7	8.6
5+ A*–G	87.0	88.8	1.8

Notes:
1. For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.
2. As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The Primary and Key Stage 3 National Strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offers comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post 16, Higher Education and Adult Education

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The In Your Area website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post 16.

Drug Awareness (Essex)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers who specialise in drug awareness and prevention are currently employed in Romford and Havering constituency schools. [219021]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information is not collected centrally.

Teaching Staff

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and

(b) learning assistants there were in Battersea secondary schools on the latest date for which figures are available. [218522]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teachers and learning assistants in maintained secondary schools in Battersea in January 2004, the latest information available.

Maintained secondary schools

Battersea	*Number*
Qualified teachers	80
Other teaching staff	10
Total teaching staff	80
Teaching assistants	[1] —
Other support staff	30
Total support staff	30

[1] Less than 5.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Annual school census.

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* classroom assistants have been employed in the Hartlepool constituency in each year since 1997. [218513]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of regular teachers and classroom assistants in maintained schools in Hartlepool constituency in each year from January 1997 to 2004, the latest information available.

	Regular staff	*Teaching Assistants*	*Other support staff*	*Total support staff*
1997	840	100	110	210
1998	810	110	120	230
1999	800	120	120	240
2000	820	140	140	280
2001	840	210	160	370
2002	850	140	340	470
2003	840	260	270	530
2004	850	250	300	550

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
DfES annual survey of teacher numbers and vacancies, (teacher numbers) and Annual School Census, (teaching assistants and support staff).

Teaching assistants and other support staff include maintained and non-maintained special schools.

Education Funding

Mr. Mackay: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the reasons are for the funding gap between school sixth forms and further education colleges in the Bracknell constituency; and if she will make a statement. [218659]

Dr. Howells: As a direct consequence of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act and the removal of the incorporated FE sector funding systems from local authority control, there was a divergence from local authority systems which has resulted in funding level differences. These differences were made more apparent when all post 16 funding became the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council in 2001.

The Government recognises that there is a funding gap between school sixth forms and further education colleges in the resources provided for students aged 16 to 18 following similar programmes. Our policy has been to 'bring up' the level of funding for colleges, as and when we are able to secure the resources to do so.

Essex Students

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information she has collated on the percentage of Essex county's 17 to 18-year-olds who go on to attend university. [217143]

Dr. Howells: The most recent information shows the proportion of 18-year-olds from local education authorities within Essex county who obtained places on full-time higher education courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), and this is shown in the table.

Proportion of students aged 18 from Essex county accepted through UCAS to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK, 2003/04

Local education authority:	*Percentage*
Essex	23.1
Thurrock	10.9
Southend-on-Sea	19.6

In addition, HEFCE have recently published 'Young participation in Higher Education', which shows the proportion of young people who enter higher education at age 18 or 19 by local areas, although this only covers the years up to 2000.

Participation rates for local authorities based on this work are given on the supporting POLAR website www.hefce.ac.uk/polar. These indicate that, for the cohorts reaching 18 between 1997 and 1999, the proportion of young people from the LEAs in Essex county who entered higher education at age 18 or 19 was 27 per cent. in Essex, 24 per cent. in Southend-on-Sea and 14 per cent. in Thurrock. The English average for these cohorts is 29 per cent.

Extended Schools

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on *(a)* extended schools and *(b)* the Government's proposal to have at least one such school in each local area by 2006. [219373]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This Government are committed to the creation of at least one 'full service' extended school in each local area by 2006. Over time, however, we want all schools to become extended schools. Our Five-year Strategy for Children and Learners outlines the core offer of extended services that we expect all schools to develop, in partnership with other children's services and the voluntary and community sectors. Our 10 year strategy for child care states that by 2010 all secondary schools will be open from 5am to 6pm all year round, offering a range of activities such as music, sport, and holiday activities. Many schools already offer some

activities, recognising the benefits that extended services provide for children, their families, local communities and schools themselves. We are supporting the development of extended schools with both advice and funding including, from April this year, £107 million through all local education authorities in England.

Fair Access

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list *(a)* the universities and *(b)* secondary schools which have been visited by (i) the Director General of the Office for Fair Access and (ii) other members of her staff. [218987]

Dr. Howells: The Director of Fair Access and his staff have met or spoken with numerous institutions and sector bodies since OFFA was established in October 2004. In particular, a series of OFFA seminars were attended by most higher education institutions, and meetings have taken place with representative bodies, including Universities UK, the Standing Conference of Principals, the Association of Colleges, the Independent Schools Council, and the Secondary Heads Association.

Foreign Students

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students from EU accession countries have obtained places at London universities in each year since 1997. [218968]

Dr. Howells: The available information on undergraduate entrants is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record and figures are given in the table.

EU accession country[1] domiciled undergraduate entrants at London HE institutions[2] 1997/98 to 2003/04

Academic year	*Entrants to London HE institutions*
1997/98	360
1998/99	345
1999/2000	430
2000/01	420
2001/02	475
2002/03	430
2003/04	535

[1] Includes Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia.
[2] Figures exclude the OU.
Note:
Snapshot as at 1 December and figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Freedom of Information

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 855-56W, on Freedom of Information, what progress has been made by the Office for Fair Access in preparing a publication scheme under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and how many requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act have been *(a)* received and *(b)* responded to by the Office for Fair Access. [218990]

Dr. Howells: The Office for Fair Access has a draft publication scheme which it expects to submit in March 2005 to the Information Commissioner. OFFA has to date received two requests under the Freedom of Information Act, and has responded to one of them.

Girls' Schools (Sixth-form Boys)

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many representations her Department received during January 2004 requesting information and advice on making applications to the admissions forum for the admission of boys to the sixth-form of a girls' school; if she will list them; and if she will make a statement. [218930]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department did not receive any representations on this matter during January 2004. Decisions to admit boys to the sixth-form of a girls' school are made locally and do not involve the Secretary of State.

If a single-sex maintained school wishes to admit pupils of the opposite sex to the school's sixth-form, it must publish statutory proposals if the number of these pupils would exceed 25 per cent. of the year group. A final decision on the statutory proposals would be for the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or, if the SOC could not reach a unanimous decision, the schools adjudicator. If statutory proposals were not required it would then be for the admission authority—either the school's governing body or the local authority—to decide, taking into account all relevant legislation and having regard to the school admissions code of practice and any advice given by the admissions forum.

Maths and Science

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many higher education institutions offered *(a)* mathematics *(b)* physics, *(c)* biology and *(d)* chemistry-related degrees in each of the last 10 years. [218882]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The Department does not specifically collect information on the subjects offered by each HE institution. The available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record and summarises the number of HE institutions with one or more enrolments at degree level in the given subject. Figures are given in the table.

Number of UK HEIs[1] with one or more first degree enrolment in the given subjects, 1994/95 to 2003/04

		Physical sciences[2]		
			Of which:	
Academic year	*Mathematical sciences*	*Total*	*Physics*	*Chemistry*
1994/95	90	113	68	83
1995/96	92	115	69	85
1996/97	95	116	68	81
1997/98	97	117	67	78
1998/99	99	115	66	78
1999/2000	95	115	61	77
2000/01	96	115	57	78

Number of UK HEIs[1] with one or more first degree enrolment in the given subjects, 1994/95 to 2003/04

		Physical sciences[2]		
			Of which:	
Academic year	Mathematical sciences	Total	Physics	Chemistry
2001/02	93	115	55	75
2002/03[3]	107	119	64	83
2003/04[3]	108	120	68	82

[1] Figures exclude the Open University.

[2] Physical sciences includes chemistry, materials science, physics, astronomy, forensic and archaeological studies, geology, ocean sciences and physical geography.

[3] Figures for the years up to and including 2001/02 are the number of institutions with one or more first degree enrolment in the subject, based upon a headcount of the students major subject of study. For 2002/03 onwards, the figures are the number of institutions based on a count of students who have been allocated between subjects according to the split between the component parts of their degree. Because of this coverage, the figures for 2002/03 and 2003/04 are not comparable to earlier years.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Number of UK HEIs[1] with one or more first degree enrolment in the given subjects, 1994/95 to 2003/04

	Biological sciences[2]		
Academic year	Total	Of which: biology	All subjects
1994/95	114	88	174
1995/96	116	90	173
1996/97	119	90	170
1997/98	119	91	169
1998/99	117	91	164
1999/2000	117	94	164
2000/01	113	96	162
2001/02	114	95	165
2002/03[3]	122	104	165
2003/04[3]	123	111	164

[1] Figures exclude the Open University.

[2] Biological sciences includes biology, botany, zoology, genetics, microbiology, sports science, molecular biology, biophysics, biochemistry and psychology.

[3] Figures for the years up to and including 2001/02 are the number of institutions with one or more first degree enrolment in the subject, based upon a headcount of the students major subject of study. For 2002/03 onwards, the figures are the number of institutions based on a count of students who have been allocated between subjects according to the split between the component parts of their degree. Because of this coverage, the figures for 2002/03 and 2003/04 are not comparable to earlier years.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total number of students studying *(a)* mathematics *(b)* physics, *(c)* biology and *(d)* chemistry-related degrees was in each of the last 10 years. [218883]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 28 February 2005]*: The available information is given in the table. A new method of coding subject was introduced on the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record in 2002/03, hence figures for 2002/03 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years.

First degree enrolments to UK HEIs[1], 1994/95 to 2003/04

		Physical sciences[2]		
			Of which:	
Academic year	Mathematical sciences	Total	Physics	Chemistry
1994/95	15,200	51,730	9,470	15,115
1995/96	14,875	51,930	9,365	14,730
1996/97	15,240	51,915	9,915	14,520
1997/98	15,990	50,725	9,645	14,325
1998/99	15,675	50,220	9,710	14,315
1999/2000	15,635	49,115	9,435	13,615
2000/01	16,090	47,615	9,210	12,755
2001/02	16,190	45,435	8,855	12,160
2002/03[3]	19,690	48,975	9,185	12,200
2003/04[3]	19,810	48,990	9,585	11,815

[1] Figures exclude the Open University to maintain a consistent time series.

[2] Physical sciences includes chemistry, materials science, physics, astronomy, forensic and archaeological studies, geology, ocean sciences and physical geography.

[3] Figures are not comparable to earlier years due to a change in the coding methodology for subject of study in 2002/03.

Note:

Figures are on snapshot basis as at 1 December and are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

First degree enrolments to UK HEIs[1], 1994/95 to 2003/04

	Biological sciences[2]		
Academic year	Total	Of which: biology	All subjects
1994/95	49,820	16,880	915,965
1995/96	54,075	17,190	949,865
1996/97	60,265	17,755	968,875
1997/98	65,930	17,100	989,110
1998/99	66,550	17,285	1,001,765
1999/2000	67,625	16,965	1,000,210
2000/01	69,235	16,790	1,023,140
2001/02	70,100	15,985	1,054,390
2002/03[3]	95,340	17,995	1,095,615
2003/04[3]	99,525	18,200	1,131,870

[1] Figures exclude the Open University to maintain a consistent time series.

[2] Biological sciences includes biology, botany, zoology, genetics, microbiology, sports science, molecular biology, biophysics, biochemistry and psychology.

[3] Figures are not comparable to earlier years due to a change in the coding methodology for subject of study in 2002/03.

Note:

Figures are on snapshot basis as at 1 December and are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Higher Education

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the rate of participation by 18-year-olds in higher education in each region in England was in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [216487]

Dr. Howells: The latest information shows the proportion of 18-year-olds from each region who obtained places on full-time higher education courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), and this is shown in the following table. Figures for 2004/05 are not yet available.

Percentage of 18-year-olds obtaining places in HE

	2002/03	2003/04
North East	19.8	20.9
North West	21.8	20.9
Merseyside	21.4	21.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	19.7	19.3
East Midlands	21.0	21.0
West Midlands	21.7	21.2
East of England	22.6	22.0
London	23.9	23.6
South East	23.3	22.7
South West	21.1	20.2

In addition, HEFCE have recently published 'Young participation in Higher Education' published by HEFCE, which shows, for each region, the proportion of young people who enter higher education at age 18 or 19. The figures for the two most recent years are:

Percentage of each year cohort aged 18

	1999	2000
North East	24.0	24.0
North West	27.6	28.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	25.2	25.6
East Midlands	27.5	27.9
West Midlands	27.7	28.1
East of England	28.6	30.1
London	35.0	36.4
South East	32.7	33.3
South West	29.1	30.0

Rochdale Students

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 18 to 22-year-olds from Rochdale were studying at university *(a)* in 1997 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available. [217367]

Dr. Howells: Participation rates for each parliamentary constituency are not calculated by the Department. The most recent information shows the proportion of 18-year-olds from Rochdale local education authority who obtained places on full-time higher education courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), and this is shown in the table.

Proportion of students aged 18 from Rochdale local education authority accepted through UCAS to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK

Academic year	Percentage
1996–97	16.3
2003–04	18.0

In addition, HEFCE have recently published "Young participation in Higher Education", which shows the proportion of young people who enter higher education at age 18 or 19 by parliamentary constituency, although this only covers the years up to 2000. A discussion of the participation divisions between areas with high and low levels of participation, and trends (18-year-olds in 1994 to 18-year-olds in 2000) for constituencies is contained in the report (sections 2.12, 3.8 and 4.1).

The figures indicate that the proportion of young people from Rochdale who entered higher education at age 18 or 19 was 24 per cent. in 1997 and 25 per cent. in 2000.

School Funding

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the Government have allocated per child in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the Romford and Havering constituencies in 2004–05. [219374]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is collected at local education authority level. Romford schools fall within Barking and Dagenham, Essex, Havering and Redbridge LEAs. The information requested is shown in the following table:

Total cash funding per pupil by each LEA containing a school in Romford, 2004–05

£

LEA name	Primary (3 to 10-year-olds)	Secondary (11 to 15-year-olds)
Barking and Dagenham	4,060	5,080
Essex	3,460	4,360
Havering	3,480	4,480
Redbridge	3,750	4,580

Notes:
1. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education EPS settlements and include the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC.
2. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–10 and 11–15 and exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level.
3. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the EPS settlement calculations.
4. Figures are in cash terms rounded to the nearest £10 as reported by the LEA.
5. 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the allocation of capital funding to schools in Crosby and Formby before they receive Building Schools for the Future funding. [219086]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: On 30 November 2004, we announced capital funding allocations for all schools and authorities in England for the next three years. This followed the settlement of the 2004 spending review, in which schools capital increased to £6.3 billion by 2007–08, a six fold real-terms increase since 1996–97. Our announcement included direct capital funding for schools, and a typical primary school of 250 pupils will receive £25,500 of devolved formula capital in 2005–06, £32,250 in 2006–07and £34,250 in 2007–08. A typical secondary school of 1,000 pupils will receive £87,250, £108,500 and £113,000 in these years to use for its own priorities.

Further, Sefton local education authority, which includes Corby and Formby, will receive a total of £12.6 million of formulaic funding over the next three years, and a further £3.5 million will be available for its voluntary aided schools. In all, over £32.5 million has been allocated from 2005–06 until 2007–08 for Sefton and its schools.

Additionally, the authority can apply to the Targeted Capital Fund for exceptional needs which it cannot fund from its formulaic allocations. Last week we announced details of how authorities can access this funding for 2006–07, and all authorities are invited to apply for this additional funding. Finally, because Sefton is not prioritised early in the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, by 2011 we aim to provide it with funding to transform at least one of its secondary school with the greatest need.

My officials are currently meeting all authorities to discuss their capital strategy in the light of our recent announcements on funding allocations and BSF, and how they can best use the funding available to them from our allocations and their other resources to improve their school estate.

School Toilets

Dr. Palmer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) which national body is responsible for the standard of school toilets and washrooms for pupils; [218913]

(2) what discussions her Department has had with the Health and Safety Executive about extending its powers of inspection to cover school toilets for pupils; and if she will make a statement. [218914]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The minimum number of toilets for pupils in maintained schools is controlled by the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999. Local education authorities are responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulations. The condition of the facilities is a matter for the school's head teacher and governors as they are responsible for cleaning and maintenance. We have had no discussions about extending the inspection powers of the Health and Safety Executive to cover school toilets for pupils.

School Violence (Essex)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school violence episodes occurred in Romford and Havering schools in each year since 1997. [219020]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This information is not collected centrally.

Schools (Essex)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many private, independent and faith schools there are in Romford and Havering constituencies. [219017]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is shown in the tables.

All schools: Number of schools by religious character, January 2004: Romford parliamentary constituency and Havering local education authority

Romford parliamentary constituency

	Maintained nursery	*Maintained primary*[1]	*Maintained secondary*[1]	*Special*[2]	*Pupil referral units*	*Independent*
No religious character	0	19	3	0	0	1
Church of England	0	2	1	0	0	0
Roman Catholic	0	2	1	0	0	1
Methodist	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Christian Faith[3]	0	0	0	0	0	1
Jewish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Muslim	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sikh	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	23	5	0	0	3

Havering local education authority

	Maintained nursery	*Maintained primary*[1]	*Maintained secondary*[1]	*Special*[2]	*Pupil referral units*	*Independent*
No religious character	0	55	14	3	3	3
Church of England	0	2	1	0	0	0
Roman Catholic	0	0	2	0	0	1
Methodist	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Christian Faith[3]	0	0	1	0	0	3
Jewish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Muslim	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sikh	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	65	18	3	3	7

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[3] Includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census and EduBase

Schools (Gang Culture)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received with regard to gang culture in schools. [220101]

Derek Twigg: One letter has been received from a member of the public.

Specialist Schools

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what EU funding is available to the Specialist Schools Trust; and what assistance her Department is giving to the Trust in applying for such funds. [218955]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Specialist Schools Trust may apply for EU funding on the same basis as other organisations by way of formal application. The Department has no involvement.

State Schools (Accountability)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the means by which publicly funded schools are accountable for the academic performance of their pupils. [219372]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The accountability system revolves around externally assured tests which set the standards of academic performance; publishing the results, both through individual notification to parents and in national school achievement and attainment tables; setting targets for academic achievement at 11, 14 and 16; and school inspection.

The accountability system demonstrates whether or not schools are succeeding. Those that are, increasingly adopt leadership roles in the school system; those that require assistance because of the circumstances they face, can receive it; and where there are demonstrable failings, they can be tackled.

Student Debt

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of non-completion of courses on the capacity of students to repay tuition fees and student loans. [217550]

Dr. Howells: The average starting earnings of students, who do not complete their courses, are estimated to be around 70 per cent. of those of completing students entering repayment status at the same time. Future earnings are then assumed to increase based on average earnings growth. Borrowers are only required to start making repayments from the April following completion or withdrawal from their course and only if their earnings reach the repayment threshold.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many student loan borrowers have been declared bankrupt in each year since student loans were introduced in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* England and Wales. [217561]

Dr. Howells: The table shows the numbers of all student loan bankruptcies notified to the Student Loans Company in each year since student loans were introduced. As requested, the table gives the figures for *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* England and Wales. For completeness the figures for Northern Ireland are included as well.

Number of borrowers

	UK	*Scotland*	*England and Wales*	*Northern Ireland*
1990	0	0	0	0
1991	0	0	0	0
1992	20	2	18	0
1993	24	3	21	0
1994	46	3	43	0
1995	56	6	49	1
1996	71	13	58	0
1997	140	31	108	1
1998	219	75	141	3
1999	392	142	250	0
2000	456	150	301	5
2001	759	194	553	12
2002	1,018	329	678	11
2003	2,679	429	2,203	47
2004	3,803	811	2,943	49
Total	9,683	2,188	7,366	129

Source:
Student Loans Company

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effects on her Department's income flow for each financial year from April 2005 if the income threshold at which graduates start to repay their student loans were to be raised to *(a)* £15,000, *(b)* £19,000 and *(c)* £25,000 per annum. [217564]

Dr. Howells: The Department has estimated the impact on annual repayments via the tax system of raising the repayment threshold on income contingent loans from April 2005. This is not the same as the impact on the Department's total income flow, nor on the resource cost of issuing student loans as reflected in the Department's accounts.

The following table summarises the estimated percentage reduction in annual repayments from raising the repayment threshold above £10,000 from April 2005. The estimates are based on maintenance loans only, exclude voluntary repayments, and assume that all repayment thresholds increase in line with inflation beyond 2005.

Percentage reduction in forecast annual repayments compared to a £10,000 repayment threshold

	Repayment threshold in April 2005		
FY	*£15,000*	*£19,000*	*£25,000*
2005	46	73	90
2006	44	68	88
2007	40	65	86
2008	38	62	84
2009	35	58	84

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the estimated level of debt owed to the Student Loan Company is in 2005; what the

level of such debt is expected to be in each of the next five years; and what estimate has been made of the amount of bad debt which the Student Loan Company will write off in each year between 2005 and 2010. [218648]

Dr. Howells: Estimates for total student loan debt owed to the Government for maintenance (mortgage style and income contingent) loans and fee loans in England and Wales are highly dependent on the future growth of student numbers, among other factors.

Estimates for 2005–06 to 2007–08 are as follows:

At end of financial year	*£ million*
2005–06	16,270
2006–07	19,400
2007–08	23,160

Forecasts for years beyond FY07–08 are dependent on Spending Review 06 allocations. Around 5 per cent. of income contingent loans (the type of loan issued since 1998/99) in England and Wales are forecast not to be repaid. The majority of write-offs are for policy reasons, when a borrower reaches 65 years old, becomes disabled or dies.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will estimate the cost of deferred loan arrangements for EU students after 2006; and what arrangements are planned by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Student Loan Company to recover such loans. [218788]

Dr. Howells: If 75 per cent. of EU students were charged the full £3,000 fee and 25 per cent. charged the standard fee and assuming that 80 per cent. of them took out a fee loan and their repayment behaviour was similar to English and Welsh students, costs are currently estimated to be around £40 million per year (steady state at Academic Year 2006/07 terms).

The Student Loans Company (SLC) are responsible for ensuring repayments are made when they fall due and have well established procedures for recovering loans from graduates living and working outside the UK. All students taking out a loan are required to sign a declaration agreeing to repay, even if they move abroad and the SLC have a range of sanctions that can be imposed on defaulters. DfES officials and SLC are exploring ways to ensure the most robust and effective loan recovery mechanisms are in place by the time the first graduate contributions from EU students are due to be collected.

Sure Start

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition she uses of children's centres; and what steps areas with no history of Sure Start or Neighbourhood Nurseries can take to set up children's centres. [217222]

Margaret Hodge: Children's centres are one-stop shops joining up services for young children and their families, including child care integrated with early learning. Children's centres are community based, responsive to local needs and focused on tackling early disadvantage. Centre staff will help parents access services their family needs either by offering services at the centre or linking parents with other providers in the local area. This will include:

early education and child care places that fit with families' needs, whether in group settings, with child minders, or at home;

parenting and family support;

health advice, including health visiting and midwifery;

preventative services to support children with additional needs early in a child's life, including outreach into communities; and

support and help for parents to move into training and work.

Children's centres are currently being developed in the most disadvantaged areas where needs are greatest. In most cases children's centres will offer early education and child care but in some less disadvantaged areas, a more flexible model may be appropriate. The services delivered at each centre will depend on local needs and existing service provision in the area.

A large number of children's centres especially those in the more disadvantaged areas will be based upon Sure Start Local Programmes and Neighbourhood Nurseries. However, children's centres can be, and already are being, based upon a much wider range of existing private and public provision including, day nurseries, schools (nursery, primary and secondary) and family centres as well as other early years settings. Local authorities should draw upon their experience delivering the full range of early years settings and services, when establishing children's centres, building on what is currently available in the immediate locality.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the public service agreement target of 90 per cent. of young people by age 22 to have participated in a full-time programme fitting them for entry into higher education or skilled employment by 2010 will be met. [219252]

Dr. Howells: This target has been replaced by the new 2008 public service agreement target on level 2 and level 3 attainment. In the Department's 2004 autumn performance report we announced that we would no longer be reporting on the 2010 target in the context of a more streamlined and outcome-based package of spending review 2004 targets and supporting performance indicators.

In addition to the level 2 at 19 public service agreement target, we will continue to track improved outcomes for young people through the participation rates of 16 and 17-year-olds in further education and training and the number of young people attaining a level 3 by age 19 and completing an apprenticeship.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the public service agreement target to increase participation in higher education towards 50 per cent. of those aged 18 to 30 years by 2010 will be met. [219254]

Dr. Howells: Demand projections based on anticipated improvements in attainment suggest that demand for HE will continue to grow and that progress towards 50 per cent. can be maintained between now and 2010.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the public service agreement target to make significant progress year on year towards fair access into higher education was met in 2004. [219255]

Dr. Howells: The Higher Education Statistics Agency publishes a set of performance indicators for UK universities and higher education colleges. The latest data relates to entrants to higher education in the academic year 2002/03. These show that:

The percentage of young entrants to full-time first degree courses from state schools in England has risen as follows:

	Percentage
1999	84.1
2000	85.0
2001	85.2
2002	86.4

The percentage of young entrants to full-time first degree courses from low participation neighbourhoods in England has risen as follows:

	Percentage
1999	11.7
2000	11.8
2001	12.4
2002	12.5

A full copy of the performance indicators can be found at www.hesa.ac.uk/pi/default.htm.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the estimated cost to public funds is of achieving the Public Service Agreement target to make significant progress towards fair access into higher education. [219257]

Dr. Howells: No estimate has been made of the cost to the public funds of achieving the Public Service Agreement target to make significant progress year on year towards fair access into higher education.

The then Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke, made a statement to the House of Commons on 16 September 2004 about how expenditure announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his budget statement would be used to support the reforms set out in the Department's Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners.

Concerning higher education, he explained that Government expenditure will increase by about £2 billion between 2004–05 and 2007–08, taking total investment to almost £9.5 billion.

This means there will be average increases of over 6 per cent. in real terms over the next three years. These increases will cover the sector's financial needs in the short term.

Teachers (Allegations)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the results of the consultation into proposals for dealing with allegations against teachers and other staff will be published. [218863]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My officials have received 160 responses to the consultation and aim to publish a summary of those on my Department's website in early April.

HEALTH

A and E

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people attended an accident and emergency department in England in each quarter since March 2000; [215134]

(2) what the average percentage of patients seen in under four hours from arrival at an accident and emergency department to admission, transfer or discharge has been in each quarter since March 2000. [215136]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on the number of attendances and the percentage of patients seen in four hours or less in accident and emergency departments are available on the Department's website at www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospital activity/index.htm.

Data for each quarter from 2001–02 for A&E attendances and for each quarter from quarter 2, 2002–03 for patients seen in less than four hours are available in the Library. Prior to this, information was published annually in "Outpatient and Ward Attenders, England", copies of which are also available in the Library.

Ambulance Response Times

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average response time for ambulances attending 999 calls was in *(a)* Hartlepool and *(b)* England in each year since 1997. [218510]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally in the format requested. Data on response times for North East Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust and for all ambulance services in England are shown in the table. The Welsh Assembly should be contacted for information on the Welsh Ambulance Service.

Data are only available from the date trusts introduced call prioritisation. North East Ambulance Service introduced call prioritisation in 1999–2000. All ambulance services in England had introduced call prioritisation by 2001–02.

Further information can be found in the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance services, England: 2003–04". A copy is available in the Library and on the Department's website at www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0411.htm.

	North East	England
Percentage of category A calls responded within eight minutes		
1997–98	n/a	n/a
1998–99	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	50.1	n/a
2000–01	50.8	n/a
2001–02	72.3	70.8
2002–03	76.6	74.6
2003–04	75.6	75.7
Percentage of category A calls responded within 14–19 minutes		
1997–98	n/a	n/a
1998–99	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	96.1	n/a
2000–01	93.9	n/a
2001–02	98.0	94.1
2002–03	99.1	94.6
2003–04	98.9	93.9
Percentage of category B/C calls responded within 14–19 minutes		
1997–98	n/a	n/a
1998–99	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	93.0	n/a
2000–01	90.3	n/a
2001–02	94.7	90.2
2002–03	96.0	89.6
2003–04	95.1	87.5
Percentage of urgent journeys with arrival time not more than 15 minutes late		
1997–98	91.5	88.0
1998–99	85.4	84.0
1999–2000	80.1	80.5
2000–01	77.6	78.8
2001–02	85.0	78.5
2002–03	83.7	78.0
2003–04	85.4	78.1

n/a = Not available

Assertive Outreach Teams

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* crisis resolution teams, *(b)* assertive outreach teams and *(c)* early intervention teams he has established since 1999. [216154]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There were estimated to be 243 crisis resolution, 278 assertive outreach and 81 early intervention teams established in England as at 31 December 2004. These figures are based on local delivery plan returns (LDPRs). These LDPR figures are the most timely data available, but are best viewed as approximate rather than definitive. Final data will become available via the 31 March update to the Durham mapping of adult mental health services.

Breast Screening

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what facilities are available for breast screening of women aged 50 to 64 years in *(a)* North Yorkshire, *(b)* East Anglia and *(c)* other parts of England; and if he will make a statement. [217654]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The National Health Service Breast Screening Programme provides free breast screening every three years for all women in England aged 50 and over. Women aged between 50 and 70 are currently invited every three years. Once women reach the upper age limit for routine invitations for breast screening, they are encouraged to make their own appointment.

There are 85 breast screening units in the United Kingdom. These are specialised screening units, which can either be mobile, hospital based, or permanently based in another convenient location such as a shopping centre. Approximately 80 per cent. of the units are mobile.

In Northern Yorkshire, the breast screening service is comprised of two static sites, based in York, and three mobile units. For East Anglia, Ipswich, Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Peterborough each have one static site and one mobile unit. Cambridge has one static site and two mobile units, and Norfolk and Norwich have two static sites and two mobile units.

Capital Improvements (Hartlepool)

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what capital improvements have been made by his Department in the Hartlepool constituency since 1997. [218501]

Miss Melanie Johnson: County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority reports that the total value of capital developments/investments at North Tees and Hartlepool National Health Service Trust in each year since 1997–98 is as shown in the table.

	Amount (£000)
1997–98	658
1998–99	1,294
1999–2000	1,698
2000–01	1,478
2001–02	1,544
2002–03	1,159
2003–04	1,193
2004–05	1,553

The improvements that this funding has paid for include:

a new computed tomography (CT) scanner, which was delivered to North Tees General Hospital in February 2002;

a new £1 million pathology laboratory, which opened in December 2002 at the University Hospital of Hartlepool;

a new £65,000 mammogram machine, which became operational in April 2003 at the University Hospital of North Tees;

a new £2 million angiography unit, which is currently in development.

In addition, Hartlepool PCT purchased the Barlows building in 2003–04 at a cost of around £750,000.

Care Standards

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many inspections of care homes were carried out in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004 under the auspices of the Care Standards Commission; how many were unannounced; and how many led to deregistration of care homes. [218727]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 28 February 2005]*: Information on the number of inspections of care homes completed by the National Care Standards Commission in 2002–03 and 2003–04 is shown in the table.

Care home inspections	2002–03	2003–04
Announced	25,800	24,645
Unannounced	15,634	22,160
Total	41,434	46,768

As of 24 February, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has completed 39,473 of the 44,674 care home inspections scheduled to be conducted by 31 March 2005. Of the 39,473 inspections, 20,440 were announced and 19,033 were unannounced.

From 1 April 2004 to 24 February 2005, 2000 care homes have de-registered through inspection activity, home closure and change in ownership.

Cataract Operations (Wirral, South)

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on waiting times for cataract operations in Wirral, South. [218500]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Finished consultant admission episodes and average time waited for episodes with a cataract main operation in Wirral Hospital National Health Service Trust, 2003–04

	Wirral Hospital NHS Trust	England (all NHS trusts)
Finished admission episodes	1,600	297,935
Mean time waited (days)	157	148
Median time waited (days)	142	127

Notes:
1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year. Figures given are for all admission methods.
2. The main operation is the first recorded operation in the hospital episodes statistics (HES) data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, eg time waited, but the figures for "all operations count of episodes" give a more complete count of episodes with an operation. OPCS4 codes C71-C72 and C74-C75 have been used for cataract operations.
3. Time waited statistics from HES are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension. Average time waited figures given are for waiting list and booked admissions.
4. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (ie the data are ungrossed).
Source:
HES, Department of Health.

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [214653]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of enhanced exits in the Department of Health for financial years 1997–98 to 2003–04 are shown in the following table.

Financial year	Total cost[1] (£000)
1997–98	1,762
1998–99	1,129
1999–2000	2,303
2000–01	2,023
2001–02	3,200
2002–03	16,964
2003–04	9,201
Total	36,582

[1] The total includes annual compensation payments, for those aged over 50, until they reach normal retirement age

The estimated costs for financial years 2004–05 to 2007–08 are shown in the following table.

Financial year	Estimated costs (£000)
2004–05	[1]34,076
2005–06	3,000
2006–07	3,000
2007–08	3,000
Total	43,076

[1] This estimate includes £6.67 million for NHS Estates and Inventures.

Dentistry

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of dentists in *(a)* England and *(b)* each parliamentary constituency are accepting NHS patients. [217053]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As of 15 February 2005, there were 8,443 dental practices accepting at least one type of national health service treatment. Information is not available centrally number of dentists accepting NHS patients by parliamentary constituency. Information on the number of dental practices that are accepting at least one type of NHS treatment by primary care trust has been placed in the Library. Because dental practices may be accepting more than one type of NHS patient, the data cannot be proportioned.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of dentists in *(a)* each primary care trust and *(b)* each parliamentary constituency have stopped taking NHS patients in each year since 1997. [217054]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The great majority of dental practices treat both private and national health service patients. The Office of Fair Trading report "The private dentistry market in the UK" published in March 2003 estimated that out of 11,000 dental practices about 210 are totally private, treating no NHS patients. Data on the percentages of complete leavers, by primary care trust and parliamentary constituency has been placed in the Library. The data do not take account of dentists who moved to other areas and continued to work in the general or personal dental services. The dentists could have ceased doing NHS work for a number of different reasons including retirement or leave to take a short-term absence. New contractual arrangements, which we are to introduce by April 2006, are intended to make NHS dentistry more attractive to dentists.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the additional £250 million allocated to NHS dentistry in England in 2005–06 is designated for new services. [217229]

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what impact the decision to delay full implementation of the NHS dentistry reforms until April 2006 will have on the £250 million additional investment in NHS dentistry previously announced for 2005–06. [218597]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The decision to allow primary care trusts and dentists more time to prepare for the full implementation of the national health service dental reforms does not affect the resources available to support NHS dentistry. While primary dental services remain predominantly demand led, the distribution of resources is not susceptible to detailed central control. However, the additional resources underpin not only the higher income levels for existing dental practices recommended by the doctors and dentists review body but also the recruitment of 1,000 NHS dentists in little over a year and the expansion of personal dental service (PDS) schemes to provide new ways of working to the benefit of dentists and patients. We now have over 4,000 dentists in over 1,400 dental practices working under PDS arrangements. By April, we expect 25 per cent. of dental practices to be operating within the PDS.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is in a Dental Access Centre for *(a)* emergency treatment and *(b)* routine treatment. [217230]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not held centrally on waiting times in dental access centres (DACs). There are 50 DACs, which provided some 375,000 episodes of treatment in 2004.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists were signed up to the PDS contract by 31 January, broken down by primary care trust area. [217231]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists, who wish to have advanced benefit of the new contractual arrangements that will be introduced to national health services dentistry by April 2006, may move to the personal dental services (PDS). As of 31 January 2005, there were 3,881 dentists with at least one PDS contract in England. There are some further 500 practices with applications under consideration and by April 2005, we expect 25 per cent. of all dental practices to be in the PDS. A breakdown of PDS contracts by primary care trust has been placed in the Library.

Emergency Admissions

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been admitted to hospital after attending *(a)* a major accident and emergency department, *(b)* a minor injuries unit and *(c)* a walk-in-centre in each of the last three years; and what percentage of all attendances at accident and emergency departments this represented in each case. [218110]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on the number of patients admitted to hospitals after attending minor injuries units and walk-in-centres are not held centrally. The number of patients admitted to hospital after attending a major accident and emergency department and the percentage of all attendances at a major accident and emergency department that this represents, is shown in the table.

Quarter	*Number of patients admitted through major A and E*	*Patients admitted through A and E as a percentage of first attendances (major A and E)*
2002–03		
1	563,836	19
2	565,743	19
3	574,983	21
4	583,491	21
2003–04		
1	584,987	19
2	604,515	19
3	637,406	21
4	640,840	22
2004–05		
1	651,785	20
2	673,452	21
3	705,901	22

Source:
Department of Health QMAE.

Epilepsy

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is for first referral for a patient to see an epilepsy specialist; and what changes have occurred to this waiting time over the past five years. [219740]

Dr. Ladyman: Figures on waiting times for the treatment of neurological conditions are published but epilepsy is not separately identified.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made in developing a vaccine for the H5N1 strain of avian influenza. [211550]

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the amantadine vaccine as a *(a)* treatment and *(b)* prophylactic for avian influenza; [214755]

(2) what advice he has received from the Health Protection Agency on what vaccines or antivirals, and how many, to stockpile in preparation for an influenza pandemic; [214758]

(3) what vaccines, and at what minimum number of doses, his Department has assessed as sufficient to prevent an *(a)* influenza and *(b)* avian flu (i) pandemic and (ii) epidemic; [214759]

(4) what his Department's definition is of a pandemic; and what assessment he has made of the likelihood of an *(a)* influenza pandemic and *(b)* avian influenza pandemic occurring in the next five years; [214760]

(5) what estimate his Department has made of the total number of people in at risk groups for influenza, as defined by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence; [214761]

(6) what estimate his Department has made of the length of time, from February, it will take his Department to obtain the stockpiles of flu vaccines or antivirals necessary to cope with an *(a)* influenza and *(b)* avian flu (i) pandemic and (ii) epidemic; [214762]

(7) pursuant to his answer of 10 February to question 213139 on influenza vaccines, when the review will report. [217362]

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what are the current stocks of Oseltamivir are held by the NHS; and what plans he has to increase them; [218679]

(2) what assessment he has made of the risk of a pandemic of avian flu; and if he will make a statement. [218683]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Westbury (Dr. Murrison) on 1 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1080W.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has in place to protect the UK against an influenza pandemic; and what emergency procedures are in place to protect vulnerable groups; [217618]

(2) what quantity of influenza vaccine the Government has stockpiled; [217619]

(3) what steps he will take to communicate advice and warnings to the public in the event of an influenza pandemic. [217620]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member of Westbury (Dr. Murrison) on 1 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1080W.

Meat Hygiene

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what qualifications and training the Food Standards Agency proposes to implement to comply with the requirement under EC Regulation 854/2004 that company meat inspectors in white meat plants undertake the same training and pass the same qualification as Government meat inspectors. [219003]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The board of the Food Standards Agency will be considering implementation of Regulation 854/2004 at its March meeting when a decision on how to implement this requirement is expected to be taken.

Mental Health

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* median and *(b)* mean waiting times for patients waiting to see a consultant psychiatrist as (i) an outpatient first attendance and (ii) an elective inpatient admission were, in each year since 1997. [216159]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Outpatient provider and commissioner waits for mental health specialities[1] quarterly from June 1996 (provider only) to December 2004 in England

		Weeks			
		Provider		Commissioner	
	Waited (seen) quarter	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
1996–97	June	3.83	6.94	n/a	n/a
1996–97	September	3.81	7.04	n/a	n/a
1996–97	December	3.75	7.17	n/a	n/a
1996–97	March	3.86	6.74	n/a	n/a
1997–98	June	3.91	6.88	4.08	7.23
1997–98	September	3.89	6.96	3.88	6.96
1997–98	December	n/a	n/a	3.63	6.47
1997–98	March	3.75	6.65	3.76	6.52
1998–99	June	3.84	6.81	3.89	6.72
1998–99	September	3.80	6.82	3.67	6.51
1998–99	December	3.69	6.77	3.61	6.57
1998–99	March	3.75	6.75	3.66	6.54
1999–2000	June	3.90	6.66	3.81	6.58
1999–2000	September	3.72	6.62	3.69	6.63
1999–2000	December	3.73	6.65	3.61	6.40
1999–2000	March	3.81	6.79	3.80	6.86
2000–01	June	3.81	6.65	3.70	6.53
2000–01	September	3.87	6.72	3.78	6.75
2000–01	December	3.72	6.67	3.63	6.55
2000–01	March	3.91	6.78	3.84	6.77
2001–02	June	4.32	6.86	4.02	6.95
2001–02	September	4.29	7.02	3.93	6.86
2001–02	December	3.83	6.76	3.67	6.77
2001–02	March	4.31	7.56	4.00	7.25
2002–03	June	4.51	6.94	4.18	6.88
2002–03	September	3.85	6.34	3.87	6.59
2002–03	December	3.75	5.97	3.84	6.37
2002–03	March	4.21	6.32	4.31	6.43
2003–04	June	3.92	5.92	3.89	5.90
2003–04	September	3.71	5.50	3.73	5.48
2003–04	December	3.64	5.38	3.76	5.54
2003–04	March	3.91	5.67	3.87	5.68
2004–05[2]	June	2.95	5.43	2.88	5.43
2004–05[2]	September	2.87	5.38	2.75	5.29
2004–05[2]	December	2.71	5.10	—	—

n/a = not available.

[1] Mental health specialists include mental illness, child and adolescent psychiatry, forensic psychiatry, psychotherapy and old age psychiatry.

[2] Please note that after April 2004–05, the data has been provided using different time bands, which leads to a more accurate calculation of the mean and median.

Source:
Provider—QM08
Commissioner—QM08R

Inpatient provider and commissioner waits for mental health specialities[1] quarterly from June 1996 to December 2004 in England

		Weeks			
		Provider		Commissioner	
	Waited (seen) quarter	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
1996–97	June	13.64	10.26	14.25	10.86
1996–97	September	14.65	10.67	13.37	9.88
1996–97	December	16.65	11.87	16.45	12.50
1996–97	March	14.39	10.66	14.14	10.69
1997–98	June	n/a	n/a	12.58	9.84
1997–98	September	n/a	n/a	11.46	8.82
1997–98	December	n/a	n/a	13.56	10.52
1997–98	March	12.34	9.50	12.61	9.70
1998–99	June	11.59	9.12	12.64	9.84
1998–99	September	11.69	8.97	11.69	9.15
1998–99	December	12.35	9.41	12.77	9.12
1998–99	March	10.99	8.46	12.15	8.84
1999–2000	June	12.70	9.81	12.19	9.40
1999–2000	September	11.76	8.78	12.54	8.53
1999–2000	December	11.93	8.95	13.03	8.58
1999–2000	March	10.20	8.03	12.64	8.45
2000–01	June	11.19	8.76	10.18	7.98
2000–01	September	10.26	8.54	8.85	7.55
2000–01	December	10.41	8.78	9.52	7.89
2000–01	March	11.01	8.98	10.49	8.68
2001–02	June	10.61	8.46	11.11	8.74

Inpatient provider and commissioner waits for mental health specialities[1] quarterly from June 1996 to December 2004 in England

		Weeks			
	Waited (seen) quarter	Provider		Commissioner	
		Median	Mean	Median	Mean
2001–02	September	11.12	9.00	11.76	9.13
2001–02	December	12.59	10.19	11.55	9.01
2001–02	March	12.40	9.89	9.86	8.11
2002–03	June	12.95	9.73	10.09	8.36
2002–03	September	11.86	9.09	9.49	8.09
2002–03	December	13.22	9.52	11.11	8.69
2002–03	March	12.79	8.80	9.20	7.51
2003–04	June	10.17	8.22	7.67	7.08
2003–04	September	10.40	8.43	7.65	7.13
2003–04	December	8.93	7.78	8.28	7.61
2003–04	March	8.97	7.89	9.29	8.10
2004–05[2]	June	6.73	4.69	7.32	4.88
2004–05[2]	September	6.47	4.01	6.75	4.19
2004–05[2]	December	7.27	5.82	8.46	7.54

n/a = not available.

[1] Mental health specialists include mental illness, child and adolescent psychiatry, forensic psychiatry, psychotherapy and old age psychiatry.

[2] Please note that after April 2004–05, the data has been provided using different time bands which leads to a more accurate calculation of the mean and median

Source:

Provider—KH07

Commissioner—QF01

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total expenditure on mental health services has been in each year in real terms since 1986, broken down as in Annex A of the further memorandum given by his Department to the Joint Select Committee on the draft Mental Health Bill. [216164]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available for the period requested. However, information on expenditure on mental health services in each year since 1993–94 has been placed in the Library. The information is from the hospital and community health service programme budget and does not include expenditure on people with mental health problems seen solely in primary care.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women detained voluntarily or involuntarily as psychiatric inpatients are detained in (i) high security NHS hospitals, (ii) other NHS facilities and (iii) private mental nursing homes. [216173]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the format requested. On 31 March 2004, there were 7,727 men and 3,981 women detained in national health service facilities and 1,516 men and 776 women in independent hospitals (known until April 2002 as private mental nursing homes) under Parts II, III and X the Mental Health Act 1983. It is not possible to identify the number of detentions in high security NHS hospitals separately as the information is collected by NHS trusts

Information on informal (voluntary) patients in hospital on 31 March 2004 is not available. However, there were 191,070 admissions to NHS hospitals under mental illness and learning disability specialties in 2003–04 as a whole.

Mobile Phones

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department has spent on research programmes on the possible health effects of mobile phone technologies in each of the last five years. [217700]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has contributed the following amounts directly to mobile phones and health research through its radiation protection research programme and (after 2001) the mobile telecommunications and health research (MTHR) programme (www.mthr.org.uk).

	£000
2000–01	42,061
2001–02	101,320
2002–03	373,404
2003–04	[1]378,052
2004–05	390,625

[1] Includes part estimate to end of March 2005

The total value of the MTHR programme and its adjunct funding arrangements is currently £8.8 million.

The Department supports other mobile phone health research through its contributions to the National Radiological Protection Board (www.nrpb.org) and the World Health organisation electromagnetic fields project (www.who.int/peh-emf).

NHS Injury Cost Recovery Scheme

Mr. Mole: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the proposed expansion of the NHS Injury Cost Recovery Scheme. [219864]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department recently completed a public consultation exercise on draft regulations to govern the operation of the expanded national health service injury costs recovery (ISR) scheme. Although the full analysis of the responses to the consultation is still under way, one of the key messages to come out of our initial scrutiny was that high levels of concern remain about the insurance market's ability to cope with the new changes. After further discussions, I have decided that now is not the right time to introduce the expanded scheme. However, we remain committed to the principle of "polluter pays" that underpins the ICR Scheme, and the expanded scheme will be introduced by October 2006.

Nursing Homes (Essex)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money has been allocated for the improvement and renovation of nursing homes in the Romford and Havering constituencies in 2004–05. [219378]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected by the Department. Care homes are private businesses and any improvements and renovations they make are a matter for them to decide on and fund out of their own resources.

Open Mind (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding Open Mind in Chorley received in the last year for which figures are available. [218925]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department does not provide funding directly to Open Mind in Chorley. Over 80 per cent. of national health service resources are allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs) which are responsible for commissioning health services to meet the needs of their local population. In the current financial year, Chorley and South Ribble PCT received a resource revenue allocation of £171.7 million, this will increase to £266.7 million in 2007–08.

Physical Activity

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department has spent on advertising the benefits of physical activity in each of the last seven years. [217501]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department and the national health service promote the benefits of physical activity in many ways to professionals, the public and other stakeholders. In particular, primary care trusts are required to have systematic and managed health promotion programmes, including action on exercise, that are responsive to local needs.

In support of local delivery, we published a national quality assurance framework for exercise referral systems in 2001 and a report from the Chief Medical Officer, "At least five a week" in 2004 setting out evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health.

The public health White Paper "Choosing health, making healthier choices easier" includes a commitment for a new cross-government campaign to raise awareness of the health risks of overweight and obesity, and the steps people can take through diet and physical activity to prevent obesity.

Self-harming

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of people who commit suicide he estimates have previously self-harmed. [216169]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not collected centrally. However, research suggests that around 50 per cent. of people who commit suicide have previously self-harmed.

As part of the implementation of the national suicide prevention strategy, three centres have been established to monitor deliberate self-harm and provide accurate data on national trends and patterns to help inform suicide prevention interventions and detect changing patterns or local variations. Through monitoring, it will be possible to estimate the number of suicides by people who have self-harmed in the year prior to death.

Sunlight Exposure

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent research he has examined concerning *(a)* the effects of lifetime exposure to sunlight on the risk of melanoma and *(b)* the effect of sun exposure on survival rates for melanoma; [217717]

(2) what recent research he has examined concerning the effect of exposure to UV light on the risk of lymphoma;

(3) what recent research he has examined concerning the effect of exposure to vitamin D from sunlight in the months immediately after birth on the risk of developing multiple sclerosis. [217719]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The most recent review of the research evidence about the health effects of UV radiation was published in 2002 by the National Radiological Protection Board's (NRPB) independent advisory group on non-ionising radiation (AGNIR).

The review gives clear evidence that exposure to ultra-violet radiation (UVR) is a risk factor for developing melanoma and other skin cancers. There is less certainty about the relative roles of cumulative (lifetime) exposure or burning episodes in the genesis of the different types of skin cancer. Chronic exposure to solar radiation also causes photo-ageing of the skin. The risk of developing melanoma has increased substantially in white populations in the United Kingdom and Europe for several decades. The review did not consider clinical issues such as the effect of sun exposure on survival rates for melanoma.

The review noted that the possibility has been raised that the immunosuppressive effects of UVR might be involved in causing lymphoma. The review concluded that overall the results are not-consistent with a major role for solar UVR in the aetiology of non-Hodgkins lymphoma (NHL), but they leave open the possibility of a minor role, or an aetiological relation for a particular subtype of NHL.

The review also contains a chapter on vitamin D, which considers the amount of vitamin D needed from UV exposure or the diet to sustain adequate vitamin D levels. It considers the role of vicarious sun exposure in vitamin D synthesis. It notes that infant formula milks are fortified with vitamin D. There is no information in the review on vitamin D and multiple sclerosis, or on any relationship between vitamin D levels in early childhood and illness in adulthood.

The European skin cancer society, Euroskin, is hosting an international meeting to look at the whole issue of UV exposure, vitamin D levels and health later this year. This meeting will include consideration of hypotheses of a wider role for vitamin D in long-term health.

Surrey and Sussex (Health Inspection Bodies)

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the bodies which inspect *(a)* the East Surrey hospital and *(b)* the Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust. [218042]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The specific information requested is not held by the Department.

However, 31 bodies have the right to inspect and regulate national health service hospital trusts in England. Of these, 18 are regulators of the professions and only have a role in inspecting training.

The 31 bodies are as follows:

Independent health regulators,

Audit Commission,

Healthcare Commission (formerly called the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection),

Monitor (formerly called the Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts),

Health and Safety Executive,

General Social Care Council,

Health Development Agency*,

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority* (This will be incorporated into the Regulatory Authority for Fertility and Tissue by 2007–08, along with the Human Tissue Authority),

National Audit Office,

National Biological Standards Board*,

National Health Service Appointments Commission,

National Institute of Clinical Excellence,

Commission for Social Care Inspection,

The Commission for Patient and Public Health Involvement in Health*,

Regulators of the Professions,

General Chiropractic Council,

General Dental Council,

General Medical Council,

General Optical Council,

General Osteopathic Council,

Health Professionals Council,

Nursing and Midwifery Council,

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain,

Royal College of Anaesthetists,

Royal College of General Practitioners,

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists,

Royal College of Ophthalmologists,

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health,

Royal College of Pathologists,

Royal College of Physicians,

Royal College of Psychiatrists,

Royal College of Radiologists,

Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Bodies indicated with a * will no longer exist in 2007–08.

The Better Regulation Task Force defines an independent regulator as: "A body which has been established by Act of Parliament, but which operates at arm's length from Government and which has one or more of the following powers: inspection; referral; advice to a third party; licensing; accreditation; or enforcement."

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Constitutional Treaty

Kate Hoey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 902–03W, on the Constitutional Treaty, how the restrictions on Government publication of information under section 125 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 will be enforced. [219047]

Mr. Leslie: It is the responsibility of those to whom section 125 applies to ensure that they comply with the requirements of that provision. A person alleging a breach of section 125 could seek a judicial review.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 902–03W, on the Constitutional Treaty, (1) what obligations there will be under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 for permitted participants in the referendum on the European Constitution to declare donations from the institutions of the European Union; [218838]

(2) what regulations will govern expenditure by UK-based organisations that are funded by the institutions of the European Union but are permitted participants in the referendum on the European Constitution. [218839]

Mr. Leslie: Donations to permitted participants are regulated by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA). Donations must be declared to the Electoral Commission and can only be accepted if they are from permissible donors (except for donations of less than £200). A permissible donor can only be:

an individual registered on a UK electoral register;

a UK company;

a UK trade union;

a UK building society;

a UK Limited Liability partnership;

a UK friendly/building society;

a UK based unincorporated association.

a UK registered political party (in the case of a donation to a designated organisation or a registered political party which is not a minor party)

In addition, powers in the European Union Bill may be used to include similar classes of donors for Gibraltar.

Therefore donations of £200 or more from the institutions of the European Union to a permitted participant would have to be declared as impermissible donations and returned.

All permitted participants are subject to referendum expenditure limits, set out in Schedule 14 to PPERA, namely: £5 million in the case of a designated organisation; between £500,000 and £5 million in the case of political parties; and £500,000 in other cases.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Diplomatic Posts

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total personnel costs were for the last full financial year for which records are available of running the diplomatic posts in *(a)* the European Union, *(b)* Paraguay, *(c)* Belgium, *(d)* El Salvador, *(e)* Nicaragua, *(f)* Hondouras, *(g)* Germany, *(h)* France, *(i)* Luxemburg, *(j)* Vanuatu, *(k)* Tonga, *(l)* East Timor, *(m)* Kiribati, *(n)* The Bahamas, *(o)* Lesotho, *(p)* Swaziland and *(q)* Madagascar. [217807]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 24 February 2005]*: The total personnel costs of running diplomatic posts for 2003–04 for the relevant countries are set out in the table. The European Union figure includes UK representation to the European Union and to 24 member states.

	£ million
The European Union	79.190
Paraguay	0.259
Belgium	2.824
El Salvador	0.085
Nicaragua	0.316
Honduras	0.271
Germany	9.882
France	12.526
Luxembourg	0.622
Vanuatu	0.218
Tonga	0.122
East Timor	0.033
Kiribati	0.006
The Bahamas	0.377
Lesotho	0.289
Swaziland	0.230
Madagascar	0.222

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Co-operation Committee (EEC—ASEAN) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217922]

Mr. Mullin: The EU Joint Co-operation Committee with the Association of South East Asian Nations did not meet during this period.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (i) EEC-Bangladesh, (ii) EC-Kingdom of Cambodia and (iii) EEC-China met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218273]

Mr. MacShane: During this period the EC Joint Committee with Bangladesh met in Brussels on 19 November 2003 and the EC Joint Committee with China on 30 October 2003 in Beijing. The EC Joint Committee meeting with Cambodia did not meet during this period.

As these Committees are chaired by the Commission, with support from the Presidency, there were no UK representatives at these meetings. However, the UK participated fully in formulating the EU's position for the meetings.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Joint Committee EEC-Mongolia, (ii) EC-Moldova Co-operation Committee and (iii) Joint Committee (EC-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218433]

Mr. MacShane: During this period, there were two meetings of the EU-Moldova Co-operation Committee—on 28 October 2003 in Chisinau and on 23 November 2004 in Brussels. There was one meeting of the Joint Committee on EEC-Mongolia on 4 November 2003 in Ulaanbaatar. As these meetings are chaired by the Commission, with support from the presidency, there were no UK representatives. However, the UK participated fully in formulating the EU's position for the meetings.

There is no Joint Committee between the EC and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Technical dialogue between the EU and Macedonia now takes place in the annual meetings of the Stabilisation and Association Committee, which met for the first time in Skopje on 2–3 June 2004. Prior to the entry into force of the EU-Macedonia Stabilisation and Association Agreement on 1 April 2004, technical dialogue took place in the annual meetings of the Co-operation Council, which met for the last time in Brussels on 25 July 2003. The European Commission leads these technical dialogue meetings on behalf of the EU. Member states have the option of attending as observers. The UK sent an observer from the local UK mission to each of the meetings mentioned above.

EU Information Campaigns

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) which EU budget lines in the EC draft budget for 2005 may be used for information campaigns; how much is allocated under each line; which projects under each line are operating in the United Kingdom; and which projects he intends to support within the United Kingdom as part of the EU Constitution debate; [218738]

(2) how much has been spent by the EU on PRINCE within the UK in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year; [218740]

(3) how much has been spent by the EU under the PRINCE information programme *(a)* on Economic and Monetary Union, *(b)* on the Debate on the Future of Europe and *(c)* under EC budget line 16 04 04 in the UK in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year; [218741]

(4) how much he estimates will be spent in the United Kingdom from EC budget lines *(a)* 2710, *(b)* 2719, *(c)* 2720 and *(d)* 2830 during the 2005–06 financial year; [218742]

(5) how much has been spent under EC budget line *(a)* 16 02 02 and *(b)* 16 03 01 in the UK in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year; [218743]

(6) what public relations campaigns the European Commission UK Representation has undertaken under EC budget line 16 03 01 in the last 12 months; and what campaigns are planned in the forthcoming year; [218744]

(7) what events the European Commission UK Representation has undertaken under EC budget line 16 03 01 in the last 12 months; and what events are planned in the forthcoming year; [218745]

(8) how much has been spent by the European Commission representation in the UK *(a)* under EC budget line 16 03 02 and *(b)* on priority

communications under EC budget line 16 03 03 in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year; [218746]

(9) how much has been spent on *(a)* information and *(b)* communication tools by the European Commission UK Representation under EC budget line 16 04 02 in the UK in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year; [218747]

(10) how much his Department spent in partnership with the European Commission and its UK Representation in relation to EC budget line 16 04 02 in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year; [218748]

(11) what publications funded under EC budget line 16 04 02 were distributed in the UK during the last 24 months; [218749]

(12) how much has been spent on information outlets by the European Commission UK Representation under EC budget line 16 05 01 in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year; [218750]

(13) how much has been spent on special events by the European Commission under EC budget line 15 06 06 in the UK in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year. [218752]

Mr. MacShane: The Institutions of the European Union are responsible for their own activities in terms of providing information to the public. Further details can be obtained from the UK Representations of the European Union's Institutions, contact details of which can be found at www.cec.org.uk, www.europarl.org.uk and www.europe.eu.int.

European Commission

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on information outlets in partnership with the European Commission and its UK representation in relation to EC budget line 16 05 01 in each of the last five financial years; and how much is budgeted to be spent in the 2005–06 financial year. [218751]

Mr. MacShane: None and nothing.

European Constitution

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 703W, on the European Union, what assessment the Government have made of whether the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly, could be construed as national parliaments under the terms of Article 6 of Protocol 2 of the EU Constitutional Treaty. [218537]

Mr. MacShane: The Government believes that the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly are not "national parliaments" for the purposes of that Article.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department will take to promote the proposed EU constitution; when its actions will commence; and how much his Department will spend on promotion of the proposed constitution. [218538]

Mr. MacShane: For the financial year 2004–05, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office budget for informing the public about the EU, including about the constitutional treaty, is £613,000. A range of materials communicating the facts about the EU and the new treaty will be produced. A Guide to the European Union, which included information about the new treaty, was published recently. Additionally, I make regular visits around the country to discuss European issues with the public.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the remit is of the EU Constitution Team; what the budget for the EU Constitution Team *(a)* is in 2004–05 and *(b)* was in 2003–04; and how many staff work in the EU Constitution Team. [218647]

Mr. MacShane: The EU Constitution Team of 14 staff leads on managing the passage of the EU Bill through Parliament, policy on the EU constitutional treaty and EU communications work. It has a programme budget of £613,000 for financial year 2004–05. The EU Constitution Team did not exist in 2003–04 as the EU constitutional treaty was only agreed at the June 2004 European Council.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the planned timetable for appointing the agencies for partnership marketing and e-communications to promote the European Constitution is. [218813]

Mr. MacShane: A partnership marketing agency, Iris, was appointed on 11 February 2005 through a competitive tendering process. We hope to appoint an agency to help with online information in mid March. The objective of this work is to provide factual information about the EU and the proposed EU constitutional treaty.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1454W, on the European constitution, whether the external companies appointed to promote the constitution will be contractually required to ensure that the information they give is objective. [218814]

Mr. MacShane: The work of external companies in communicating the EU and proposed EU constitutional treaty is managed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Contracts are with Central Office of Information Communications following standard guidelines. All output by external agencies must be cleared with the FCO. The FCO works to ensure that all information it issues on the subject of the EU and the EU constitutional treaty is objective and explanatory.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from what budget within his Department the contracts for the external companies promoting the European constitution are being met. [218815]

Mr. MacShane: Europe directorate meets the costs of hiring external companies to inform the public about the EU, including about the proposed EU constitutional treaty.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which unit within his Department is responsible for deciding the terms of reference for the external companies promoting the European constitution. [218816]

Mr. MacShane: The work of external companies in communicating the EU and proposed EU constitutional treaty is managed by the Europe directorate. Contracts are with Central Office of Information Communications following standard guidelines.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs for what reasons the Electoral Commission may not designate a permitted participant in the referendum on the EU Constitution as referred to in paragraph 59 of the Explanatory Notes to the European Union Bill. [219274]

Mr. Leslie: Sections 108(2)*(b)* and 109(4) and (5) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 provide for the circumstances under which the Electoral Commission may not designate a permitted participant as a campaign representative. The Electoral Commission shall designate a permitted participant to be a campaign representative in relation to each outcome unless they are not satisfied that in both cases there is an applicant who adequately represents those campaigning for the outcome.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs on what grounds it would be possible to seek a judicial review of the result of the referendum on the EU Constitution. [219275]

Mr. Leslie: Clause 8 of the European Union Bill provides that a legal challenge to the referendum result may only be brought by proceedings for a judicial review commenced within six weeks of the certified result.

It would be for the court to determine if there were grounds for a judicial review, if sought.

Falkland Islands

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Government of Argentina about charter flights for cruise ship passenger transfers to the Falkland Islands; [218728]

(2) whether he has made representations to the Government of Argentina following the revocation of permission for charter flights to the Falkland Islands for cruise ship passenger transfers; and if he will make a statement. [218835]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 1 March 2005]*: I met the Argentine Foreign Minister Bielsa in the margins of the international aid conference on support for Colombia in Cartagena. The subject of charter flights was discussed. The situation on this issue remains unchanged from that given in my statement to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mr. Simmonds) on 18 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1782W.

General Affairs and External Relations Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the outcome was of the General Affairs and External Relations Council held on 21 February; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [218156]

Mr. MacShane: The information is as follows:

Outcome of the 21 February 2005 General Affairs and External Relations Council

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, John Grant (UK Permanent Representative to the EU) and I represented the UK at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels on 21 February 2005.

Conclusions were agreed on the Middle East, Iraq, Western Balkans, Ukraine and Sudan.

General Affairs Session

Preparations for the European Council—22/23 March, Brussels

The presidency introduced the draft agenda for the March European Council. The European Council will discuss the mid-term review of the Lisbon agenda, reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, sustainable development and international issues. The next meeting of the GAERC on 16 March will or prepare discussions in detail.

Future financing 2007–13

The Council had an exchange of views on competitiveness for growth and employment (spending on Lisbon-related objectives). The Government argued that the budget needed to be determined according to rigorous prioritisation and clear EU value added. The Government also argued, along with other supporters of an overall 1 per cent. GNI budget package, that the proposed budget (a threefold increase) was far too high. All member states endorsed research and development as a general priority but with different emphases on where EU value-added lay. Most member states expressed deep scepticism about the proposed Growth Adjustment Fund. The next meeting of the GAERC on 16 March will have a broader discussion of progress in the overall future financing negotiation.

External Relations Session

MEPP

The Council discussed the recent political developments in the MEPP, including the outcomes from the Sharm al-Sheik meeting and the Israeli Government's formal decision to implement the disengagement plan, which includes withdrawal of settlements from Gaza and part of the West Bank. The UK thanked the presidency, High Representative Solana, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner and member states for their support for the 1 March London Meeting and explained the aim of the meeting was to assist the Palestinian leadership in building the institutions for a viable state. The focus would be on economic, governance and security institutions. The Council also discussed the importance of implementing UNSCR 1559 and condemned the attack which killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri.

Iraq

The Council discussed strengthening the EU's relations with Iraq following last month's successful elections and agreed a package of measures to that end. These include an integrated ESDP Rule of Law Mission (EUJUST LEX) with a liaison office in Baghdad, continued assistance with the elections process, provision of constitutional experts, intensified activity on capacity building in Iraqi Ministries particularly in the trade and energy sectors, and a commitment to an EU Troika visit to Iraq and a Joint Political Declaration to frame future co-operation, as soon as the Iraqi Transitional Government is in place and political developments allow. There was also discussion on the effective co-ordination of international reconstruction assistance to the Iraqi administration based on a French proposal. The UK welcomed the French proposal and thanked member states and the Commission for their constructive approach. There was much the EU could now do to help nurture Iraq's new government and the continuing political process.

Western Balkans

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Soren Jessen-Petersen, joined Ministers for a discussion on Kosovo. The Council offered Mr. Petersen its support for his work to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1244. It noted that the Review of UN-endorsed Standards would take place in mid-2005. If positive, this Review would pave the way for a process to determine Kosovo's final status. The Council expressed hope that the Provisional Institutions of Self Government would continue implementation of Standards to allow a positive assessment. The Council encouraged Belgrade to engage constructively on Kosovo. It reaffirmed that the future of the Western Balkans—including Kosovo—was within the European Union; the EU would therefore have an important future role to play. The Council emphasised that Kosovo's future must be consistent with the principles of multi-ethnic democracy. The UK supported this assessment of the road ahead, agreeing that the UN would remain in the lead in Kosovo but that the EU would also have an important role to play.

The Council also discussed Croatia and adopted Conclusions which set out clearly that Croatia must co-operate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia if accession negotiations are to open on 17 March.

Transatlantic relations

Ministers briefly discussed the EU meeting with President Bush on 22 February with the presidency stressing the need for strict discipline on both the length and substance of interventions at the 22 February meeting.

Ukraine

After a brief discussion, the Council agreed Conclusions based on the 10 point package presented to the GAERC on 31 January by Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner. The package consists of 10 concrete steps to strengthen co-operation between the EU and Ukraine beyond the European Neighbourhood Action Plan which was also launched and endorsed by the EU-Ukraine Co-operation Council in the margins of the GAERC on 21 February.

Revision of Cotonou

The Council discussed revisions to the text of the Cotonou Agreement (which governs EU relations with the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states) and the accompanying financial package to succeed the ninth European Development Fund (EDF) in preparation for the EU/ACP ministerial meeting on 23 February 2005. Commissioner Michel briefed the Council of the latest state of play on negotiations of the text with the ACP. Differences between the two sides were now small and he was confident that agreement could be reached on 23 February. Agreement was also reached on the financial package with the retention of language on a performance review on which decisions about financing beyond the minimum agreed sum would be based. The flexibility in the language on the sunset clause setting 2007 as the final date for commitments of funds under the current EDF was also retained. Both are good outcomes for the UK.

Sudan

The Council agreed Conclusions which call upon the Government of Sudan and the National Democratic Alliance to sign the full Cairo Agreement as soon as possible, note the Council's concerns about violations of the ceasefire and it's readiness to support measures agreed in the UN Security Council, and welcome the International Commission of Inquiry report on Darfur.

AOB—Great Lakes

Belgian Foreign Minister De Gucht briefed the Council on his recent visit to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He had two concerns. First, further problems could arise if no solution was found to the training of a unified army. Belgium had trained one unified brigade, and was helping with a second. But EU funding was required to support this. He hoped that a solution could be found by the time of the next GAERC. Second, election plans for the DRC were unrealistic. If a referendum on the constitution was held in July, as planned, elections could not take place until 2006. One solution would be to hold elections in July and for both houses of the provisional parliament to vote on a new constitution immediately thereafter. The presidency suggested that EU Africa Directors meet soon to discuss the two issues raised.

AOB—Belarus

Lithuania called for the EU to do more to support democratisation, human rights and the independent media in Belarus. Lithuania informed the Council they would host a workshop in Vilnius on 18 March.

AOB—Mercosur

Spain stressed the importance of the EU's strategic relationship with the Mercosur countries. The presidency said they would strengthen work with a view to the EU/Mercosur meeting in May.

Iraq

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what involvement the UK Government had in the drafting of Order 81, issued by the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, which prohibits the saving of seed by Iraqi farmers. [216068]

Mr. Rammell: UK Government officials in Iraq, as members of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), and other officials in the UK were consulted and invited to comment during the drafting of CPA Order 81. The Order was the subject of consultation and co-ordination with the Iraqi Governing Council, and was consistent with the needs identified by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the development of Iraq and its transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy.

The provisions of CPA Order 81 concern the registration and protection of intellectual property rights in new plant varieties. The Order should not affect the ability of Iraqi farmers to save seeds from traditional sources. Any restrictions would relate only to patented biotech inventions or protected plant varieties. This is the normal effect of introducing such an intellectual property law. To secure protection, plant varieties would have needed to have been shown to be new, distinct from other varieties in common knowledge, uniform and stable. Farmers will have a choice of sources for their seed supply: they may choose to continue using current sources, such as saving their own seeds of traditional and unprotected varieties, or may choose to buy seeds which are subject to patent or plant variety rights protection.

The implementation, application and interpretation of all CPA orders is now a matter for the Iraqis. The newly elected Transitional National Assembly, together with the Iraqi Transitional Government, have the power to overturn or rewrite any existing CPA Orders that they feel do not address the needs and rights of the Iraqi people.

Kazakhstan

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between the UK and Kazakhstan regarding the proposed autumn 2005 closure of Almaty airport to international arrivals into Kazakhstan and the diversion of all international flights to Astana; and what assessment has been made of the effect of this change on UK-Kazakhstan *(a)* bilateral relations and *(b)* trade. [218178]

Mr. Rammell: Discussions are ongoing with the Kazakhstan authorities but the Government have made clear their opposition to their proposals for Astana to become the sole point of entry for international flights from certain European countries. The Government are discussing with UK airlines, and with other European countries, what the implications of this might be for future aviation links with Kazakhstan. We are also discussing the possible wider implications with British businesses.

Kyrgyzstan

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made by his Department of the prospects for free and fair elections in Kyrgyzstan on 27 February; and if he will make a statement. [218282]

Mr. Rammell: President Akaev and his Government have declared their commitment to holding fair and transparent elections in line with fundamental human rights. We have welcomed this commitment and we have been supporting efforts to fulfil it—bilaterally and through the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU. These elections are an opportunity for Kyrgyzstan to demonstrate that they are leading the way towards democracy in Central Asia. However, several NGOs have raised concerns about the conduct of these elections including on the freedom of the media and freedom of expression. The international community will keenly await the findings of the OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Election Observation Mission and others who have been present in Kyrgyzstan over the election period.

Nepal

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what types of assistance have been given to the global conflict prevention pool since its inception in 2001 for the specific purpose of tackling the causes of the conflict in Nepal; if his Department will continue assistance to foster a democratic Nepalese state following the actions of King Gyanendra since 1 February 2004; and if he will make a statement. [214728]

Mr. Alexander: The global conflict pool has funded many activities aimed at tackling the underlying causes of conflict in Nepal. These causes include poverty, social injustice, corruption and human rights violations. We have funded the following activities to address them:

Rural infrastructure programmes 2002–03

Food support to communities in Maoist areas 2003–04

Support for civilian human rights initiatives 2003–04

Police reform 2003–04

Human rights advisor 2003–04

Assistance to the ICRC programme 2004–05

Support to the Government peace unit 2004–05

Political and conflict analysis 2004–05

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence (Mr. Ingram) notified Parliament of the withdrawal of our proposed package of military assistance to Nepal on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 252–53W. In his reply to my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Clare Short) on Nepal he stated:

> "In light of the recent events in Nepal, the Government has decided to withdraw the minute relating to the gift of military equipment rending a full review of our policy with regard to the provision of military assistance and equipment to Nepal".

We remain deeply concerned by the King's assumption of power on 1 February 2005. Such is the level of our concern that on 14 February the Foreign Secretary temporarily recalled our ambassador in Nepal for consultations. We will continue to work to secure a peaceful, durable and democratic resolution to the conflict. I have already made a statement calling for the immediate restitution of multi-party democracy. A copy of my statement is available on the FCO website www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will halt the provision of military equipment and training to the Government of Nepal following recent actions by King Gyanendra; what assessment he has made of reports of human rights abuses by the Nepali security forces; and if he will make a statement. [215939]

Mr. Alexander: The UK is deeply concerned by the King's assumption of power in Nepal on 1 February. Through the Global Conflict Prevention Pool, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development, we have been providing non-lethal military assistance to Nepal including training and equipment to help enhance bomb disposal efforts and intelligence gathering capabilities, and to increase the accuracy of the army's legitimate counter insurgency operations.

On 14 February my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recalled our Ambassador in Nepal to London for consultations. Following those consultations with our Ambassador and other key international partners we decided to withdraw the proposal, laid before Parliament in a minute of 20 January 2005, for a further tranche of military assistance to Nepal. I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Defence gave her on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 252–53W.

We are deeply troubled by numerous credible reports of severe human rights violations by the Maoists and the Nepalese security forces. We have regularly criticised Nepal's poor human rights record. We have also funded projects working with the armed forces and the police to improve their understanding and respect for human rights. When I visited in Nepal in November 2004 I underlined the strong importance the UK attaches to human rights with all my interlocutors, including the King.

Student Visas

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of processing an international student visa was in the last year for which figures are available. [218550]

Mr. Mullin: Visa fees are set at a level to ensure that the full cost of providing the world-wide entry clearance service is met entirely from fee income and that no part of the cost is met by the UK taxpayer. Since 1 July 2002, the student visa fee has been £36, which is considerably below the cost of processing. The levels of all visa fees are currently under review to ensure that the full cost of the visa service is being met.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of international visas issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were student visas in the last year for which figures are available. [218580]

Mr. Mullin: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office issued 1,836,362 visas in the year from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004. Of these, 146,736 were issued to students. This is approximately 8 per cent. of the total of visas issued.

Figures for April 2004-March 2005 are not yet available. When they are, they can be found, along with further entry clearance statistics, on the UK visas website at www.ukvisas.gov.uk-"Entry Clearance: Facts and Figures".

Sudan

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the UN are taking to assist the reform of Sudanese criminal law to bring it into line with international human rights and humanitarian law. [218668]

Mr. Mullin: Under the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the Sudanese Government have committed itself to complying fully with international human rights treaties. The CPA sets out rights and freedoms to be enjoyed under Sudanese law, including the rights to fair trial and equality before the law. The UK plans to play a leading role supporting reform of the Sudanese justice sector. We have committed £7.2 million for a programme which will include training for police and the establishment of key commissions to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement. We are also funding programmes through the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Christian Aid and the Sudanese Organisation Against Torture (SOAT) to support legal aid training and to raise awareness of human rights standards.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is leading the UN's effort to strengthen the rule of law in Sudan. They are focusing on training and capacity building. The UK has provided funds for UNDP to appoint two legal experts to work on legal reconstruction and reform, and to co-ordinate donor support in this area. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) is also implementing programmes for the promotion and protection of human rights in the administration of justice. It is important to seize the opportunities offered by the CPA to make progress on human rights in Sudan.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the UN is taking to ensure that the Sudanese Government adheres to its obligations under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. [218669]

Mr. Mullin: We have made clear our commitment to helping the parties implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed on 9 January 2005, in Nairobi.

We regularly press the Government of Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army to establish the Government of National Unity and the necessary Commissions to take the CPA forward. We have also committed £100 million in humanitarian and development aid to Sudan for the coming financial year, and supported signature of the EU's Country Strategy Paper, which unlocks a progressive release of funds to Sudan based on successful implementation of the Agreement.

The UN Security Council is currently discussing a draft resolution, which includes plans for a UN Peace Support Operation (PSO) of up to 11,000 personnel to south Sudan. The PSO will monitor compliance with the

terms of the CPA and will include a number of civilian experts to assist the parties in implementing the agreement.

Uganda

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the chances for future stability in Uganda, with particular reference to the recent statement on the issue by British High Commissioner Mr. Adam Wood. [218272]

Mr. Mullin: Given Uganda's past experience, it is crucial that the current process of constitutional change is widely perceived as legitimate, and carries the confidence of the Ugandan people and Parliament. We have urged that Parliament should be given the opportunity to vote on proposed amendments individually and in the spirit of constitutional provisions for change.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the visit to Uganda by the Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and *(b)* the level of support by President Museveni for the Iranian nuclear programme. [218285]

Mr. Mullin: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) today (UIN 218287).

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the visit to North Korea by the Ugandan Defence Minister Mr. Amama Mbabazi and *(b)* the extent of Ugandan support for North Korea's nuclear programme. [218286]

Mr. Mullin: The Defence Minister may have been exploring military procurement. We have helped Uganda undertake a comprehensive defence review. We are now concerned that all Uganda's defence spending—including its classified budget—should reflect the priorities identified in that review.

We do not consider that Uganda can offer significant support on nuclear issues.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the visit to Uganda by the Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and *(b)* the extent of Uganda's support for the Iranian nuclear programme. [218287]

Mr. Mullin: The two Presidents, in their public statements, discussed Iranian investment in Uganda. Inward investment is important to Uganda. It needs to be based on sustainable financial arrangements that benefit the economy. We do not consider Uganda has significant support to offer on nuclear issues.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to dissuade African countries from supporting President Mugabe's land reform policies in Zimbabwe. [218288]

Mr. Mullin: We want to see the return of democracy, prosperity and the rule of law in Zimbabwe and are working with our international partners to that end. In this context we have raised, and continue to raise, Mugabe's disastrous land reform policies with other African countries.

WORK AND PENSIONS

APW Pension Scheme

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether pensioners who will retire after the wind-up of the APW pension scheme will qualify for the deemed buyback of guaranteed minimum pensions and have these benefits backdated to the date at which they retired at age 65. [218995]

Malcolm Wicks: Pensioners who retire after the wind-up of the APW Pension scheme may qualify for deemed buyback, providing the amount of scheme rights that are available in respect of the member (the Actual Transfer Value) is less than the amount required to restore State Scheme rights to the level they would have been had the member never been contracted-out (the Technical Amount).

For those who qualify and opt for deemed buyback the state pension will be uprated from the "effective date" (as defined in regulation 1(2) of the Occupational Pension Schemes (Contracting-out) (Amount Required for Restoring State Scheme Rights and Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/1397). The "effective date" is the date that the Secretary of State determines, for the purposes of Deemed Buyback, the extent to which the resources of the pension scheme are insufficient to meet the liability for the cash equivalent of the member's rights under the scheme.

Benefit Overpayments

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received in response to proposals to change the rules relating to overpayments of benefit resulting from changes in circumstances which have been reported to his Department but have not been acted upon. [212340]

Mr. Pond: Where there has been a full and correct disclosure of changes of circumstances, overpayments arising as a result of the Department failing to action a reported change are not recoverable under social security legislation.

We have no plans to change the rules relating to such overpayments.

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213815]

Maria Eagle: Where a congestion charge is incurred in the course of official business, the Department meets this cost. The information on cost is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Department incurs no costs relating to penalty charge notices incurred by civil servants.

For information on congestion charges and penalty charges incurred by vehicles provided to Departments by the Government Car and Despatch Agency I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Milburn) on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 957W.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* savings limit and *(b)* disregards in the assessment of council tax benefit have been since 2001; and what assessment he has made of the financial consequences of introducing assessments of savings based on those used in pension credit. [218027]

Mr. Pond: Prior to April 2001 the lower capital limit was £3,000 and the upper capital limit was £16,000 for all client groups. From April 2001 the lower capital limit for pensioners was raised to £6,000. From April 2006 the lower capital limit for working age people will be raised to £6,000 to bring it into line with that of pensioners. With the introduction of pension credit in October 2003 the amount of notional income that is assumed from capital, for pensioners has been halved from £1 in every £250 over the lower limit to £1 in every £500; there is no upper capital limit for those pensioners receiving the guarantee credit element of pension credit.

If the savings rules for council tax benefit were changed to match those in pension credit, there would be some 160,000 additional beneficiaries at an estimated cost of £65 million.

Notes:

1. Beneficiaries are rounded to the nearest 10 thousand, costs to the nearest £5 million.
2. Each beneficiary represents a benefit unit, which can be a single claimant or a couple.
3. The impact is estimated using the DWP Policy Simulation Model for 2005–06.
4. This model is based on the 2002–03 Family Resources Survey data, up-rated to 2004–05 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels, and is calibrated to latest published forecasts and policies.

Departmental Policies

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to North-West Leicestershire constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on North-West Leicestershire constituency. [218046]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in North West Leicestershire will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, whilst older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 22 per cent. of adults and 7 per cent. of children in the East Midlands Region are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in North West Leicestershire who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

North West Leicestershire

Operational year	*Number DLA/AA recipients*
2001	5,400
2002	5,500
2003	5,700
2004	6,000

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.
Source:
DWP Information Centre.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in North West Leicestershire, the proportion in employment has risen to 87 per cent.

Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with over 920 in North West Leicestershire alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 1,200 families in North West Leicestershire.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the State Second Pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 3,495 pensioners in North West Leicestershire are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £36.33 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70 plus payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their Basic State Pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 16,400 pensioners in North West Leicestershire have benefited from this increase.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, south constituency, the effect on the constituency of policies pursued by his Department at the Council of Ministers; and if he will make a statement. [215720]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave him on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 605–07W. Promoting work and social inclusion are also at the heart of this Department's policy towards business in the Employment and Social Policy Council. These policies apply to the whole of the United Kingdom and it is not possible to distinguish the effect on a particular constituency.

Geraint Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the Croydon, Central constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on the Croydon, Central constituency. [219288]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Croydon, Central will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Governments decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 18 per cent. of adults and 4 per cent. of children in the London area are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Croydon, Central who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Croydon, Central

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	4,600
2002	4,600
2003	5,000
2004	5,600

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; though in Croydon, Central the proportion in employment has reduced by 1.5 points since 1997 to 77.6 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with 2,630 in Croydon, Central alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 3,600 families in Croydon, Central.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the

first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 3,815 pensioners in Croydon, Central are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £48.69 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 16,600 pensioners in Croydon, Central have benefited from this increase.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205606]

Maria Eagle: DWP was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service (ES). Information on the cost of purchasing new furniture is in the table.

DWP purchases of furniture and fittings

	£
1997–98	7,335,000
1998–99	14,341,000
1999–2000	1,239,000
2000–01	636,000
2001–02	11,373,000
2002–03	3,780,000
2003–04	1,398,000

Note:

Figures for the period prior to June 2001 refer to the former DSS and ES.

DSS entered into a 20-year PFI Partnership Agreement from 1 April 1998 for the provision of fully serviced accommodation for the former DSS estate. The agreement included the hire of furniture, the cost of which is not separately identifiable. During 2003–04, the agreement was extended to cover all Jobcentre Plus properties.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and procurement of services and items is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government accounting.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral statement of 22 February 2005, on the Financial Assistance Scheme, what estimate his Department has made of the annual cost of the guarantee to workers within three years of retirement. [218368]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* As made clear in the statement, on 22 February 2005, *Official Report,* column 16WS, firm estimates of the extent of individual losses, and of costs overall and in individual years, can only be made once the pension schemes concerned have applied for FAS assistance and completed or are close to completing wind-up, so it is much too early in the setting up of the FAS to have a firm estimate of the annual cost of the assistance.

Growth Areas (Funding)

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what funding his Department has earmarked for growth areas to ensure that they have the resources required to meet the demands of a growing population. [218333]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pension's major expenditure (around £100 billion in 2005–06) is on benefits and pensions which are determined by a combination of need and entitlement conditions. Application of these factors will ensure that where appropriate our expenditure meets the demands of a growing population. The Department does not have any resource specifically earmarked for growth areas.

Job Vacancies

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how information on job vacancies is provided to the public other than through Jobcentres; and what the cost is of each such method. [217477]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Malcolm Bruce, dated 3 March 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question 'how information on job vacancies is provided to the public other than through Jobcentres; and what the cost is of each such method'. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Information about vacancies is provided through four different channels in addition to Jobcentres. Jobseeker Direct, a telephone service operated through Jobcentre Plus contact centres which customers can access from home or through a dedicated phone. The annual cost for this service is £11.8 million.

A network of 68 jobpoints located in libraries, supermarkets and community centres provides access to vacancy information outside the Jobcentre network and cost £0.3 million. We are introducing access to vacancy information via touch screen kiosks provided by our partners (mainly local authorities). This costs £0.03 million per annum.

The Jobcentre Plus and Worktrain websites provide internet access to vacancy information and in total the service costs £2.3 million to operate both sites.

I hope this is helpful.

Pension Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the take-up rate of the savings credit element of the pension credit; and how much savings credits remains unclaimed. [218690]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* National statistics on take-up of major DWP benefits are published annually by the Department in "Income Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up". These are based on the Family Resources Survey (FRS) for the relevant year and take account of both entitled non-recipients and non-entitled recipients. However, they are published significantly in arrears and the 2004–05 statistics will not be available for some time.

Take-up for private households entitled to the savings element of pension credit is of the order of 60 per cent. This figure does not include those in residential care or nursing homes. It is derived by comparing administrative and survey sources, which are not directly comparable. No meaningful robust figures for the savings element unclaimed can be derived in this way. Indeed any take-up figure derived this way is indicative only.

Pensions Act 1995

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals have been able to exercise their right to deemed buy back under the Pensions Act 1995. [219452]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* It has been established that, of the schemes that have approached the Inland Revenue so far, there are currently around 800 members of underfunded contracted-out pension schemes in wind-up who have had the opportunity to exercise their right to deemed buyback. However, deemed buyback is only one of a number of options available to a member for securing their accrued rights (for example they could transfer their rights to another scheme). The final decision on which option to use is taken by the member, not the scheme.

Personal Advisers

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many personal advisers will be employed within Jobcentre Plus as part of the roll out of the Pathways to Work programme in the financial years *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [219733]

Maria Eagle: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Jeremy Groombridge to Mr. Paul Goodman dated 3 March 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked David Anderson to reply to your question concerning the number of Personal Advisers employed within Jobcentre Plus as part of the roll out of the Pathways to Work Programme in the financial years 2005–06 and 2006–07. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to him as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus. I am replying on his behalf as one of the Directors of the Jobcentre Plus Board.

In answer to your specific question, the estimated number of Personal Advisers who will be employed in 2005/06 is 359, increasing to 467 in 2006/07.

I would add that the number of Personal Advisers who will be employed as part of the Pathways to Work Programme is subject to change. Our current estimate of the number of additional Personal Advisers has been determined by the latest version of the Costing Model. This Model determines the number of Personal Advisers, and other staff, required to undertake the additional Pathways activity and allocates resources accordingly. The Costing Model continues to be developed and consequently any changes that are made may potentially alter the estimate of the number of Personal Advisers required, I hope this is helpful.

Prescribed Disease A11

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects that the change to the terms of prescription of prescribed disease A11 will be put in place. [218257]

Jane Kennedy: The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council published its report on Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome in July 2004. The principal recommendation was that the terms of prescription for PD A11 (vibration white finger) be extended to include sensorineural symptoms, in addition to the existing vascular symptoms.

The regulatory changes required to implement the recommendations relating to Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome are currently being worked on. It is intended that the new regulations will come into force in summer 2005.

Private Pensions

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will review the information in booklets and leaflets issued by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority and *(c)* the Financial Services Authority regarding the security of private pensions. [218997]

Malcolm Wicks: We recognise the need to keep leaflets and other material up to date, but the Department does not offer financial advice and cannot assume responsibility for doing so. The Department and the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority regularly review the information in their general booklets and leaflets and provide whatever helpful general information they can.

The Financial Services Authority does not have responsibility for the rights of members of occupational pensions schemes but does provide basic information for consumers on these schemes through its consumer publications. This information is general and does not constitute financial advice. The FSA regularly reviews and updates its consumer publications.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 4 March 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Gaelic Language

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his Department's policy is on the use of the Gaelic language; and what plans his Department has to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme. [217091]

Mr. Leslie: Action to support the Gaelic language is primarily the responsibility of the Scottish Executive.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of the Gaelic language in line with the UK's obligations under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill currently before the Scottish Parliament does not extend statutory obligations on UK public bodies in Scotland in relation to the preparation or implementation of Gaelic language plans. However, UK Departments and public bodies which operate in Scotland may—like comparable Scottish public bodies—have a role to play in facilitating the use of the language.

My Department has been working closely with colleagues in the Scotland Office and the Scottish Executive on the role we can play, voluntarily, in securing the status of Gaelic.

Unpaid Fines

Sarah Teather: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many and what value of court-imposed fines have been defaulted on in *(a)* each London borough and *(b)* England in each year since 1997. [212370]

Mr. Leslie: Information on fines imposed and collected is provided by the 42 magistrates courts committees (MCCs) with the Greater London Magistrates' Courts Authority (GLMCA) responsible for courts covering the Greater London area.

Data are collected on the value of financial penalties (including fines) imposed and outstanding. It is not possible to separately identify the number and value of court-imposed fines defaulted on in any one year.

Table 1 shows the national position since 1999 when payment rate collection began. There is no comparable data for previous years. Table 2 shows performance and payment rates prior to the establishment of the GLMCA in 2001 for the 22 magistrates courts committees (MCCs) that were subsequently amalgamated into the GLMCA. Data are not available centrally at borough level.

Table 1

Percentage

Financial year	*Payment rate[2] (National—England and Wales)*	*Payment rate (GLMCA)*
1999–2000	62	[1]See table 2 and note below
2000–01	63	[1]See table 2 and note below
2001–02	59	46
2002–03	55	40
2003–04	74	66
2004–05 (April-January)	80	67

[1] Prior to 2001 the GLMCA did not exist as a single entity. It was created from the amalgamation of 22 magistrates courts committees (MCCs) on 1 April 2001 and therefore no earlier comparable figures exist. In addition, as a result of changes to the calculation of the payment rate in 2003–04, direct year-on-year comparisons are not appropriate (see note [2]).

[2] The Payment Rate is defined as the amount paid into court as a percentage of new amounts owed. As a result of the revisions in the method of calculating the payment rate (detailed as follows), direct year-on-year comparisons cannot be made.

Payment rate (September 1999 to March 2003)

The calculation for the payment rate until March 2003 was:

Payment rate = amount paid divided by new amount owed

(New amount owed includes legally cancelled plus civil plus confiscation orders)

Payment rate (April 2003 to December 2003)

The calculation for the payment rate between April 2003 and December 2003 was:

Payment rate = amount paid divided by new amount owed

(New amount owed excludes legally cancelled plus civil plus confiscation orders)

Payment rate (January 2004 onwards)

The payment rate is currently calculated as follows:

Payment rate = amount paid divided by new amount owed

(New amount owed excludes legally cancelled plus administratively cancelled plus civil plus confiscation orders)

Table 2: Payment rate for Greater London MCCs (now GLMCA)

Percentage

MCC	*Financial year 1999–2000*	*2000–01*
Barking and Dagenham	51	59
Barnet	69	29
Bexley	72	63
Brent	54	44
Bromley	51	71
City of London	69	41
Croydon	75	48
Ealing	59	56
Enfield	56	67
Haringey	49	49
Harrow	50	50
Havering	70	75
Hillingdon	105	97
Hounslow	62	48
Inner London	36	27
Kingston Upon Thames	57	63
Merton,	57	56
Newham	56	50
Redbridge	61	88
Richmond Upon Thames	66	86
Sutton	41	44
Waltham Forest	59	46

TREASURY

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Chairman of the Inland Revenue will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 20 December 2004 with regard to Mr. and Mrs. J Griffin of Brixham. [219812]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue replied to the hon. Member on 1 March 2005.

Euros

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many euro coins and notes have been produced *(a)* in and *(b)* for the United Kingdom in preparation for possible British membership of the euro; and what the cost of production has been. [220230]

Mr. Timms: No UK euro notes or coin have been produced for a possible changeover to the single currency.

Further details of the Government's Policy on how a cash changeover would be managed, should there be a UK changeover, is published in Chapter 5 of the "third outline National Changeover Plan, June 2003", which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Bereavement Grants

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether bereavement grants are taxable. [219555]

Dawn Primarolo: Bereavement payment, made under s36 SSCBA 1992, is not taxable but the weekly bereavement allowance, paid under s39 SSCBA 1992, is taxable.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much UK corporation tax revenue was collected in each of the last 10 years, broken down by industry. [219439]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the amount of Corporation Tax liability by industry for the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Corporation tax liability by financial year

£ million

Industry	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	99	109	137	143	106
Energy, water supply	1,065	1,518	1,743	2,751	2,065
Extraction, metal mfg, chemicals	952	1,738	2,052	1,993	1,660
Metal goods and engineering	1,763	2,266	2,304	2,421	2,566
Other manufacturing	2,270	2,670	2,750	2,794	2,799
Construction	548	592	631	702	818
Distribution and repairs	3,030	3,556	3,741	3,997	4,411
Hotels and catering	149	209	272	328	451
Transport and communication	1,423	1,438	1,956	2,019	1,935
Banking, finance and insurance	5,079	6,922	8,520	9,099	10,329
Business services	1,943	2,272	2,489	3,249	3,410
Other services	500	587	707	827	885
Overseas activities	95	464	190	267	190
Not classified	1,125	1,321	1,479	1,051	1,206
All industries	20,041	25,661	28,971	31,641	32,829

£ million

Industry	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	86	90	73	88	100
Energy, water supply	1,786	1,903	3,808	3,996	2,829
Extraction, metal mfg, chemicals	1,418	1,188	1,038	1,134	1,198
Metal goods and engineering	2,354	1,918	1,667	1,386	1,276
Other manufacturing	2,853	2,308	2,277	1,920	1,986
Construction	915	934	1,044	1,219	1,420
Distribution and repairs	3,985	3,502	3,462	3,751	3,952
Hotels and catering	427	433	365	340	359
Transport and communication	2,274	1,398	1,207	876	1,263
Banking, finance and insurance	11,543	10,473	12,024	7,945	8,227
Business services	4,301	4,126	4,299	4,325	4,231
Other services	1,002	748	724	828	869
Overseas activities	304	136	78	275	54
Not classified	1,305	773	555	572	876
All industries	34,554	29,932	32,621	28,656	28,639

Growth Rate

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the UK's five year rolling average growth rate has been in each year since 1992. [219556]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Willetts, dated 4 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the UK's five year rolling average growth rate has been in each year since 1992. (219556)

The rolling average growth rates of UK Gross Domestic Product, for each year since 1992, in nominal terms (current prices) and chained volume measures (constant prices) are summarised in the table below:

Growth rates of UK Gross Domestic Product

Rolling annual average growth rates for:	*Using data for:*	*Average percentage change in GDP—current prices*	*Average percentage change in GDP—constant at 2000 prices*
1992	1989 to 1994	5.8	1.3
1993	1990 to 1995	5.2	1.7
1994	1991 to 1996	5.4	2.5
1995	1992 to 1997	5.8	3.1
1996	1993 to 1998	6.0	3.3
1997	1994 to 1999	5.8	3.0
1998	1995 to 2000	5.8	3.2
1999	1996 to 2001	5.4	3.1
2000	1997 to 2002	5.2	2.8
2001	1998 to 2003	3.8	3.9
2002	1999 to 2004	3.4	4.4

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate his Department has made of the effect of migration on the underlying growth rate of the UK economy. [219561]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury's projection for the trend growth rate of the economy is built up from projections of growth for the different components that drive trend growth, one of which is the population of working age. As referred to in the 2004 pre-Budget report, the trend growth assumption is 2¾ per cent. over the current economic cycle, with growth in the working-age population contributing around ¼ percentage point. Included in this ¼ percentage point is a contribution from net migration of slightly over ¼ percentage point. The paper "Trend Growth: Recent Developments and Prospects" published alongside Budget 2002 explained the Treasury's approach to assessing trend growth, and further relevant material is published in the economy chapter of each pre-Budget and Budget report.

Inland Revenue/Customs and Excise (Merger)

Mr. Key: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the Inland Revenue office in Alexandra House, Salisbury of the merger of the Inland Revenue with Customs and Excise. [219776]

Dawn Primarolo: Any decisions are dependent upon customer requirements and the development of the new HMRC business model. The plans for Alexandra House, Salisbury were made public in my written answer of 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 759W. Planning options continue to be explored for the staff affected.

Rent-a-room Scheme

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* landlords and *(b)* tenants have participated in the rent-a-room scheme. [219553]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue does not have central records of the numbers of landlords or tenants who have participated in the rent-a-room scheme, as many of those landlords do not have to complete tax returns.

Tax Credits

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the oral answer of 11 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 922, on tax credits, when the figures for overpayments of tax credits referred to will be published. [212358]

Dawn Primarolo: Statistics on overpayments and underpayments will be published in spring 2005 under National Statistics. In line with the National Statistics code of practice, the date of publication will be announced on the Inland Revenue website in due course.

http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/updates/updating_figures_2003_1.htm

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what safeguards are in place to ensure individuals do not suffer financial hardship through the recovery of overpayment of tax credits by the Inland Revenue; [219531]

(2) what factors are taken into account before the Inland Revenue takes a decision on the level of repayment an individual should make towards recovery of overpayment of tax credit; [219532]

(3) what steps the Inland Revenue takes to discuss affordability with individuals in advance of imposing deductions to recover overpayments of tax credit. [219533]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits. It describes a number of measures the Revenue has put in place to protect against hardship being caused by the recovery of an overpayment, which I can summarise as follows:

Where possible, the Inland Revenue will collect an overpayment from a previous year from a continuing award. There are automatic limits on the amounts that will be deducted from payments and these are designed to prevent hardship.

Where a claimant's circumstances change, the Inland Revenue adjust their payments for the rest of the year with the aim of paying the right amount of tax credits for the year as a whole. The Inland Revenue may make additional tax credits payments to prevent hardship where payments are reduced following the adjustment of an award. The effect of these payments is that only part of an expected overpayment being collected is recovered by the end of the year, leaving the balance to be recovered in later years.

In exceptional cases, where claimants still feel that recovery of an overpayment is causing hardship, the Inland Revenue will consider the facts of the case and may decide not to collect all or part of the overpayment, or allow more time to pay.

Where claimants have no award for the current year, they receive a "Notice to Pay". This advises them to contact the Inland Revenue if they want to arrange to pay back their overpayment in 12 monthly instalments, or to request repayment over a longer period.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Northavon of 5 January (PO Ref: 1/38019/2005) regarding the tax credits position of a constituent; and if he will ensure that the constituent receives emergency giro payments of tax credits at the earliest possible opportunity. [219743]

Dawn Primarolo: I wrote to the hon. Member on 2 March.

The Inland Revenue sent the hon. Member's constituent a payment on 1 March.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when a giro for an underpayment of tax credits for the 2004–05 tax year will be sent to Mr. David Crawford of Galmpton; why it has not been issued to date; and if he will make a statement on the tax credit computer system problems which are preventing giros being issued. [219809]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue wrote to the hon. Member on 3 March 2005.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will investigate the reasons for working family tax credit being reclaimed from Ms Deborah Porter of Paignton; and for what reasons the Tax Credit Office have not replied to her letters. [219810]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue replied to the hon. Member's constituent's letters on 3 December 2004 and 3 March 2005. Their Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credits?" outlines the approach they take in dealing with overpayments of tax credits.

Tax Returns

Pete Wishart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the annual saving to the Exchequer of the introduction of *(a)* self-assessment tax returns and *(b)* online filing of self-assessment tax returns. [212348]

Dawn Primarolo: Self-Assessment was introduced in 1996 to modernise and simplify the assessment and payment processes. The new system also produced staff savings worth over £450million within the first four years. The success of the project was confirmed in an independent post-implementation review.

Since 1996 many improvements and changes have been made in the light of experience and they have also produced savings. One of the most significant has been the ability to file online (via the internet or the electronic lodgement service). More than 1.6 million online tax returns have been received in 2004–05 (for tax year 2003–04). These will generate targeted savings of more than £14 million in 2005–6, which as take-up continues to rise will increase to over £40 million per annum from 2011–12.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many random checks on *(a)* self-employed and *(b)* small business tax returns there were in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) the last year for which figures are available; and what proportion of these random checks identified (A) major and (B) minor errors or omissions. [212349]

Dawn Primarolo: I can inform that hon. Gentleman that in every year since 1997 the Inland Revenue has undertaken roughly 2,600 random enquiries into the tax returns of self-employed individuals and roughly 250 random enquiries into the tax returns of small businesses. In the tax year 1997–98 adjustments were made to the returns in 32 per cent. of all random enquiries. The last year for which the Inland Revenue has produced complete analysis is 1998–99. In 1998–99 adjustments were made to returns in 30 per cent. of random enquiries.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of random checks of self-assessment tax returns in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* the last year for which figures are available. [212350]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has not undertaken any research into such costs.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the tax fee insurance being offered by accountancy firms to cover costs in the event of a random audit by the Inland Revenue; and if he will make a statement. [212351]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has not made any assessment of these insurance schemes.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the average costs borne by an individual facing a random audit of their income tax return; whether financial assistance will be made available to cover the costs for those individuals who are found to have filed their return correctly; and if he will make a statement. [212352]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has not undertaken any research into the costs concerned and has no plans to offer to reimburse such costs in any inquiry case.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there is a difference in the average cost for the Inland Revenue when undertaking a random audit of an individual's income tax return when the Inland Revenue deals with *(a)* an accountant representing the individual and *(b)* the individual themselves. [212353]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has not undertaken any research into the relative costs concerned.

Tax Take (Scotland)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the impact *(a)* in total and *(b)* as a percentage on (i) total Government revenue, (ii) income tax take, (iii) corporation tax take, (iv) national insurance take and (v) revenue from duties of an increase in Scottish gross domestic product of (A) 0.5 per cent., (B) 1 per cent. and (C) 1.5 per cent. on his most recent estimate for UK gross domestic product growth. [212356]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available. The overall impact on revenues of stronger relative Scottish growth would depend upon the composition of the extra growth.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the impact *(a)* in total and *(b)* as a percentage on (i) total Government revenue, (ii) income tax take, (iii) corporation tax take, (iv) national insurance take and (v) revenue from duties of a medium-term fall in Scotland's population of (A) 100,000, (B) 250,000 and (C) 500,000. [212357]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available. The impact on total government revenues from a fall in the population of Scotland would depend in part on the effects on the age profile and income distribution of the population.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Portcullis House (Fire Alarms)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission how many fire alarms have gone off in Portcullis House in each of the last two years; how many were found not to have been caused by a fire; what the *(a)* shortest, *(b)* average and *(c)* longest period was that the building was closed; and if he will make a statement. [219696]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: In 2003, detecting devices were triggered in Portcullis House on 73 occasions, of which 18 were caused by fire and smoke, 17 were activated for other reasons such as steam, and 38 were faults in the system. The corresponding figures for 2004 are 86, 18, 14 and 54. The fire alarm sounded and as a result there was a full evacuation of the building on two occasions in 2003 and seven in 2004. Records are not kept of the length of each evacuation.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service Prosecutions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many *(a)* fraud, *(b)* forgery, *(c)* gun crime, *(d)* internet crime, *(e)* robbery, *(f)* snatch theft and *(g)* alcohol-related violent offence cases the Crown Prosecution Service has brought in (i) Essex and (ii) England and Wales in each year since 1997; and how many of these resulted in (A) conviction and (B) acquittal. [210455]

The Solicitor-General: Gun crime, internet crime and alcohol-related violent offences are offences which cannot be separately identified on the Home Office Court Proceedings Database. Snatch theft is categorised as theft from the person. The table sets out the relevant figures for the other requested categories. The figures relate to persons for whom these sentences were for the principal offences for which they were found guilty. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts, found guilty at all courts and acquitted at crown courts for various offences—Essex police force area and England and Wales, 1997 to 2003 [1]

	Theft from the person			*Fraud*		
	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*
Essex police force area						
1997	140	158	9	528	355	19
1998	192	164	8	558	361	14
1999	139	127	9	508	347	23
2000	70	55	4	544	324	5
2001	165	112	5	505	321	11
2002	177	138	3	483	316	12
2003	204	173	5	442	321	6
England and Wales						
1997	5,987	5,742	556	20,866	14,661	587
1998	6,256	5,495	573	24,161	17,402	580
1999	6,816	5,691	473	25,101	17,992	679
2000	6,853	5,673	503	23,660	17,039	716

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts, found guilty at all courts and acquitted at crown courts for various offences—Essex police force area and England and Wales, 1997 to 2003 [1]

	Theft from the person			*Fraud*		
	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*
2001	7,340	6,008	579	22,512	16,084	607
2002	8,140	6,498	451	21,494	15,743	494
2003	8,012	6,542	446	20,787	15,223	541

	Forgery			*Robbery*		
	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*
Essex police force area						
1997	314	226	4	137	60	9
1998	300	217	3	163	86	13
1999	231	173	3	132	89	8
2000	234	176	1	153	78	6
2001	304	223	3	198	80	21
2002	249	176	1	206	95	17
2003	191	149	—	171	84	19
England and Wales						
1997	9,851	7,298	137	10,781	5,589	984
1998	9,423	6,900	98	10,450	5,542	1,164
1999	8,893	6,408	103	10,321	5,626	1,214
2000	8,075	5,668	93	12,142	5,891	1,374
2001	8,221	5,731	102	14,871	6,822	1,515
2002	8,381	5,734	90	15,644	7,711	1,172
2003	8,758	6,057	112	13,732	7,303	1,897

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Freedom of Information Requests

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Solicitor-General what her policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215220]

The Solicitor-General: Where a response is likely to be of general interest, I have arranged for the information to be placed on the departmental website. This is decided on a case-by-case basis.

This is consistent with Guidance on Publication Schemes issued by the Department of Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, which recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate.

I do not intend as a general rule to make such information available in the Library, as placing it on the website makes it available to a wider audience.

Rape/Sexual Assault

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what plans she has to improve the prosecution attrition rate in rape cases. [215577]

The Solicitor-General: The HMCPSI and HMIC joint thematic inspection into the investigation and prosecution of cases involving allegations of rape was published in April 2002. The report set out concerns regarding levels of victim satisfaction, high attrition rates and low conviction rates in cases of rape.

In July 2002, the Government published a Rape Action Plan. It accepted nearly all the recommendations put forward by the HMCPSI and HMIC report.

Implementation of these recommendations has been ongoing since the publication of the Rape Action Plan. The measures implemented by the Crown Prosecution Service following the Rape Action Plan include each CPS Area having a rape co-ordinator to provide and disseminate good practice within and across areas; that rape cases are reviewed by specialist lawyers; that decisions to drop or substantially reduce the prosecution case, or to advise the police to take no further action, are discussed with a second specialist lawyer before a final decision is made; that instructions are given to prosecuting advocates that offensive and seemingly irrelevant cross-examination should be challenged, and inappropriate cross-examination about previous sexual experience should be challenged; and that the Crown Prosecution Service has published its policy statement on rape explaining to the public how the Crown Prosecution Service deals with rape cases.

There will be an audit of the Rape Action Plan of police forces and CPS areas by a working group comprised of Home Office, CPS and ACPO officials. The audit of the Rape Action Plan will take into account forthcoming research in attrition rates and other recent publications, both in terms of assessing progress, and identifying any further recommendations that may follow. It is planed to carry out this audit in the spring/summer of this year.

The work of the audit will tie in with the Home Office research planned to look in detail at the decline in detection rates in rape and sexual assault cases and current variation in detection rate performance.

An audit of the Rape Action Plan will enable the Government to identify what is working and what remains to be done to tackle attrition in rape cases, which has been identified by the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Sexual Offending as a key priority.

Whiterock Parade

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Solicitor-General what the reasons were for the decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions not to proceed with charges arising from events associated with the Whiterock Parade in July 1993. [216317]

The Solicitor-General: Arising out of an incident at Whiterock, Belfast, on 28 June 2003, the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland received a police file in respect of an alleged breach of a Parades Commission's Determination of 28 June 2003. Following consideration of the file the police were asked to commence proceedings against one individual for an offence contrary to section 8(7) of the Public Processions Act (Northern Ireland) 1998. This is an offence that can only be tried in the magistrates court and proceedings must be commenced within six months of the alleged offence having been committed. The administrative steps required to initiate the proceedings were a matter for the police.

The absence of formal confirmation of commencement of proceedings was noticed by the Department on 23 December 2003 and the police were asked to confirm that proceedings had in fact been commenced. The Department was assured that proceedings had been commenced. In February 2004 the Department was informed that through administrative error, proceedings had not in fact been commenced by police within the statutory time period. As more than six months had elapsed at that stage proceedings were by then statute barred and it was not possible to take any further action.

The Police Service for Northern Ireland referred the matter to the Police Ombudsman for investigation.

Witnesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General what powers of investigation are granted to the Crown Prosecution Service to check the credibility and reliability of witnesses, in addition to the initial investigations by the police. [218870]

The Solicitor-General: On 20 December 2004, the Attorney-General published his report on "Pre-trial Interviews with Witnesses". The Attorney recommended that, in certain circumstances, a crown prosecutor should in the future have the ability to hold pre-trial interviews with witnesses.

Such interviews should be conducted for the purpose and the extant that, in the view of the prosecutor, such an interview is necessary in order to assess the reliability of or clarify a witness's evidence. This will inform the decision to prosecute or to continue with a prosecution that has already been commenced. The intention is not to gain or obtain new evidence, although further evidence upon which the prosecution would seek to rely may be revealed during the course of the interview. In such circumstances, a police officer will be asked to take a further statement.

The Director of Public Prosecutions has commissioned work to take forward the recommendations of the report and to see how the recommendations can best be piloted.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in the last two years. [202416]

Charlotte Atkins: The cost of works in 2002–03 to restore four ministerial suites, the offices of the Permanent Secretary and two Special Advisers and associated private office areas (including those for the ministerial support unit and the parliamentary branch) was £145,660 plus fees plus VAT. This work was undertaken as part of a consolidation package to co-locate Ministers and DfT staff in the same building and has resulted in an annual saving of some £220,000 in accommodation costs to the Department.

Foreign Airlines (Disabled People)

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will press for measures to ensure that deaf and other disabled people are not refused carriage by foreign airlines operating in the UK unless there are legitimate safety grounds; [220213]

(2) if he will request that Iberia Airlines apologise to, and compensate, the party of deaf UK passengers, for refusing to carry them on 22 July 2004. [220214]

Charlotte Atkins: In light of the incident on the Iberia Airlines flight last summer we have referred the issue of restrictions on the number of disabled people who are carried on particular aircraft to the European Civil Aviation Conference's Facilitation Sub Group on air travel for persons with reduced mobility (PRM). The term PRM is used in European fora to refer to disabled and, in some cases, also to other mobility impaired people.

The ECAC group has agreed to look at the issue with a view to seeing what, if any, changes might be needed to current recommended practices and policies. That work item has been included in the progamme for this year.

We have no basis on which to ask Iberia Airlines to apologise to, or to compensate those involved in last summer's incident.

Growth Areas (Funding)

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding his Department has earmarked for growth areas to ensure that they have the resources required to meet the demands of a growing population. [218332]

Charlotte Atkins: Apart from the new £200 million Community Infrastructure Fund for transport projects to facilitate new housing development, my Department has taken account of the benefits that particular projects would have for the four growth areas when considering individual proposals, rather than set aside specific parts of national budgets to spend in those areas.

Our latest estimate of recent and planned expenditure on local authority and Highways Agency major transport projects that will support the growth areas is about £3.5 billion. This includes, for example, the cost of a number of Local Transport Plan projects that have been provisionally accepted for DfT funding and therefore assumes that they will obtain all necessary statutory approvals as well as satisfying the Department's detailed scheme assessment requirements.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what undertakings the Government have given to the London bid team on meeting shortfalls in the budget for the London 2012 bid; and who will be responsible for meeting a shortfall in the budget to deliver a 2012 London bid. [216081]

Tessa Jowell: London 2012 have stated that they are not budgeting for a shortfall on the bid and they have received no assurances from the Government on meeting any shortfall on the bid should one arise. London 2012 and its directors are responsible for ensuring that it has sufficient income to meet its costs.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with Transport for London on special arrangements to control the flow and numbers of passengers using the London Underground system during the visit of the International Olympic Committee evaluation team to London in February. [216093]

Tessa Jowell: I have had no such discussions. The operation of the London Underground is the responsibility of Transport for London.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* businesses and *(c)* representatives of users of public roads regarding the use of synchronised traffic lights and other special measures during the visit of the International Olympic Committee evaluation team in February. [216094]

Tessa Jowell: I have had no such discussions, although officials are aware that some measures were considered by Transport for London. The management of traffic signalling in London is the responsibility of Transport for London.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on promoting London's bid for the 2012 Olympics; how much has been spent in London; and if she will make a statement. [216002]

Tessa Jowell: As stated in the Command Paper Cm 5867 laid before the House in June 2003, the Mayor and I agreed that DCMS and the London Development Agency (LDA) should contribute to the costs of the bid organisation and associated planning in equal shares to a combined limit of £30 million.

Included within this sum is an agreed grant, with a limit of £20 million and financed in equal part from the DCMS and LDA, to the bid company "London 2012", which oversees the majority of the work associated with promoting the London bid. A cost breakdown of what proportion of this money has been spent in London is not readily available.

The further £10 million is a bid support budget jointly funded and managed by DCMS and the LDA. Costs committed under this budget to date are as follows:

Item	*Amount (£)*
Start up costs for London 2012	278,822
Stakeholder accountability (including cost validation and OGC review)	169,578
Masterplanning (including consultancy and legal work)	3,000,000
Sports events	600,000
Infrastructure (including feasibility study for Aquatics Centre and for undergrounding of power lines in Olympic Park area)	1,598,000
Staging period preparation (including economic benefit assessment and consultancy work)	719,553
Miscellaneous (including assessment work for transport and "kids swim free" scheme)	1,865,040
Total	8,230,993

DEFENCE

12 Mechanised Brigade

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the date is for the deployment of 12 Mechanised Brigade to Iraq; [219524]

(2) what training in prisoner handling 12 Mechanised Brigade will receive before their deployment to Iraq. [219525]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* 12 Mechanised Brigade (12 Mech Bde) will deploy to Iraq in the next few months. I am withholding the precise date as its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of our forces.

Prisoner handling training for 12 Mech Bde will be covered by the following methods: all soldiers receive initial training on handling of prisoners through Individual Training Directive No 6: "Law of Armed Conflict", which is then repeated on an annual basis; all personnel will receive a legal brief on the handling of prisoners during Central Pre-Deployment Training; additional legal training to be undertaken by commanding officers and key staff will include a study period on search and detention; and a number of other personnel will attend a specific course on prisoner handling and tactical questioning. In addition, aspects of prisoner handling will be practised on 2 Field Training Exercises prior to the Brigade's deployment.

Commando Training Centre (Lympstone)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the reasons were for the decision to drop assault charges against the six Royal Marines instructors based at the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone; on what date the decision was taken; and whether further complaints against officers are awaiting consideration. [218574]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply.

Six members of the training staff at Lympstone Marine Commando Training Centre were originally charged with offences including disgraceful conduct, ill-treatment of men of inferior rank and conduct prejudicial to military discipline. On receipt of fresh evidence pertaining to the case, and in accordance with its duty to keep the prosecution under constant review, the Army Prosecuting Authority reviewed the charges against the six accused. Applying the tests of sufficiency of evidence and public interest contained in the Code for Service Prosecutors, the APA decided to discontinue all proceedings against one accused on 31 January and then, following the receipt of further evidence, against the remaining five accused on 2 February 2005. The Army Prosecuting Authority is not aware of any further complaints against these servicemen.

Infantry Armoured Artillery

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of infantry armoured artillery was deployed at 1 January. [219048]

Mr. Caplin: Around 15 per cent. of Infantry units, 20 per cent. of Royal Armoured Corps units and 21 per cent. of Royal Artillery units were deployed on operations on 1 January 2005.

Recruitment (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the *(a)* Black Watch, *(b)* King's Own Borderers and *(c)* Scots Guards were recruited from Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [219051]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004, the last full financial year for which figures are available, is shown in the following table.

Recruited from Lancashire during financial year 2003–04

Regiment	*Number*
Black Watch	0
King's Own Royal Border Regiment	15
Scots Guards	10

It should be noted that Infantry recruits are enlisted into a Division and not a specific Regiment. The results in this table may not, therefore, be fully accurate as it reflects those recruits who specified The Black Watch, The King's Own Royal Border Regiment and the Scots Guards as a "Preferred Capbadge" on enlisting as recorded on the database of Headquarters Recruiting Group, who oversee the Army's recruiting offices.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Exports (Sudan)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many prosecutions have been brought in courts outside the UK against *(a)* UK nationals and *(b)* UK bodies for breach of the embargo on sales of arms to Sudan; [216465]

(2) how many *(a)* UK nationals and *(b)* UK bodies are under investigation but have not yet been charged for possible breaches of the embargo on sales of arms to Sudan. [216466]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Customs are not aware of any prosecutions in courts outside the UK of UK nationals or UK bodies for breaches of the embargo on the supply of arms to Sudan.

Customs made inquiries into allegations concerning two UK nationals supplying the Government of Sudan with military equipment. As a result of those inquiries Customs concluded that there was insufficient evidence to commence criminal proceedings and they intend to take no further action unless new information comes to light.

The release of further information regarding any inquiries in this area would prejudice law enforcement or the prevention and prosecution of crime. However, it is normal policy that Customs will look into all significant allegations and intelligence in relation to breaches of arms embargoes.

Correspondence

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, when she expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Walsall North of 2 February concerning the malfunction of pensioners' PIN cards. [219530]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I replied to my hon. Friend's letter on 17 February 2005.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Advisory Committee for the Technical Adaptation of the Community Procedure to Improve the Transparency of Gas and Electricity Prices Charged to Industrial End-users and (ii) Committee for the Implementation of the Series of Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Networks met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [218434]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: A "Task Force on Gas and Electricity Prices", composed of experts from member states looked into the new methodology for the data collection of gas and electricity prices for both the industrial and domestic sectors. It reported prior to the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies of the EU, which spanned the period July 2003 to December 2004. Subsequently, the Energy Statistics Committee

Working Group with senior statisticians from member states, discussed the conclusions of the Task Force in May 2004.

The Trans-European Networks Financial Assistance Committee for the Energy Sector met once during the Italian presidency of the EU, on 15 July 2003, and once during the Dutch presidency, on 12 November 2004. Both meetings took place in Brussels. The Committee did not meet during the Irish presidencies.

Nuclear Industry

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of proposals in the International Atomic Energy Agency publication, Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (infcirc/640), in respect of the conversion of the Sellafield and Dounreay reprocessing facilities to international ownership and management. [219450]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government believes this publication will provide a valuable contribution to the nuclear debate. It is too early for any detailed assessment on the implication of the report for the UK nuclear industry. However the Government will, as the report recommends, be giving attention to the approaches set out in the report to investigate their practicality, feasibility and usefulness, and be playing a full part in the international discussions which follow.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what mechanisms are used to monitor and track nuclear waste materials; and if she will make a statement. [218821]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The majority of UK radioactive waste stocks are recorded in a UK Radioactive Waste Inventory prepared jointly by The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and United Kingdom Nirex Ltd (Nirex) approximately every three years. The last published inventory, for a stock date of 1 April 2001, was published in October 2002. The next, for a stock date of 1 April 2004, will be published towards the end of this year. But the inventory is not used to specifically track waste materials, nor does it list all such materials.

The UK's civil nuclear sites apply stringent security measures regulated by the Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS). OCNS also regulate security for the transportation of civil nuclear materials. Security at nuclear sites and during transportation of nuclear material is kept under regular review in the light of the prevailing threat.

In addition, Euratom Safeguards are applied to the nuclear material content of certain types of nuclear waste and these involve reporting to and inspection by the European Commission.

Post Office Card Accounts

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what provisions are made for those who withdraw their pension using the Post Office account card and forget their pin; and if she will make a statement. [218608]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Where a customer has forgotten their PIN when in the Post office branch they are asked to call the customer service helpline 08457 22 33 44 to order a replacement PIN. The account holder should receive a replacement PIN within four working days. The terms and conditions document for the card account which customers are required to read before opening an account also gives this information.

As with most card accounts, Post Office card account customers can change the PIN originally allocated to them to a set of numbers that they might find easier to remember.

Wind Turbines

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many wind turbines she anticipates will be erected in the UK by 2010. [217348]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government's target of renewable energy sources contributing 10 per cent. of our electricity by 2010 is for all forms of renewables, not just wind, although it is clear that wind will make the main contribution. At this stage it is difficult to predict precise numbers. There are already just under 1,200 wind turbines currently in operation. Generating 10 per cent. of UK electricity from renewables could mean an increase of possibly another one and half times that number. There will also be a rather smaller number of offshore turbines.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Complaints about Schools

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many complaints the Commissioner for Local Administration in England has received concerning schools in Sittingbourne and Sheppey. [212345]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills does not keep a record of the number of complaints the Commissioner for Local Administration has received concerning schools in Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action the Commissioner for Local Administration in England has taken in relation to complaints that he has upheld concerning schools in Sittingbourne and Sheppey. [212346]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department does not keep a record of any action taken by the Commissioner for Local Administration in relation to complaints that he has upheld about schools in Sittingbourne and Sheppey and on which he expects the organisation to provide a suitable remedy.

Post-16 Education (York)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of

young people in York continuing in education and training after GCSE was in *(a)* each year since 1996–97 and *(b)* 2004–05. [220284]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information for 16-year-olds (i.e. the first year of post compulsory education) in education and work based learning (WBL—including apprenticeships) by local education authority (LEA) is currently only available as at the end of the calendar year 2001.

The number of 16-year-olds participating in education or WBL in York LEA at end 2001 was around 1,900, or 88 per cent.

Figures for end 2002 and end 2003 will be published, alongside an historic time series, on 31 March 2005 on the Department's website.

Education Maintenance Allowances (York)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students at education institutions in York are receiving education maintenance allowances; what the average weekly value of those allowances is in York; and what the total expenditure on the allowances in York is expected to be in the 2004–05 academic year. [220283]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: At 1 March 2005 a total of 916 young people who are studying in institutions in York LEA area have received at least one EMA payment since the start of the 2004/05 academic year.

Data is not available at LEA level as to the actual expenditure. Payments are, and vary between £10, £20 and £30 per week according to household income, and are dependent upon whether the student has attended college or school in each week. There are also bonuses, which are linked to progression and retention. Taking account of these factors, and applying national averages, the estimated expenditure on students in York for the 2004/05 academic year is around £915,000.

Permanent Exclusions

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what change there has been in the level of unsatisfactory behaviour leading to permanent exclusions since 1997. [220102]

Derek Twigg: We are unable to indicate what change there has been in levels of behaviour leading to exclusion since 1997 as schools use a range of measures to tackle poor behaviour before it reaches a point where exclusion is the only appropriate response. There were 12,668 permanent exclusions in 1996/97. In 2002/03, the last school year for which we have data, exclusions had fallen to 9,290, which is around 25 per cent. below the 1996/97 peak. The following table provides information on the levels of permanent exclusion from 1996/97 to 2002/03:

Permanent exclusions 1996/97 to 2002/03 for England

	Number of pupils	*Percentage of school population*
1996/97	12,668	0.17
1997/98	12,298	0.16
1998/99	10,438	0.14
1999/2000	8,323	0.11
2000/01	9,135	0.12
2001/02	9,535	0.12
2002/03	9,290	0.12

Primary Teachers (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many primary school teachers were on permanent contracts in London in September in each year since 1997; and how many unfilled vacancies there were in each of these years. [212374]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Information on the numbers of teachers employed on permanent contracts in primary schools is not collected centrally.

The following table provides the number of nursery and primary teacher vacancies in London in January of each year from 1997 to 2004, the latest information available.

	Number
1997	450
1998	630
1999	590
2000	520
2001	820
2002	600
2003	410
2004	250

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
DfES annual survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies (Form 618G Survey).

Pupil Referral Units

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what security measures are implemented in pupil referral units; and what the costs of those measures were in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* costs of security personnel, *(b)* costs of security features including alarm systems, metal detectors, fencing and CCTV cameras and *(c)* other costs. [218044]

Derek Twigg: Security measures in schools, including in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), are arranged locally. The Department for Education and Skills does not collect implementation details or figures showing the security costs in PRUs. Money made available to local authorities in England (as Grant 317) or from the Capital Modernisation Fund from 1997–08 to 2002–03 could be used to improve security in PRUs as well as in other maintained schools. Ring-fenced funding totalled £120 million and was all drawn down.

School Budget Deficits (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in each borough in Greater London ran a budget deficit in the year ended 31 March 2004; and how much this deficit was for each school. [219749]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

School Playground Schemes

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what support the Government are giving to school playground schemes. [218004]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[pursuant to the reply, 24 February 2005, Official Report, c. 756W]:* The funding being provided by the Big Lottery Fund (BLF), towards playground improvements in England, is around £8.1 million. This is distributed through the New Opportunities for Physical Education and Sport programme.

Specialist Schools

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to encourage head teachers who have not applied for specialist status for their schools to do so. [212315]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Within the framework of the Specialist Schools Programme it is for individual schools to decide on whether to apply for specialist school designation. We fund the Specialist Schools Trust and the Youth Sport Trust to offer advice and to support schools wishing to apply for specialist status.

Sure Start

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many children in North Durham have benefited from the Sure Start programme since its inception; [214673]

(2) how much money has been spent on the Sure Start programme in North Durham since its inception. [214674]

Margaret Hodge: Durham North has two Sure Start local programmes; Sure Start Stanley and Sure Start Chester-le-Street.

Sure Start Stanley was approved as a local programme in October 2000 and supports around 940 young children and their families living in the Stanley area of North Durham. The local programme provides a wide range of services to support local families including: access to good quality and affordable childcare, crèche provision, playgroups and parent and toddler groups; improved local health care and family support and an extensive range of training and work related courses.

Since opening Sure Start Stanley has worked toward improving the quality of life for local families. The number of women smoking during pregnancy has fallen from 36 per cent. to 28 per cent.; the usage of libraries by young children and their families is 7 per cent. above the national average; there has been a significant improvement in the personal and social development of children at school-age. The programme has contacted 869 children out of the total of 943 under 5s in the catchment area and has seen 100 per cent. of newborns within two months of birth.

There is strong parental involvement in this programme through the Parent Communications Group, (a decision-making group of 18 parents), training programmes facilitated by Sure Start Stanley (340 training places taken up by parents) and parents involved as volunteers delivering a range of Sure Start activities and services.

Sure Start Chester-le-Street was approved as a local programme in April 2001 and has a semi rural catchment area. It supports around 800 young children living in the Chester West area and surrounding villages. The local programme provides a range of services from its main centre including: high quality daycare, parent and toddler and crèche facilities; successfully integrated health services and a wide range of work based training courses.

Sure Start Chester-le-Street is working toward delivering a rotating service to the outlying villages within its boundary to ensure regular access to Sure Start activities and services for those families living in remote areas.

The local programme has been successful in improving the quality of life for young children and their families. Following the programme being established, breastfeeding has increased by 5 per cent., a storyline and Bookstart service has promoted the use of libraries by 100 per cent. and a successful baby massage service has led to an extension of the programme to include baby yoga and training for parents for them to deliver the service in the future.

There is strong parental involvement in Sure Start Chester-le-Street. A Parents' Committee (14 elected parents) is represented on the Management Committee (two parents) and Partnership Committee (two parents), the decision making bodies for this local programme. Parents are actively involved in a childcare NVQ level 2/3 training programme run jointly by Sure Start Chester-le-Street and The Bridge, a local women's charity.

Durham North has six neighbourhood nurseries. Durham city council is developing four children's centres from these settings that are delivering 169 integrated early learning with childcare places. Around 700 three-year-olds and 830 four-year-olds are receiving free nursery education in maintained nursery and primary schools and other maintained schools.

The Sure Start local programmes have received DfES funding of £2,286,323 revenue and been allocated £2,075,000 in capital grants since being opened in October 2000 and April 2001 respectively. The neighbourhood nurseries have been allocated a total revenue grant of £777,062 and have received a total of £255,528 in capital grants.

These programmes are developing into children's centres and will contribute towards achieving our goal of a children's centre in every community by 2010.

A well thought-through careers advice service has enabled 49 parents to complete the Parent Employability Programme.

Unauthorised Absence (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many half-days have been lost owing to unauthorised absence of pupils in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 2002–03 (i) in absolute terms and (ii) as a proportion of the total number of half-days. [220108]

Derek Twigg: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Unauthorised absence in primary and secondary schools in Greater London

	Academic year 2002/03		*Academic year 2003/04*	
	Number of half days missed	*Percentage half days missed*	*Number of half days missed*	*Percentage half days missed*
Greater London	2,671,594	1.02	2,665,298	0.99
Barking and Dagenham	119,169	1.60	121,981	1.60
Barnet	87,718	0.74	99,017	0.83
Bexley	50,333	0.51	74,947	0.71
Brent	57,691	0.61	68,193	0.70
Bromley	87,561	0.73	96,235	0.78
Camden	55,645	1.14	42,197	0.84
Croydon	110,841	0.87	119,055	0.92
Ealing	48,907	0.49	49,137	0.48
Enfield	173,070	1.44	140,460	1.11
Greenwich	166,073	1.85	180,309	1.94
Hackney	105,774	1.62	90,997	1.40
Hammersmith and Fulham	48,180	1.19	49,281	1.16
Haringey	129,538	1.63	122,052	1.41
Harrow	25,072	0.32	22,373	0.28
Havering	37,431	0.39	40,453	0.41
Hillingdon	111,853	1.10	100,667	0.97
Hounslow	95,439	1.11	101,909	1.16
Islington	80,662	1.36	70,282	1.14
Kensington and Chelsea	24,846	0.97	16,707	0.62
Kingston upon Thames	17,616	0.35	13,147	0.27
Lambeth	62,317	0.92	59,449	0.82
Lewisham	136,429	1.57	140,500	1.55
London, City of	0	0	152	0.29
Merton	41,819	0.77	43,868	0.76
Newham	150,817	1.29	117,667	0.94
Redbridge	76,663	0.73	90,365	0.85
Richmond upon Thames	56,648	1.09	57,358	1.04
Southwark	157,226	1.75	155,229	1.66
Sutton	35,024	0.46	39,458	0.51
Tower Hamlets	138,820	1.56	141,381	1.53
Waltham Forest	81,085	0.90	100,796	1.07
Wandsworth	52,766	0.78	43,182	0.66
Westminster, City of	48,561	1.08	56,494	1.18

Unauthorised absence is absence without leave from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. It includes pupils who are late or who take time off with parents' consent—for example for a holiday which the school will not authorise.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on progress with the business rate property revaluation. [219780]

Mr. Raynsford: The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) has successfully completed the revaluation of all business properties. The draft rating lists were published, as planned, on 1 October 2004. At the same time, as part of a comprehensive programme to make more information available to ratepayers, a summary valuation (an explanation of how the valuation is determined) was issued for the bulk of the properties. This was sent to many ratepayers and made available on the VOA website. Final lists have been given to billing authorities enabling them to issue the rate bills for 1 April 2005 using the new valuations.

Departmental Policies (Hull, North)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Kingston-upon-Hull, North constituency, the effects on Kingston-upon-Hull, North of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211811]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the UK. For example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is determined that everyone should have the opportunity to have a decent home, and since 1997 we have reduced the number of non-decent homes nationally by one million.

North Hull Housing Action Trust, which operated between 1991 and 1999, invested £109 million of public funds to modernise 2,083 homes, provide community

facilities and services, promote training and employment initiatives and undertake environmental improvements in the North Hull area.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides grant funding that benefits the Kingston-upon–Hull, North constituency through a number of programmes.

For example over the period 2001–06, Kingston-upon-Hull has been allocated over £39 million Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources to help the local authority, in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership, improve services in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the area.

More broadly, since 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to increase the total amount of government grant given to local authorities by £22.6 billion. This is a 33 per cent. increase in real terms. Kingston-upon-Hull has received an average annual increase in formula grant since 1997 of 3.7 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at: http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Faith-based Volunteers

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he gives to local authorities regarding the funding of voluntary projects run by churches and religious groups. [220267]

Mr. Raynsford: Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not formally guide local authorities on funding of voluntary projects run by churches and religious groups, its position on this issue remains as outlined in the Local Government Association's "Faith and community—a good practice guide for local authorities". The "Compact: Community Groups Code" also sets out a position on funding for faith communities agreed within the Compact process which the Government endorses.

Housing

Mr. Salter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units were built as part of each affordable housing scheme funded in Reading, West in each of the last three years; and how many units in each scheme are for key workers. [219498]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation records affordable housing schemes by type of funding, Housing Association, site and whether or not the housing is for key workers. Thus key worker housing and non-key worker housing are identified as separate schemes even if they are built in close proximity in the same or different years.

A summary of affordable dwellings built in Reading local authority area, which includes Reading, West, for the last three years for which data are available is given in the following table.

Affordable housing in Reading 2001–02 to 2003–04

	Number of schemes	*Number of units*
2001–02		
Non-key worker	22	157
Key worker	4	4
Total	26	161
2002–03		
Non-key worker	17	138
Key worker	41	41
Total	58	179
2003–04		
Non-key worker	38	250
Key worker	104	249
Total	142	499

Source:
Housing Corporation South East

In 2001–02 and 2002–03 the key worker housing was constructed under the Starter Homes Initiative and individual dwellings were recorded as separate schemes. In 2003–04 the key worker housing built in the local authority area consisted of 94 dwellings under the Starter Homes Initiative and recorded as separate schemes together with 155 dwellings built in 10 schemes using Challenge Funds. These 10 schemes consisted of between eight and 26 dwellings. Funding for affordable housing for non-key workers are through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme, Challenge Fund, and Local Authority Social Housing Grant.

Mr. Salter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on funding plans for key worker housing in Reading, West. [219499]

Keith Hill: Affordable housing assistance for eligible key workers within the Reading, West area is available through the £690 million Key Worker Living programme.

As at the end of January 2005, a total of £3,885,366 had been spent to assist 102 key workers in Berkshire to purchase homes through the "Homebuy" element of the programme. "Homebuy" allocations for 2005–06 within the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Zone are still subject to confirmation.

In addition it is anticipated that a further £11,306,959 will be spent on producing 396 new build units by March 2007. The following table breaks down these figures by local authority:

	Homebuy Element		*New Build Element*	
Local authority	*Number of key workers assisted*	*Total grant expenditure (£)*	*Number of units*	*Total grant expenditure (£)*
Bracknell Forest	17	691,460	50	1,003,001
Reading	29	1,051,530	247	7,770,871
Slough	24	900,476	31	667,500
West Berkshire	7	270,789	0	0
Windsor and Maidenhead	4	164,940	28	640,000
Wokingham	21	806,171	40	1,225,587
Total	102	3,885,366	396	11,306,959

Key workers may also benefit from the shared ownership and Homebuy programmes funded by the Housing Corporation to help existing social tenants and those on waiting lists into home ownership.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will break down the expected building costs of building the Government's planned £60,000 homes by each estimated unit construction cost. [219656]

Keith Hill: In the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Homes for All" public service plan, launched on 24 January 2005, a competition was announced that would invite organisations to bid for the right to construct one or more new developments on English Partnerships owned sites. This "Design for Manufacture" competition aims to demonstrate that it is possible to build a home that reaches good standards of accessible design and environmental performance for £60,000.

This target cost of £60,000 for constructing a home relates solely to construction costs. In setting this target, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister looked at a series of data sets, including those produced by RICS Building Costs Information Service and the Tender Price Index of Social Housing, as well as real-life case studies, to identify what might be a challenging but achievable figure for the core costs of constructing a home.

One of the main purposes of the competition is to encourage greater efficiency in the construction process. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister anticipates that the creativity and innovation that exists within the industry will mean that this could be achieved in different ways. Thus it is not possible at present to break down anticipated dwelling building costs.

It is important to note that competition entries will be expected to include a range of dwellings of different types and sizes. While it is anticipated that approximately 30 per cent. of all the dwellings built through the competition will meet a target construction cost of £60,000, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will expect all of the dwellings built through the competition to achieve equivalent cost-efficiency.

Local Government Ombudsman

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many complaints were received by the Local Government Ombudsman in the last year for which figures are available; and how many were upheld. [219491]

Mr. Raynsford: In 2003–04, the last complete year for which figures are available, the Local Government Ombudsman received 18,982 complaints. Of the cases in which determinations were made, local settlements (where the council agrees to take action which the Ombudsman considers is a satisfactory response to the complaint) were made in 3,188 cases. Maladministration was found to have occurred in 180 cases. No or insufficient evidence of maladministration was found in 5,418 cases. In the remainder of cases, the complaints were not pursued, for example, because the complaint was outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, or the council had not first been given a reasonable opportunity to deal with the complaint.

Ordnance Survey Maps

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what criteria Ordnance Survey uses in deciding whether to include school names on maps it produces. [219815]

Yvette Cooper: Ordnance Survey (OS) routinely records all school names within its national large-scale mapping. On smaller scale OS Explorer and OS Landranger map series, textual information is reduced to maintain clarity and legibility, and school names are not normally shown unless space permits or unless a school constitutes a tourist attraction.

Planning Appeal

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the reason was for the delay in *(a)* determining the appeal against refusal to grant consent to fell an oak tree at 8 Langley Close, St. Ives, Ringwood, Hampshire and *(b)* publication of the decision letter. [219774]

Keith Hill: Tree preservation order appeals are processed by officials in the Government Offices for the Regions, who issue the final decision on behalf of the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. There are several stages in the process, including an exchange of written representations between the appellant and the local planning authority, and arranging a site visit. In this case the appeal was submitted on 16 April 2004 and the site visit took place on 3 September 2004. There is currently a non-statutory timetable for appeal decisions to be issued within 16 weeks of the site visit. In this case a Planning Officer from the Government Office for the South West carried out the site visit on 3 September 2004, and he submitted his report on 9 November, with the decision being issued on 26 November, some 12 weeks after the site visit. While Government Offices would hope to be able to issue decisions within a shorter timescale whenever possible, this cannot always be achieved. In this particular case I do not consider there was any undue delay in determining the appeal.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reason the inspector who carried out a site visit in connection with a tree preservation order appeal at 8 Langley Close, St. Ives, Ringwood, Hampshire on 3 September 2004 did not retain any notes taken during his visit; and if he will make a statement on the standard practice required in relation to the retention of site notes by the Planning Inspectorate. [219775]

Keith Hill: The inspector who held the site visit on 3 September was a Planning Officer from the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). Any notes that he took following the site visit were incorporated directly into the body of his report. He therefore decided that there was no longer any need to retain his notes once the appeal decision including the report had been issued. Government Office officials carrying out such site visits will in future be instructed to retain their site visit notes at least until the period for challenging the decision in the High Court has expired.

It is the standard practice for Inspectors of the Planning Inspectorate to retain their notes of any site visit for one year.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that stable resources are available to local government. [219196]

Mr. Raynsford: The local government Public Service Agreement targets require the improved delivery and value for money of local services. A key part of this will be to ensure that authorities are able to plan their budgets effectively. The introduction of the three-year settlements for individual authorities from 2006–07 onwards, as announced in Spending Review 2004, will greatly assist this process. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on the implementation of three-year settlements and will announce the outcome later this summer.

It is also clear that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister should review some aspects of the grant distribution system before the 2006–07 settlement in order to ensure that the system continues to distribute grant in a fair way between authorities. We will be conducting this review in partnership with local government.

The existing spending plans for 2006–07 onwards provide continued investment in local government which reflect the work to identify pressures and enable local government to deliver high quality services with low council tax increases. It builds on the 33 per cent. real terms increase in Government grant which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been able to provide to councils since taking Office. We will continue to work closely with local government to ensure that levels of central grant are based on a realistic assessment of the service commitment pressures faced by councils.

PRIME MINISTER

Miscarriages of Justice

Mr. Chope: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 194W, on Miscarriages of Justice, if he will place a copy of the transcript in the Library. [220082]

The Prime Minister: Due to an administrative error, the date to which I referred should have been Wednesday 9 February. I have placed a copy of the press briefing in the Libraries of the House.

Official Visits

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the towns and cities in the UK he visited in 2004 in an official capacity; and what the purpose of the visit was in each case. [220229]

The Prime Minister: In 2004, I undertook the following official visits within the UK:

Date (2004)	*Destination*
8 January	London
16 January	London
22–23 January	Hexham
	Newburn
	Newcastle
29 January	Rickmansworth
9 February	London
12 February	London
23 February	Birmingham
	Edgbaston
24 February	London
26–27 February	Inverness
4–5 March	Teesside university
11–12 March	Liverpool
	Manchester
18 March	Enfield
	Milton Keynes
5 April	London
19 April	London
2 May	Cardiff
4 May	Leeds
13–14 May	Coventry
	Birmingham
	Gateshead
	Newcastle upon Tyne
	Bishop Auckland
	Chesterfield
27–28 May	London
	Manchester
	Bury
	Sheffield
7 June	Birmingham
	Wolverhampton
	Wednesbury
15 June	London
7 July	London
19 July	London
22 July	Durham
	Coventry
31 August	Harlow
1 September	London
4–5 September	Scotland
9–10 September	Middlesbrough
13 September	Brighton
16–18 September	London
	Kent
25 September	Crawley
	Brighton
18 October	Coventry
	Birmingham
21–22 October	Sedgewick
	Stockton
	Tees Valley
	Shildon
9 November	Falconwood Green
	Welling
13 November	Liverpool
25 November	Slough
2–3 December	Edinburgh
8 December	Belfast
9, 10 December	Sheffield

My visits covered a range of matters including health, education, criminal justice, the economy and meeting current and former members of the armed forces. I also travel regularly to my constituency.

I travel making the most efficient and cost-effective arrangements. My travel arrangements are in accordance with the arrangements for official travel set out in Chapter 7 of the Ministerial Code, and the accompanying guidance document, "Travel by Ministers".

The Progressive Consensus

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the role of Government employees in the preparation of The Progressive Consensus; and if he will make a statement. [220232]

The Prime Minister: I have regular meetings and discussions with ministerial colleagues and others on a wide range of subjects. Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Atomic Waste

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much atomic waste was produced in the UK in each of the last five years; and how much atomic waste in total was disposed of in the UK in each year. [216938]

Mr. Morley: The 2001 UK Radioactive Waste Inventory, the latest in the series published, gives predictions of the annual volumes of waste produced in the period 2001 to 2005 (The actual figures for 2001 to 2004 will be published in the 2004 Inventory, due out in autumn 2005). The first table presents the production broken down into the three main levels of waste i.e. High, Intermediate and Low, which are abbreviated to HLW, ILW and LLW. Varying amounts of the predicted annual amounts of waste have now been conditioned; in order to aid comparison the numbers presented are for all the waste in its conditioned form, expressed in cubic metres.

Cubic metres

Waste level	*Predicted arisings 2001*	*Predicted arisings 2002*	*Predicted arisings 2003*	*Predicted arisings 2004*	*Predicted arisings 2005*
HLW	68	66	66	66	64
ILW	3,026	3,671	3,678	3,754	3,648
LLW	12,447	12,919	12,574	13,579	10,976

The HLW and ILW produced will have been stored and most of the LLW will have been disposed of routinely. The predicted disposal volumes of LLW, expressed in cubic metres, are set out in the following table:

Waste LLW

Predicted disposal	*Cubic metres*
2001	10,360
2002	10,834
2003	10,676
2004	11,759
2005	9,396

Bio-energy/Biofuels

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received from the biomass study group on *(a)* barriers to developing bio-energy and *(b)* how barriers to developing bio-energy might be overcome. [219515]

Mr. Morley: The Biomass Task Force issued its first progress commentary on 14 February. The commentary has been sent to stakeholders and can also be accessed on the Defra website.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on further fiscal measures to encourage the production of biofuels. [217530]

Mr. Morley: The Department is in regular contact with Treasury Ministers to discuss a whole range of matters related to energy and environmental policy. In addition, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, meets regularly with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a wide range of matters that affect the business of the Department.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's policy is in respect of areas of grazing where it is too dangerous to graze cattle due to the high density of the badger population and the associated dangers of badger-to-cattle transmission of tuberculosis. [214164]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has published guidance advising farmers to minimise direct contact between cattle and badgers, and contact between cattle and places where badgers may have left saliva, urine or faeces.

The booklet "TB in Cattle—Reducing the Risk", includes the following guidance for farmers:

identify areas which badgers use

fence off the areas around badger setts to keep cattle out

fence off badger dung pits

avoid grass from badger latrines and field margins when cutting silage

This advisory booklet has been available to farmers, free of charge, since 1999.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will undertake research to determine what measures would be needed to alter public perception of the culling of TB-infected badgers in order to facilitate a comprehensive culling programme of TB-infected badgers. [214708]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra wants to achieve a better understanding of the views of the wider public so these can be reflected in policy development. Public opinion around badger culling is one area of interest. Defra strives to ensure that its policies are based on the best available scientific evidence, and that they are cost effective and sustainable. Any future decision on badger culling will need to take account of the way the general public perceives badgers and acceptability of culling them to control TB in cattle.

Defra-commissioned research at Reading University will give some assessment of societal values ascribed to changes in badger populations. We will consider the report of this work, expected shortly, and undertake further work on informing and assessing public opinion.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress on tests for a vaccine for bovine TB using the BCG vaccine; and whether she expects the vaccine to be applicable to badgers. [218767]

Mr. Bradshaw: The research programme for producing an effective vaccine remains broadly in line with the timetable outlined in the Krebs report (1997). This estimated:

Years 1–5: Identification of candidate vaccines and development of differential diagnostic tests;

Years 5–10: Experimental investigations of vaccination protocols;

Years 10–15: Field trials.

Vaccination of cattle with BCG remains a problem because it affects skin test readings. Work is in progress on a differential diagnostic test. The sequencing of the *Mycobacterium bovis* genome in 2002 has led to the development of an experimental test to distinguish between vaccinated and unvaccinated cattle, but more work is required to validate the test under field conditions. Defra is funding research at the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, in collaboration with New Zealand workers, to experimentally vaccinate cattle with BCG and to differentiate vaccinated animals from infected animals. The current project is due to end in 2005. New research proposals taking the work forward on new candidate vaccines and neonatal vaccination are currently being appraised by independent referees. Future plans to look at the performance of vaccine candidates under natural infection conditions are also being drawn up.

Collaborative research with the Republic of Ireland has shown that parenteral BCG vaccination provides a degree of protection against experimental challenge with *M. bovis* in badgers. Some work has already been done on requirements for a field trial. Further work is still required on vaccine delivery, immunological monitoring of effective immunisation of badgers and effect of exposure of non-target species. This work is addressed in the current research requirements for 2005.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will reconsider the decision to end the reactive element in the Bourne/Krebs bovine TB trials. [218768]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no evidence to suggest that the resumption of reactive culling would reduce the incidence of bovine TB in cattle. The ISO has continued to collect data from the reactive areas and recent analyses are consistent with results presented in late 2003, with the confidence limits providing no evidence for a beneficial effect of the reactive strategy over the time scale under study. Further detailed investigations based on the distribution of TB breakdowns in space and time are under way to investigate whether the observed increased incidence was linked to proximity to reactive culling. In addition, as further TB incidence data are obtained, the ISG will continue to analyse data from reactive areas. If the TB incidence rates in reactive and survey areas become more similar over time, this finding would indicate that the observed increase in TB breakdowns in reactive areas, compared with survey-only areas, was associated with reactive culling.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether pockets of M. bovis infection reported in wild deer in the Dulverton area of Exmoor are related locally to high levels of endemic infection in badgers; and whether isolates of M. bovis from both species share the same spoligotype. [214134]

Mr. Bradshaw: During the period 1972 to 1998, none of the badgers from the Dulverton area that were examined by MAFF/Defra were found to be positive for bovine tuberculosis. The release of information relating to the TB status of badger carcases since the start of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial is not being made publicly available on the advice of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB.

Environment and Development (Ministerial Meetings)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the environment and development ministerial meeting scheduled for 17 and 18 March in Buxton, providing details of *(a)* the agenda and what aspects of the impact of climate change upon development will be discussed, *(b)* which environmental non-governmental organisations have been invited and will attend and *(c)* what the desired outcomes of the meeting are. [218928]

Mr. Morley: On 17 and 18 March, the Secretary of State for International Development and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will co-host the first G8 meeting of Environment and Development Ministers. The agenda will include action to tackle illegal logging, Africa and climate change, the recommendations from the Commission for Africa Report, biodiversity and Humanitarian Aid Reform.

The Africa and climate change item will examine recommendations made in the "African Climate Report" published by my Department and the Department for International Development in December 2004 and seek agreement on ways in which these should be addressed.

There will be a parallel outreach session, which will report back to the ministerial. A wide range of civil society groups, including environmental non-governmental originations from across G8 countries have been invited.

The desired outcomes will be action by G8 partners to tackle illegal logging, and on Africa and climate change to highlight the importance of measures to reduce Africa's vulnerability to climate change.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her statement on 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1368, on climate change and the environment, which 20 countries will attend the round table discussion for Ministers; what the *(a)* date and *(b)* location of the meeting will be; what the agenda is for the meeting; what aspects of the impact of climate change upon development will be discussed; which environmental

non-governmental organisations (i) have been invited and (ii) will be attending; and what the desired outcomes of the meeting are. [218929]

Mr. Morley: The Energy and Environment Ministerial Roundtable will take place at the Brewery, London, on 15–16 March 2005. The invited countries are: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, the United States and the European Commission. At this point, most countries have confirmed attendance by at least one minister and in some cases two.

In addition to participation by ministers, selected senior figures from international and non-governmental organisations concerned with energy and environmental issues have been invited.

The round table will consider the challenges and opportunities for investment in sustainable and secure energy systems in a lower carbon world. The sessions will cover national and international policy drivers, national experience of and priorities for the development and diffusion of technology and how to accelerate these and the deployment lower carbon energy systems. The roundtable will focus on the key issues that were identified by national experts during the preparatory meeting, including sustainable energy and its development context.

This new and innovative forum will enable us to share valuable experience and look at new ways of working together in the development and deployment of sustainable energy systems.

Emissions Trading (Brick Industry)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the consequences for the brick industry if the European Commission does not ratify Phase 1 of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [219545]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The brick industry have made several representations on the effects of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme on their industry and these have been taken fully into account in our negotiations with the Commission on temporary exclusion from the scheme for Climate Change Agreement participants. If the Commission do not approve the UK's application to temporarily exclude Climate Change Agreement participants from Phase 1 of the EU scheme, the brick industry will join the scheme from 1 January 2005.

If the European Commission did not approve the amended UK National Allocation Plan for Phase I (2005–7) of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, the Government would be unable to issue free allowances to installations covered by the Scheme. This would include operators of installations in the brick industry.

Government are continuing its dialogue with the Commission with a view to finding a solution which addresses the concerns of both sides and which will enable allowances to be issued as soon as possible. While we cannot give a firm date at this stage, the Government envisage that the issuance of free allowances will be made well in advance of the deadline for surrendering allowances of 30 April 2006.

Energy from Waste

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the use of energy from waste. [217139]

Mr. Morley: Energy from waste is a sustainable waste management option that offers a solution for dealing with the residual waste that will be left after steps have been taken to reuse, recycle or compost waste.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many companies have not yet been paid by her Department for work on the foot and mouth epidemic; [216563]

(2) how many companies have gone to court to seek payment for work done during the foot and mouth epidemic; and how many have been settled *(a)* in and *(b)* out of court. [216565]

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many claims arising from the foot and mouth outbreak lodged with the Department are awaiting payment. [218770]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer my hon. Friend to pages 36 and 37 of the National Audit Office report "Foot and Mouth Disease: Applying the Lessons—Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General HC184 Session 2004–2005 2 February, 2005".

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which companies have disputed claims outstanding from the foot and mouth epidemic; and what amounts are involved in each case. [216564]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is neither appropriate nor fair to identify the names of contractors with whom the Department is in dispute given that these are ongoing disputes, which are being concluded either through litigation or alternative disputes resolution procedures, or which are the subject of investigation by the relevant authorities.

Although some contractors and their representatives have sought to publicise their disputes through the media for reasons unknown to the Department, others have chosen not to do so and no useful purpose is likely to be served by the identity of contractors being divulged in these circumstances.

Gangmasters (Licensing) Act

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to take action against those gangmasters who contravene provisions of the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004. [218459]

Alun Michael: The Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 gives the Secretary of State responsibility for enforcing the criminal offences set out in the legislation. These

include the offences of operating as a gangmaster without a licence, using an unlicensed gangmaster and the possession or use of false documents.

These offences will be brought into effect once gangmasters who require a licence have had the opportunity to apply for one. It will also be necessary for the Secretary of State to make regulations clarifying the checks labour users must make to establish the due diligence defence created by the Act. If the Gangmasters Licensing Authority makes early progress on specifying licence conditions and establishing the new licensing arrangements after its anticipated establishment on 1 April, it is expected that the new offences will be introduced mid 2006.

A new team of enforcement officers will be appointed by the Secretary of State to enforce the criminal offences created under the Act. Enforcement officers will have wide ranging powers including the power of arrest, the right of entry and the power to obtain information or the production of records.

The Act gives the Gangmasters Licensing Authority responsibility for ensuring that licence holders comply with the provisions of a licence issued to them. The Authority will set out how it intends to undertake its compliance role once it is formally established.

Institute for Animal Health

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she had made of the effects the restructuring at the Institute for Animal Health will have on research into *(a)* BSE, *(b)* milk quality, *(c)* streptococcal pathogenicity, *(d)* pestiviruses, *(e)* porcine immunology, *(f)* avian pox virus, *(g)* avian leucosis, *(h)* Marek's disease and *(i)* respiratory syncitial virus. [219738]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* In line with the evolving needs and requirements placed on such an institute the IAH management have developed a five-year strategy, within which decisions have been reached no longer to continue certain areas of work. This is to reflect changing priorities in part governed by financial constraints. Throughout the process of strategic planning the IAH management have been mindful to ensure that the Institute will be able both to maintain the depth of its research activity and to develop the financial capability to work on important new areas of science as they arise.

With respect to work on BSE and more general TSE research, this remains of critical importance to the Institute, with approximately 20 per cent. of the research capability devoted to this area. The changes being made will not have a significant impact on the Institute's ability to deliver its core science around TSEs.

In areas where it has been decided to cease or reduce work then there will inevitably be some effects but research on these subjects continues to be done by other groups in the UK or elsewhere.

Lard (North-west)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent estimate she has made of shop stock levels of lard in *(a)* Chorley, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* the north-west of England. [218937]

Alun Michael: The Government does not collect any figures on shop stock levels of lard.

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what contribution her Department has made to the United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and what use she expects to make of the Assessment once it is published; and if she will make a statement. [218903]

Mr. Morley: In August 2004, the Department co-ordinated views on the second review of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) to the MA Secretariat from Government Departments and agencies. Defra also submitted reviews on the final synthesis reports in December 2004. In addition, a scientific adviser from my Department was a lead author of the chapter on policy implications (Volume II, Chapter 14).

In 2001, DETR contributed £42,100 to the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) to enable the recruitment of a member of the MA technical support staff and to initiate assessment work for the MA. The MA will be published in stages. The overall findings of the report will be launched in London, and other major world cities simultaneously, on 30 March 2005. Seven synthesis reports, up to 120 pages each, will be published between April and September 2005. Four technical reports, 500–800 pages each, will be available in July 2005. An additional set of about 16 sub-global assessments will also be released separately from late 2005 to 2006. My Department will study and make use of relevant information as the different sections become available.

The Assessment is expected to contribute to the process established by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for assessing progress towards the target set by the World Summit on Sustainable Development—to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

Salmon Farming

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the value of the farmed salmon market was in the last year for which figures are available. [218932]

Mr. Bradshaw: The data are not held by the Department. However the farmed salmon industry in the UK is estimated to have generated some £300 million of turnover at "farm gate" value in 2002.

Energy Efficiency (SMEs)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons the interest-free loan scheme for small and medium-sized enterprises that install energy efficiency measures is cash-limited. [216475]

Mr. Morley: The Carbon Trust offers interest-free unsecured loans of between £5,000 and £100,000 to small and medium-sized businesses who are investing in an energy-saving project. The amount of money that can be offered under the loan scheme is governed by European "de minimis" state aid exemptions which limit the amount of state aid that an organisation can receive in a three-year period. The Carbon Trust is a private company, and decisions regarding the provision of funding by the Carbon Trust is a matter for its board.

Supermarkets (Dairy Prices)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with supermarkets on prices for dairy products paid to farmers; and if she will make a statement. [218055]

Alun Michael: Price negotiations between producers and processors, or processors and supermarkets, are a private commercial matter in which the Government cannot and should not get involved, provided competition rules are respected. However, Ministers frequently meet representatives from all parts of the dairy supply chain and are therefore aware of the issues. For example, my noble Friend Lord Whitty will chair the next Dairy Supply Chain Forum meeting on 2 March 2005. The Supermarket Code of Conduct is currently the subject of investigation by the Office of Fair Trading, which is expected to report shortly.

Warm Front (Christchurch)

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the waiting time is for Warm Front heating installations in Christchurch constituency. [218653]

Mr. Morley: The target for completion of heating installations under Warm Front is 119 working days. The average waiting time for a Warm Front heating installation in the Christchurch constituency currently stands at 82 working days.

Wine

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) for what reasons the UK is withdrawing from the International Organisation of Wine and Vine (OIV); and by what mechanisms UK wine growers will be represented on the OIV in future; [217522]

(2) what assessment has been made of the benefits to the UK wine market of membership of the International Organisation of Wine and Vine; [217523]

(3) what the cost to the UK of belonging to the International Organisation of Wine and Vine was in the last year for which figures are available. [217524]

Alun Michael: The costs of the UK belonging to the International Organisation of Wine and Vine (OIV) have been variable and have depended on the number of proposals under consideration within the organisation, the degree of UK involvement, the resources attached to that involvement, as well as the level of annual membership fees that have been set. Where the OIV chooses to hold its meetings, for example France or Australia, will also affect the cost. In 2003–04, the latest year for which figures are available, the meetings attended by the UK were in Paris alone, and the costs estimated to be about £25,000. A cost-benefit analysis of UK membership of OIV is not available but the UK's ability to produce, import and trade wine is not conditional on membership. Proposals emerging from OIV need to be implemented in European Community law in order to have practical effect in the UK, so our withdrawal from OIV will continue to ensure a consequence of reprioritisation of the Department's budgetary resources to focus public spending where it is most needed to meet Government objectives. The decision will not interfere with the UK continuing to play an active role in the development of European Community policy and legislation on wine and the interests of the UK wine industry and consumers are fully represented at that level.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH

Advertising

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many advertising contracts, and to what value, were signed by his Department in the periods *(a)* 1 September 2004 to 1 March 2005 and *(b)* 1 September 2003 to 1 March 2004, broken down by (i) television, (ii) radio, (iii) press, (iv) direct mail and (v) other advertising. [219352]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* No advertising contracts were signed during the periods *(a)* 1 September 2004 and 1 March 2005 and *(b)* 1 September 2003 to 1 March 2004.

Afghanistan

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many women have been appointed in the Afghan cabinet; and what posts they hold. [220081]

Mr. Rammell: President Karzai announced his Cabinet on 23 December 2004. It included two women: Dr. Masooda Jalal (Minister of Women's Affairs) and Sediqa Balkhi (Minister of Martyrs and Disabled).

Bangladesh

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Bangladesh concerning the safety of British nationals resident in Bangladesh. [218631]

Mr. Alexander: We have serious concerns about the security and law and order situation in Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi Government need to take effective action to bring those responsible for violence to justice. I made these points to the Bangladeshi Prime Minister in Dhaka on 21 December. The British high commissioner maintains a regular dialogue with the Bangladeshi authorities on these issues at a senior level, including on the implications for the safety of British citizens.

The large majority of recent attacks have been directed at political and civil society rather than against British or other foreign nationals. There is a danger, however, that British citizens could get caught up in the growing number of indiscriminate attacks. We monitor the situation closely, our high commission maintains close contacts with the British community and we update our travel advice on a regular basis, most recently on 14 February. But we do not advise against travel to the country, other than against all but essential travel to the Chittagong Hill Tracts because of the risk of being caught up in clashes between rival tribal groups, settlers and the military in that area.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment the High Commission in Bangladesh has made of the security situation in that country; and if he will make a statement. [218632]

Mr. Alexander: We have serious concerns about the security situation in Bangladesh. Attacks using explosive devices have been taking place in locations throughout the country with increasing frequency. Some of these attacks have been targeted at high profile political gatherings; others have targeted cinemas, shrines, cultural events, markets and most recently the offices of NGOs. There has also been a marked increase in the number of discoveries of illegal arms and explosives. We monitor the situation carefully and make our concerns clear to the Bangladeshi authorities. I did so with the Bangladeshi Prime Minister in Dhaka on 21 December. The British High Commissioner maintains a regular dialogue on these issues with the Bangladeshi authorities at a senior level, emphasising the need to address the security situation effectively, with full regard to human rights, in order to bring to justice those responsible for such attacks.

Burma

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Burma about human rights in that country; and if he will make a statement. [220228]

Mr. Alexander: I met the Burmese Ambassador on 29 November 2004 and pressed for political reform, full respect for human rights and the need for all groups in Burma, including ethnic groups, to play a full part in national reconciliation.

The UK works closely with its international partners to promote human rights in Burma, and fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary General's Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro.

Human rights violations have been highlighted in successive UK co-sponsored resolutions on Burma in the United Nations General Assembly and in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The UK played a key role in drafting last year's UN General Assembly Human Rights Resolution on Burma. The Resolution, adopted by the UN in December, condemned the many human rights abuses in the country, including against ethnic groups.

Our Ambassador in Rangoon has drawn to the attention of the Burmese Foreign Minister the serious concerns expressed by hon. Members and Peers of both Houses about the question of human rights in Burma.

We will continue to raise our concerns at every suitable opportunity.

Cambodia

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to promote *(a)* democratic pluralist governance and *(b)* civil society in Cambodia. [218181]

Mr. Alexander: Strengthening governance and civil society remains a key part of UK bilateral assistance for Cambodia. The UK is helping the Cambodian Government undertake critical reforms that aid this process particularly in areas such as transnational crime, public financial management, health services and strengthening local governance.

For example, the UK is giving ongoing support to the Government to enable the elected Commune Councils to become increasingly involved in local planning of infrastructure and local services. This support also extends to district level where annual commune plans are shared between Communes, Local Government and Civil Society. We will continue to strengthen these important steps in local governance and encourage greater involvement of Civil Society.

We hope that the political will needed to implement the necessary reform will be forthcoming. I raised this issue with the Cambodian Minister of Justice, Mr. Ang Vong Vathana, on 27 January. Our ambassador in Phnom Penh also raised it with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on 1 February.

We will continue to encourage the Government of Cambodia to take concrete action towards reform and provide the practical support to help them do so.

Departmental Staff (Cancer)

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218582]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) considers every case based on individual need. Our occupational health doctors advise on what adjustments should be considered. Both in the UK and overseas, we encourage flexible working practices and other adjustments during cancer treatment. The Sickness Absence policy is in keeping with Health and Safety Executive best practice and, once in remission, cancer patients can benefit from the FCO Return to Work Programme which allows for gradual return (at full pay) to full-time work.

The FCO follows general civil service practice on generous provision of sick absence on full (six months) and half (six months) pay. In some cases, officers who are still unable to work after 12 months may receive pay at an abated rate until their return to work.

The FCO also has a 24-hour, free Employee Assistance Programme available to all employees worldwide which provides a range of advice and support, from psychological support through to practical advice on entitlements and care arrangements.

China (Military Technology)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans there are to develop a transatlantic consultative mechanism to prevent the transfer of sensitive military technology from the EU to China. [218385]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* In December 2004 the European Council discussed the EU Arms Embargo on China. The UK and partners invited the Luxembourg Presidency of the EU to take forward work on the review of the embargo. This is ongoing. Until the review process is complete, the Government continue fully to implement the Arms Embargo.

The Government are in favour of dialogue and consultations with EU partners and other close allies which might provide them with more information on which to take defence export licensing decisions under the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. This principle applies to China as it does to any other country. There have been no formal discussions or proposals within the EU about a transatlantic consultation mechanism with respect to China, although there have been contacts between officials in several member states on this subject.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has received from his EU counterparts regarding the development of a transatlantic consultative mechanism to prevent the transfer of sensitive military technology from the EU to China; [218386]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts regarding the development of a transatlantic consultative mechanism to prevent the transfer of sensitive military technology from the EU to China. [218388]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The Government are in favour of dialogue and consultations with EU partners and other close allies which might provide them with more information on which to take defence export licensing decisions under the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. This principle applies to China as it does to any other country. There have been no formal discussions or proposals within the EU about a transatlantic consultation mechanism with respect to China, although there have been contacts between officials in several member states on this subject.

Correspondence

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to reply to the letter of 6 December 2004, reference 184348/04, from the hon. Member for West Chelmsford. [219529]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* I apologise to the hon. Member for the delay in replying. A reply to his letter of 6 December was not issued due to a misunderstanding about whether the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or the Department for Constitutional Affairs would respond. A reply will be sent forthwith.

Europe Day

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guidance has been issued to UK embassies in the EU regarding the celebration of Europe Day on 9 May. [212382]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* None.

Indonesia

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of Papuans killed in civil conflict in the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [218845]

Mr. Alexander: We are not aware of any official figures for those killed in Papua over the last 10 years.

Iran

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the written answer of 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 621W, on Iran, and the oral answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Jeremy Corbyn) of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1496, what the E3 have agreed with Iran following the *(a)* working groups on political/security issues meeting in Geneva on 9 to 11 February and *(b)* working group on technology co-operation meeting on 8 February. [219564]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* These working groups, and one on nuclear issues, were set up under the agreement between Iran and the UK, France and Germany on 15 November 2004. Their aim is to agree long-term arrangements for Iran's nuclear programme based on objective guarantees that the programme is exclusively for peaceful purposes; and they provide for co-operation in other areas. The groups meet every three or four weeks in Geneva. The group on political and security issues has discussed, for example, export controls, counter-narcotics co-operation and other subjects of mutual interest. The working group on technology and co-operation is looking at issues in a range of economic sectors. But in view of the need to build mutual confidence and trust, the two sides have agreed not to disclose details of the discussions, which are continuing.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many officials in his Department have tendered their resignation citing the war in Iraq as their reason for doing so. [212343]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* Two Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials have tendered their resignation citing the war in Iraq as the reason for doing so.

Lebanon

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Lebanese Government about the treatment of Palestinian refugees. [216075]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* Our ambassador in Beirut raises the situation of the Palestinian refugees with the Lebanese authorities on a regular basis. In the context of the right of return for all Palestinians, subject to final status negotiations, Lebanon restricts Palestinian refugees from settling permanently in Lebanon. We have raised our concerns that this policy places restrictions on the civil and social rights of Palestinian refugees by limiting, for example, their access to education and employment.

North Korea

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage the re-establishment of the six-country discussions on north Korea. [218576]

Mr. Rammell: The Government have no direct involvement in the six-party talks process. We follow developments closely as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, as a Depositary State of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and as a member of the European Union. We are also in direct and regular contact with all the parties involved in the six-party talks process, including the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We have urged the north Korean authorities to reconsider their suspension and we very much hope that the talks will be resumed as soon as possible.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the trend in the level of suppression of dissidents in north Korea in recent months; and what recent discussions he has had with the Chinese Government on this matter. [218577]

Mr. Rammell: We have no information on the level of suppression of dissidents in north Korea in recent months. We have raised the matter of north Korean refugees in China on a number of occasions with the Chinese Government, most recently during the UK/China Human Rights Dialogue in Beijing in November 2004. We continue to urge China to observe its obligations under the 1951 Convention.

Russia

Mr. Benton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what programmes his Department has in place to encourage the establishment of democratic institutions in Russia. [218872]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has spent over £900,000 this financial year on projects that cover democracy, human rights and governance issues in Russia.

One of the larger projects, for example, aims to improve the interaction between local government and local media. Another is contributing to the process of reform of regional-level public administration, intended to improve standards in public life.

Other projects include training for small independent media companies and a project to liberalize new legislation on alternative civilian service for conscientious objectors.

Funding for the financial year 2005–06 is currently under discussion. The focus in Russia will be on increasing respect for the rule of law and freedom of expression, both of which are critical to developing democracy and civil society.

Student Visas

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of charges for applications for student visas on the number of overseas students applying to universities in Scotland. [220331]

Mr. Mullin: The fees for applying for entry clearance in order to study in the UK are set at £36 in order to recover the cost of processing the application without burdening the taxpayer. They have not risen since 2002 and are currently under review.

While statistics are available only for entry clearance to the UK as a whole and not by area, applications to study in the UK have increased year by year since 2000. I refer the hon. Member to the reply below. (UIN 220332).

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many applications were made for student visas to study in each country of the UK in each year since 2000; and how many student visas were issued in each year since 2000, broken down by country of study in each year. [220332]

Mr. Mullin: Statistics are available only for entry clearance to the UK as a whole and not by area.

As of March 2001, UK visas, the department responsible for entry clearance matters arising overseas, began providing statistics by financial year. Before this, statistics were provided by calendar year.

The number of those applying to study in the UK and issued entry clearance since 2000 is as follows:

Number

	Applications received	*Issued*
January 2000–December 2001	125,239	99,559
March 2001–April 2002	151,524	121,466
March 2002–April 2003	181,905	128144
March 2003–April 2004	225,239	146,736

These figures are publicly available on the UK visas website (www.ukvisas.gov.uk). Figures for 2004–2005 are not yet available.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was raised from charges for applications for student visas from students studying or seeking to study in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Scotland in each year since 2000. [220333]

Mr. Mullin: Statistics are available only for entry clearance to the UK as a whole and not by area.

The overseas entry clearance operation is required to function on a full cost recovery basis and is therefore non-profitable. The student visa fee is calculated to ensure that it covers the cost of the work involved in processing the application. The charge for a student visa application is currently £36 irrespective of factors such as the duration of the course, where the student applied

for entry clearance overseas or where they intend to study in the UK. The fee was last raised in 2002 and the level of visa fees is currently under review.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to remove charges for student visa applications for students studying or seeking to study in Scotland. [220334]

Mr. Mullin: No. Visa fees are set in order to recover the costs of issuing visas overseas. The overseas entry clearance operation is not funded from general taxation but operates on a full cost recovery basis. Visa fees are related to the amount of work involved in issuing them.

UN Security Council (Japan)

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of Japan's aspiration to become a member of the UN Security Council; and if he will make a statement. [218552]

Mr. Rammell: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has frequently made clear, most recently during his visit to Japan on 19–20 January, we support Japanese aspirations to become a permanent member of an enlarged Security Council.

Japan is currently a non-permanent member of the Security Council and we are working closely with our Japanese colleagues.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Staff (Cancer)

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218584]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has a range of measures in place to assist employees who are sick with cancer or have other serious illness. These include paid certificated sick leave of up to six months on full pay and up to a further six months on half pay, depending on the circumstances; access to our Welfare and Counselling and Occupational Health Services, and the possibility of phased arrangements for a return to work following any period of prolonged absence.

Iran

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department plans to provide for victims of the recent earthquake in Iran. [218384]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member for Newark to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mr. Simmonds) on 1 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1065W.

Mine Clearance

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development in what countries his Department is funding mine clearance. [220353]

Hilary Benn: During the current financial year (2004–05), DFID is supporting bilateral demining projects in the following countries:

Afghanistan
Angola
Cambodia
Georgia and Abkhazia
Iraq
Laos
N. Caucasus
Somaliland
Sri Lanka
Sudan

Palestine

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the amount of Palestinian *(a)* arable land and *(b)* water resources which are now on the Israeli side of the separation barrier. [218725]

Hilary Benn: UN reports last year estimated that around 157,000 acres of land, some 11.5 per cent. of the West Bank and home to over 93,000 Palestinians would lie between the completed separation barrier and the 1949 Armistice Line (excluding East Jerusalem). This land includes some of the West Bank's richest agricultural land and covers part of the aquifer system which is a major source of water resources for the West Bank. The barrier also affects Palestinian access to groundwater wells in the West Bank which had previously supplied water for both drinking and agriculture. Precise figures on this are not available. The proposed route of the barrier has recently been altered by the Israeli Cabinet in response to calls from the international community and the Israeli judicial system to minimise the impact on Palestinian livelihoods. There has been no authoritative analysis yet of the impact of the changes. While some improvement is expected there will continue to be inevitable and significant disruption to the lives of Palestinians living near the route of the barrier.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to deliver improved effectiveness of UK and international support for conflict prevention by addressing long-term structural causes of conflict, managing regional and national tension and violence, and supporting post-conflict reconstruction, where the UK can make a significant contribution, in particular Africa, Asia, Balkans and the Middle East, by 2008 will be met; [219568]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to improve trading opportunities for developing countries and a more competitive Europe will be met by 2008; [219571]

(3) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that the EU secures significant reductions in EU and world trade barriers by 2008 will be met; [219572]

(4) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that 90 per cent. of eligible heavily indebted poor countries committed to poverty reduction that have reached decision point by the end of 2005 received irrevocable debt relief by the end of 2008 will be met. [219576]

Hilary Benn: These four questions relate to targets in the Department for International Development's Public Service Agreement (PSA) for the period 2005 to 2008. This PSA will be implemented from 1 April 2005. Progress against the targets will first be assessed in DFID's Autumn Performance Report 2005 (which we expect to be published in December 2005).

DFID also has targets relating to conflict prevention, trade and debt relief in its 2003–06 PSA. Progress against these targets has been assessed twice-yearly in DFID's Autumn Performance Reports and Departmental Reports. The most recent analysis of performance against DFID's PSA targets was published in the Autumn Performance Report in December 2004; this is available in both hard copy in the Library of the House of Commons and electronically on DFID's website (www.dfid.gov.uk). Updated assessments of performance against all 2003–06 PSA targets and sub-targets will be provided in DFID's Departmental Report 2005, which we expect to be published in late April.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of EC Overseas Development Assistance to low-income countries from 38 per cent. to 70 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219570]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that 75 per cent. of eligible heavily indebted poor countries committed to poverty reduction receive irrevocable debt relief by 2006 will be met; [219575]

(3) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of his Department's bilateral programmes evaluated as successful by 2006 will be met; [219579]

(4) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of his Department's bilateral programme going to low-income countries from 78 per cent. to 90 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219580]

(5) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to secure improved trading opportunities between the UK and developing countries by 2005 will be met; [219582]

(6) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to secure agreement to a significant reduction in trade barriers by 2005 will be met; [219583]

(7) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to work with international partners to make progress towards the UN Millennium Development Goals; [219584]

(8) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the impact of EC external programmes on poverty reduction; [219585]

(9) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the proportion of 15 to 24-year-old pregnant women with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa from 16 per cent. by 2006; [219587]

(10) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school in Asia from 87 per cent. to 94 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219588]

(11) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the proportion of people living in poverty in South Asia from 42 per cent. to 32 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219589]

(12) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the proportion of people living in poverty in sub-Saharan Africa from 48 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219590]

(13) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the ratio of girls to boys enrolled in primary school in sub-Saharan Africa from 89 per cent. to 96 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219591]

(14) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants in Asia from 39 per cent. to 57 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219592]

(15) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the cure treatment rate of tuberculosis to above 85 per cent. in Asia by 2006 will be met; [219601]

(16) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the detection rate of tuberculosis to above 70 per cent. in Asia by 2006 will be met; [219602]

(17) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the prevalence rate of HIV amongst vulnerable groups in Asia to below 5 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219603]

(18) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the under-five years mortality rate of girls and boys in Asia from 92 to 68 per 1,000 live births by 2006 will be met; [219604]

(19) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase primary school enrolment in Asia from 95 per cent. to 100 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219605]

(20) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the proportion of people living in poverty in East Asia and the Pacific from 15 per cent. to 10 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219606]

(21) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to support the effective implementation of the G8 Action plan for Africa; [219607]

(22) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the number of people whose lives are affected by violent conflict in sub-Saharan Africa by 2006; [219608]

(23) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the effectiveness of the UK contribution to conflict prevention and management in sub-Saharan Africa; [219609]

(24) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants in sub-Saharan Africa from 49 per cent. to 67 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219610]

(25) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the under-five years mortality rate of girls and boys in sub-Saharan Africa from 158 to 139 per 1,000 live births by 2006 will be met; [219611]

(26) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase primary school enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa from 58 per cent. to 72 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219612]

Hilary Benn: Details of the Department for International Development's performance against its 2003–06 Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets are published twice a year, in the Autumn Performance Report (December) and the Departmental Report (April). The most recent analysis of performance against DFID's PSA targets was published in the Autumn Performance Report in December 2004; this is available in both hard copy in the Library of the House of Commons and electronically on DFID's website (www.dfid.gov.uk). Updated assessments of performance against all the PSA targets and sub-targets will be provided in DFID's Departmental Report 2005, which we expect to be published in late April.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the effectiveness of the humanitarian aid system; [219573]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the effectiveness of the UN agencies. [219574]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development's 2003–06 Public Service Agreement does not have PSA targets as specifically worded in these questions. However, we do monitor improvements in the institutional effectiveness of 12 multilateral agencies, as an indicator of progress against the following sub-target:

"Work with international partners to make progress against the United Nations 2015 Millennium Development Goals".

The 12 agencies monitored include the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and seven United Nations agencies.

The most recent analysis of performance against this PSA sub-target was published in the Autumn Performance Report in December 2004; this is available in both hard copy in the Library of the House of Commons and electronically on DFID's website (www.dfid.gov.uk). Updated assessments of performance will be provided in DFID's Departmental Report 2005, which we expect to be published in late April.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to enhance partnership at the country and regional level to ensure that international policies support African development; [219577]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to enhance partnership at the country and regional level to increase the effectiveness of aid in African development; [219578]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the effective response of multilateral agencies to conflict and humanitarian crises; [219593]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the impact of multilateral agencies in reducing poverty. [219594]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development's 2003–2006 Public Service Agreement does not contain targets as worded in these questions. However, we do have sub-targets that relate to the subject matter of these questions:

Effective implementation of the G8 Action Plan for Africa in support of enhanced partnership at the regional and country level.

Work with international partners to make progress towards the United Nations 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

The most recent analysis of performance against these sub-targets was published in DFID's Autumn Performance Report in December 2004; this is available in both hard copy in the Library of the House of Commons and electronically on DFID's website (www.dfid.gov.uk). Updated assessments of performance against all the PSA targets and sub-targets will be provided in DFID's Departmental Report 2005, which we expect to be published in late April.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to develop evidence-based, innovative approaches to international development; [219581]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce poverty in North Africa; [219595]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce poverty in the Middle East; [219596]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce poverty in the Caribbean; [219597]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce poverty in Latin America; [219598]

(6) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce poverty in Central Asia; [219599]

(7) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce poverty in Europe. [219600]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development's 2003–2006 Public Service Agreement includes the following two objectives:

Objective III—reduce poverty in Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa.

Objective V—Develop evidence based, innovative approaches to international development.

There are no specific PSA targets attached to DFID's work under these two objectives, and therefore progress is not assessed in the same way as for the five targets. Nonetheless, DFID provides details of its work in these areas in its annual Departmental Reports, which are available in the Library of the House of Commons and on DFID's website (www.dfid.gov.uk). An updated analysis of DFID's performance in these areas will be provided in DFID's Departmental Report 2005, which we expect to be published in late April.

UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what contribution his Department has made to the United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and what use he expects to make of the Assessment once it is published; and if he will make a statement. [218905]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development (DFID) welcomes the forthcoming publication of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), the first public release of which will be at the end of March. We will look for opportunities to publicise the launch of this report internally to DFID staff.

The MA focuses on ecosystem services and how changes in ecosystem services affect human well-being. Building on this, the MA will identify policy, institutional, or technological changes that could not only improve the management of ecosystems, but also contribute to development and to long-term sustainability.

DFID has been involved in consultations with a number of MA working groups, providing comments and suggestions on the draft stages of the report. DFID also funded two co-ordinating lead authors through the provision of financial support to the International Institute for Environment and Development. One of the main financial contributors to the MA process has been the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to which the UK is currently contributing £103 million over four years from 2002. The UK is the fourth largest donor to the GEF.

DFID uses the results and recommendations of reports such as the MA to inform thinking on issues of poverty-environment linkages and the continual development and improvement of tools to support work to integrate environmental considerations into development co-operation. DFID is particularly interested in the findings of the MA that seek to highlight effective policies and interventions that respond to environmental challenges while bringing financial and livelihood benefits to the poor. Examples of these options include payment for ecosystem services such as catchment management and forest certification schemes.

DFID will also be encouraging those agencies involved in commissioning the report, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the Secretariats of the Conventions (in particular the Convention on Biodiversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change), to use the analyses and results of this major study to inform their future policy and implementation work.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will provide those who suffer from Alzheimer's Disease with entitlement to disability living allowance from the date of their diagnosis. [219425]

Maria Eagle: No. Entitlement to disability living allowance is not linked to particular disabling conditions. It depends on either the extent to which a severely disabled person has long-term personal care needs and/or walking difficulties as a result of their disabilities, or on whether a person has a progressive disease from which their death in consequence of that disease can reasonably be expected within six months. In either case, there is no entitlement to the allowance for periods before the date on which a claim for it is made.

Benefit Payments (Angus)

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are in receipt of each state benefit in total in the *(a)* Kirriemuir West, *(b)* Kirriemuir East, *(c)* Brechin West, *(d)* Brechin North Esk, *(e)* Westfield and Dean, *(f)* Forfar West, *(g)* Forfar Central, *(h)* Forfar East, *(i)* Brechin South Esk, *(j)* Montrose Ferrydean, *(k)* Montrose Central, *(l)* Montrose West, *(m)* Montrose Hillside, *(n)* Forfar South, *(o)* Letham and Friockheim, *(p)* Arbirlot and Hospitalfield, *(q)* Keptie, *(r)* Arbroath North, *(s)* Brothock, *(t)* Hayshead and Lunan, *(u)* Harbour and *(v)* Cliffburn wards of Angus council. [218155]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Benefit case loads at ward level within Angus local authority: August 2003

	Income support	Jobseeker's allowance	Attendance allowance	Disability living allowance	Incapacity benefit	State pension	Minimum income guarantee	Pension credit[1]
Kirriemuir West	75	50	90	170	125	845	95	175
Kirriemuir East	135	70	115	170	195	845	160	265
Brechin West	80	55	105	150	115	970	130	195
Brechin North Esk	110	65	120	170	160	925	135	235
Westfield and Dean	100	50	85	175	170	735	90	160
Forfar West	85	40	140	160	125	905	200	270
Forfar Central	105	50	135	155	145	810	150	250
Forfar East	145	60	105	200	200	815	155	255
Brechin South Esk	155	80	70	145	165	530	110	185
Montrose Ferryden	165	130	95	160	155	725	130	200
Montrose Central	145	145	140	170	190	875	185	290
Montrose West	140	80	100	170	150	865	125	190
Montrose Hillside	100	75	60	170	155	645	100	155
Forfar South	140	60	85	115	130	655	95	170
Letham and Friockheim	85	50	85	170	180	805	95	170
Arbirlot and Hospitalfield	120	80	90	150	145	805	95	145
Keptie	100	80	120	190	155	905	170	265
Arbroath North	80	65	70	145	145	630	90	130
Brothock	295	140	85	260	275	585	140	230
Hayshead and Lunan	150	80	80	210	220	655	125	195
Harbour	290	170	200	310	335	840	315	415
Cliffburn	210	145	140	220	240	750	195	290

[1] Pension credit caseload relates to December 2004.

Notes:

1. All wards based on census wards—those boundaries current as at April 2003.
2. All benefit case loads at ward level are rounded to a multiple of five to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.
3. Pension credit replaced MIG in October 2003.
4. Minimum income guarantee is defined as income support claimants and/or partners aged 60 or over.
5. Income support claimants are defined as claimants aged under 60 who do not have a partner aged 60 or over.
6. Incapacity benefit case load includes severe disablement allowance claimants.
7. Housing benefit and council tax benefit data are not available at local authority ward level.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 100 per cent. data August 2003

Child Support Agency

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many applicants there were for the post of Chief Executive of the Child Support Agency; where and when the post was advertised; and what the cost of advertising the post was. [218910]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* There were 56 applicants. The post of Chief Executive, Child Support Agency was advertised in *The Sunday Times* on 12 and 19 December 2004 and 9 January 2005 at a total cost of £19,500 plus VAT.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claimants of disability living allowance receive carers allowance to look after another person. [219395]

Maria Eagle: As at August 2004, there were 23,700 disability living allowance recipients who were also receiving carer's allowance.

Notes:

1. Figure taken from a 5 per cent. sample and therefore subject to sampling error.
2. Number has been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Only DLA cases in payment have been included.

Source:

DWP Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Technical Committee on Information Processing met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217888]

Mr. Pond: The EU Technical Commission met in Brussels on 23–24 September 2003 and 2–3 December 2003 (during the Italian presidency), 3–4 March 2004 and 24–25 May 2004 during the Irish presidency) and on 29–30 September 2004 and 24 November 2004 (during the Dutch presidency).

Officials from DWP attended all meetings accompanied by an Information Technology (IT) Consultant from Electronic Data Services (EDS), which is the Department's IT service provider.

The DWP officials were from International Pension Centre (part of the Pension Service) which is responsible for UK administration of the EU Social Security Co-ordination Regulations (Regulations 1408/71 and 574/72). The principal area of interest of the TC is to modernise the implementation of these regulations, particularly through the use of IT. The UK supports this objective, designed to produce efficiency savings and improve service to customers. An official from the Department of Health attended the meetings on 24–25 May 2004, 24–30 September 2004 and 24 November 2004.

A series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm 6174 laid in April 2004, Cm 6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm 6450 laid in February 2005, cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available in the Library and on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website at www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the written statement of 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 16–18WS on the Financial Assistance Scheme, what estimate he has made of the cost of providing benefits *(a)* in full, *(b)* at the level that will be provided by the Pension Protection Fund and *(c)* at 80 per cent. of the core pension entitlement, but with the same minimum and maximum benefit cut-off as applies to the Pension Protection Fund, to (i) all the members of the schemes potentially eligible for the Financial Assistance Scheme listed and (ii) the 15,000 occupational pension scheme members who will be covered by the Financial Assistance Scheme provisions for those within three years of retirement age. [212304]

Malcolm Wicks: No such estimates have been made.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Inward Investment

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many visits to Northern Ireland by potential inward investors have been organised by his Department in the past four years; and how many of these have been to South Down. [219424]

Mr. Gardiner: In the period 1 April 2001 to 31 January 2005 Invest NI organised 551 visits by potential investor companies to Northern Ireland. Of these, 373 included site visits to a number of parliamentary constituencies, with 15 viewing sites in the constituency of South Down.

Public Service Pensions

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Government's proposed changes to the local government pension scheme and the retirement age of school teachers; and what assessment was made of the consequent effect upon job prospects for newly qualified teachers. [217726]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department of the Environment will be consulting on proposed changes to the local government pension scheme in Northern Ireland in the near future. This scheme covers education and library board staff and support staff in some schools but does not extend to school teachers.

The Department of Education considers the review of the Northern Ireland Teachers' Superannuation Scheme (NITSS) as an opportunity for modernisation in a way that scheme members will value and also secures the long-term affordability of the scheme. We have therefore embarked upon a major consultation with interested parties, including individual teachers, to give them an opportunity to comment on a range of issues related to the future of the NITSS.

In particular, the Department is looking at ways of increasing the flexibilities available to teachers over the way in which they plan for their retirement because the more attractive and flexible the NITSS is as a benefit to the membership, the greater the contribution it will make to recruitment of newly qualified teachers and retention of existing members.

The consultation document can be found at www.deni.gov.uk

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215833]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W.

Because of uncertainties surrounding political developments in Northern Ireland at the time, it was not possible for the Northern Ireland Office to publish its first PSA until the 2000 Spending Review.

Water Service

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost has been of the two consultation exercises on water reform in Northern Ireland; and what the *(a)* operational and *(b)* staffing costs of the Water Reform Unit have been from the exercise. [219427]

Mr. Spellar: Total non-staffing expenditure incurred in respect of the 2003 public consultation on options for the reform of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland amounted to £120,000. Total non-staffing costs in respect of the public consultation on the Integrated Impact Assessment of proposals for Water Reform, which concludes on 4 March 2005, have not been finalised, but are expected to be in the order of £90,000.

Figures in relation to staffing costs of the Water Reform Unit in respect of these consultations could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are employed in the Water Service, broken down by *(a)* professional engineer, *(b)* technical and *(c)* administrative grades; how many there were in (i) 1998 and (ii) 2000; and how many staff have been made redundant in the Water Service in the last year, broken down by position and grade in each category. [219428]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Eddie McGrady, dated 4 March 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about how many people are employed in the Water Service, broken down by *(a)* professional engineer, *(b)* technical and *(c)* administrative grades; what the figures were in (i) 1998 and (ii) 2000; and how many staff have been made redundant in the Water Service in the last year broken down by types of positions and grade in each category (219428). I have been asked to reply as the issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

The information is not readily available in the form requested but details of the staffing levels in the 4 main staff disciplines in Water Service are set out in the following table.

Discipline	Number of staff at 31 March 1998	Number of staff at 31 March 2000	Number of staff at 31 January 2005
Professional and technology	589	579	528
Scientific	62	66	64
Administrative	397	396	444
Industrial	1,157	1,072	930
Total	2,205	2,113	1,966

No Water Services staff were made redundant in the last year.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will extend the consultation period in respect of the integrated impact assessment which was due to conclude on 4 March. [219426]

Mr. Spellar: The publication of Water Service's second Asset Management Plan does not provide grounds for extending the 14-week consultation period on the Water Reform Programme Integrated Impact Assessment which ends on 4 March 2005.

HEALTH

A & E Services (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Preston used accident and emergency services in each of the last three years. [213909]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not collected in the format requested. The information shown in the following table relates to the Lancashire teaching hospitals national health service trust, which serves Chorley and Preston. Data before 2002 relates to the two predecessor organisations—Chorley and South Ribble NHS trust and Preston acute hospitals NHS trust—which merged to form the Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust on 1 August 2002.

Attendances at accident and emergency departments at Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust

	Quarter	Total A and E attendances at Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust [1]
2004–05	2	27,637
2004–05	1	27,944
2003–04	4	24,898
2003–04	3	24,581
2003–04	2	27,235
2003–04	1	26,883
2002–03	4	23,757
2002–03	3	23,733
2002–03	2	26,272
2002–03	1	26,322

[1] Lancashire teaching hospitals includes both Royal Preston hospital and Chorley and South Ribble district general hospital. Separate data for the two hospital sites on attendances is only available prior to 2002–03.

Source:
Department of Health dataset QMAE.

2001–02

Quarter	Trust	Total A and E attendances
4	Chorley and South Ribble NHS trust	11,007
4	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS trust	14,115
3	Chorley and South Ribble NHS trust	11,442
3	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS trust	14,422
2	Chorley and South Ribble NHS trust	12,118
2	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS trust	15,289
1	Chorley and South Ribble NHS trust	12,502
1	Preston Acute Hospitals NHS trust	15,095

Source:
Department of Health dataset QMAE.

Abortion (Essex)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors specialising in abortion procedure there are in the Romford and Havering constituencies. [219370]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not held centrally.

Alcohol-related Hospital Admissions (Children)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children aged between 11 and 15 years were admitted to hospital in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London health authority owing to alcohol-related problems in each year since 2002–03. [220173]

Dr. Ladyman: Data are collected as counts of finished in-year admissions where there was a primary diagnosis or cause code for alcohol-related diseases.

The table shows the number of cases by strategic health authorities (SHAs) in London, followed by a sum of the total, which constitutes the total for London.

Counts of finished in-year admissions where there was a primary diagnosis or cause code for alcohol related diseases—age at admission: 11 to 15 years—national health service hospitals in London strategic health authorities

SHA		2002–03	2003–04
Q04	North West London	54	86
Q05	North Central London	66	63
Q06	North East London	58	80
Q07	South East London	59	69
Q08	South West London	122	140
Total	London SHAs	359	438

Notes:
1. Alcohol-related diseases
These are defined by a primary diagnosis of mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol (ICD10 code F10), alcoholic liver disease (K70) or toxic effect of alcohol (T51) or a cause code of accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol (X45).
2. Finished in-year admissions
A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Avian Flu

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the threat posed to public health in the UK by avian flu; and if she will make a statement. [219284]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 1 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1080W.

Care Homes

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has conducted into the viability of full cost recovery of regulatory costs for care homes; and whether the information collected is publicly available. [220226]

Dr. Ladyman: This issue is dealt with in a full regulatory impact assessment, which will be published shortly, alongside the relevant regulations. Copies will be placed in the Library and will be available on the Department's website.

Children's Weight

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average *(a)* weight and *(b)* waist size was of children in each of the last 10 years. [214820]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* Figures from the Health Survey for England for the average weight for children are shown in the table. Children have been included in the survey since 1995. No data on children's waist circumference has been collected as a raised waist circumference has only recently been identified as a risk factor for children.

Children's mean weight, by survey year, age and sex, children aged 0–15 with valid weight measurement

Weight (kg)

	Age								
	0	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*
Boys									
Mean									
1995	—	—	13.3	15.3	17.4	19.1	21.4	24.2	27.4
1996	—	—	14.0	15.2	17.4	19.3	21.7	24.4	27.4
1997	—	—	13.8	15.4	17.7	19.4	22.0	24.2	27.8
1998	—	—	13.3	15.3	17.4	19.3	21.6	24.3	27.5
1999	—	—	[1]—	16.7	18.2	19.3	21.9	25.5	28.5
2000	—	—	[3]14.3	15.8	17.5	19.5	22.0	24.4	27.7
2001	—	—	[3]13.43	15.3	17.1	20.5	22.1	25.2	28.8
2001[2]	[3]6.2	10.4	12.9	15.3	17.1	20.5	22.1	25.2	28.8
2002	6.4	10.7	13.0	15.5	17.8	20.0	21.9	24.4	27.7
2003	[3]6.9	10.6	13.1	15.9	17.6	19.7	22.7	25.3	28.0
Girls									
Mean									
1995	—	—	13.0	14.8	17.0	19.1	21.6	24.3	28.4
1996	—	—	13.1	14.8	17.3	20.0	21.4	24.2	27.3
1997	—	—	13.0	14.8	17.2	19.1	21.3	24.4	27.6
1998	—	—	13.4	14.9	17.3	19.3	21.7	23.7	27.5
1999	—	—	[3]13.0	15.0	16.7	19.4	22.1	24.6	28.4
2000	—	—	[1]—	14.5	17.5	19.9	21.8	24.3	27.7
2001	—	—	13.5	14.7	16.8	19.2	21.3	24.6	28.8
2001[2]	[3]5.8	9.9	12.7	14.7	16.8	19.2	21.3	24.6	28.8
2002	6.0	9.8	12.6	14.8	17.4	19.6	22.1	25.0	28.7
2003	[3]5.6	9.8	12.7	14.9	16.9	19.8	22.0	25.1	27.1

Weight (kg)

	Age						
	9	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*
Boys							
Mean							
1995	30.7	33.2	37.7	42.1	48.8	54.0	58.8
1996	30.4	33.7	37.6	42.3	46.5	53.6	60.6
1997	30.5	34.4	37.4	41.4	46.9	53.7	60.5
1998	29.8	33.8	38.1	43.6	48.8	53.3	58.7
1999	30.8	35.7	38.5	43.6	48.5	[3]53.8	60.0
2000	30.0	34.8	38.8	43.9	47.5	[3]56.4	61.7
2001	32.0	35.0	37.2	43.5	48.5	55.0	61.1
2001[2]	32.0	35.0	37.2	43.5	48.5	55.0	61.1
2002	31.1	35.9	39.4	44.0	49.2	56.7	61.9
2003	32.6	35.5	40.2	42.9	49.6	58.5	60.7
Girls							
Mean							
1995	30.0	34.5	40.8	44.7	47.7	53.1	58.5
1996	30.3	34.9	39.3	45.9	49.5	54.0	57.2
1997	30.7	34.6	38.8	45.0	50.4	55.4	59.3
1998	31.2	35.5	40.1	46.5	50.7	55.1	56.8

Weight (kg)

	Age						
	9	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*
1999	31.6	34.4	39.8	[3]46.3	49.9	[3]56.2	55.8
2000	30.1	35.6	39.9	45.3	51.4	56.2	57.9
2001	31.4	36.0	40.1	46.6	51.9	55.4	58.9
2001[2]	31.4	36.0	40.1	46.6	51.9	55.4	58.9
2002	32.2	36.4	42.5	46.0	50.9	57.5	58.3
2003	31.5	35.2	40.9	46.7	51.0	57.0	58.9

	Age								
	0	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*
Bases (weighted)									
Boys									
1995	—	—	65	140	145	147	161	143	145
1996	—	—	80	145	172	160	168	170	158
1997	—	—	109	229	226	217	230	238	258
1998	—	—	76	144	129	153	146	173	153
1999	—	—	25	64	70	74	69	82	69
2000	—	—	32	49	56	67	72	54	71
2001	—	—	51	95	149	124	132	108	112
2001[2]	51	82	91	95	149	124	132	108	112
2002	98	165	201	218	238	275	262	305	312
2003	31	89	88	75	95	96	115	117	94
Girls									
1995	—	—	61	131	177	148	157	129	139
1996	—	—	62	142	152	161	165	155	185
1997	—	—	99	232	234	232	228	246	243
1998	—	—	62	126	133	147	149	142	154
1999	—	—	37	77	74	71	75	75	63
2000	—	—	20	53	59	61	73	62	59
2001	—	—	65	100	119	130	121	113	144
2001[2]	42	89	125	100	119	130	121	113	144
2002	65	218	215	249	239	261	281	259	281
2003	26	73	78	93	86	97	106	106	105

	Age						
	9	*10*	*11*	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*
Bases							
Boys							
1995	138	140	128	142	140	132	134
1996	153	161	142	143	150	152	155
1997	237	220	228	226	216	207	196
1998	163	147	150	139	115	127	117
1999	78	77	82	69	69	59	68
2000	70	66	71	67	69	52	62
2001	123	117	112	148	123	132	98
2001[2]	123	117	112	148	123	132	98
2002	284	308	277	308	262	284	271
2003	120	98	118	101	116	102	103
Girls							
1995	139	144	147	136	120	135	125
1996	144	141	159	140	142	122	118
1997	244	251	224	209	192	198	181
1998	122	138	161	135	105	146	123
1999	85	61	69	58	68	67	60
2000	55	63	59	55	74	61	68
2001	138	136	141	117	122	104	131
2001[2]	138	136	141	117	122	104	131
2002	286	283	268	286	280	292	226
2003	101	129	113	112	112	123	95

[1] The unweighted sample base for this category is too small for results to be shown.

[2] In 2001, infant length measurement was included for those aged six-weeks to two-years.

[3] The unweighted sample base for this category is below 50. Treat results with caution.

Note:

Age rounded to nearest integer

Cruse Bereavement Care

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding was made available by his Department to Cruse Bereavement Care in each of the past five years for which figures are available; and what plans he has to increase the funding. [219768]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has provided Cruse Bereavement Care with funding over a number of years under the Section 64 General Scheme. Details of awards over the last five years are shown in the table.

Award	*Amount*
Development of regional support network	£150,000 over three years from 1997
Equal opportunities officer project	£100,500 over three years from 1997
Development of regional support for bereaved people and Cruse volunteers	£120,000 over three years from 1998
Quality care in bereavement	£180,000 over three years from 1999
Bereavement care—improving access	£176,000 over three years from 2000
Promoting bereavement awareness	£90,000 over three years from 2001
Service delivery plan to meet client need	£150,000 over three years from 2002
Cruse practice manual	£25,000 over one year from 2002
Core funding	£125,000 over three years from 2003
Bereavement training programme	£138,000 over three years from 2004
Core funding (top up)	£80,000 over one year from 2005

The Department has no current plans to increase funding to Cruse. However Cruse, in common with other voluntary and community sector organisations, is able to apply for funding from the Department's Section 64 Scheme and any other Government funding streams.

DEHP Plasticiser

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the resolution by the European Parliament to restrict DEHP plasticiser in medical devices. [218986]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government are aware of the European Parliament Resolution on the European Environment and Health Action Plan 2004–2010, which refers to the restriction of Di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) in medical devices except where such a restriction would have a negative impact on medical treatment. Medical devices are placed on the European Market in accordance with the provisions of the Medical Devices Directive. In meeting the relevant essential safety requirements, manufacturers must make an assessment that any risks are outweighed by the clinical benefits and that evidence of such benefits are provided.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which is the body in the United Kingdom with oversight for the Medical Devices Directive, has ensured that appropriate manufacturer's representative bodies are fully aware of the implications of the directive as they apply to DEHP-containing medical devices.

The Agency is also aware of, and is encouraging, manufacturers' efforts to find alternative material to phthalates, looking at ways of limiting exposure to DEHP and gaining a better understanding of DEHP toxicity

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1688W, on dentistry, how many dentists returned to NHS dentistry from a career break between *(a)* April 2001 to March 2002, *(b)* April 2002 to March 2003 and *(c)* April 2003 to March 2004. [219380]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* 46 dentists returned to national health service dentistry and were members of the "Keeping In Touch" scheme between April 2003 and March 2004. Data is not available for the previous two years.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1688W, on dentistry, and the answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Westbury (Dr. Murrison) on 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1620W, on the "Keeping in Touch" scheme, what information he collects on the number of whole-time equivalent dentists being recruited as a result of the "Keeping in Touch" scheme. [219382]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* The Department collects information from the retaining and returning adviser in the dental postgraduate deanery on the dentist's date of return to work, the primary care trust where the dentist is working and the number of sessions worked.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on dental registration rates. [217609]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 486W. We are undertaking the most far-reaching reforms to national health service dentistry since 1948, in order to make NHS dentistry more attractive to dentists.

Drug Rehabilitation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget is for drug rehabilitation in 2004–05; what allocation he has made up to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [216744]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The pooled drug treatment budget for 2004–05 and the allocated funding up until 2007–08 is shown in the table.

	Amount (£ million)
2004–05	253.4
2005–06	299.4
2006–07	423.8
2007–08	478.4

It is estimated that an additional £200 million mainstream funding is being spent on drug treatment in 2004–05, but we are not able to estimate the mainstream spend in future years.

These figures incorporate all six treatment modalities. These are day care; general practitioner prescribing; specialist prescribing; residential rehabilitation; in-patient detoxification and structured counselling. We do not have specific spend figures by individual treatment type.

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department in the Standing Committee on the Drugs Bill on 3 February 2005, fifth sitting, *Official Report*, column 155, what progress has been made by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the national treatment agency in advising (i) general practitioners and (ii) other prescribers to consider using opiate substitutes other than methadone. [217073]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A decision to use buprenorphine or opiates other than methadone for opiate substitution treatment requires knowledge and understanding of the use of these drugs in the management of addiction, as well as their limitations. Such treatment would normally be initiated by a specialist or a general practitioner with additional competence in this area of practice.

To support effective prescribing of a range of opiates, the Department has issued the clinical guidelines, "Drug misuse and dependence—guidelines on clinical management" (1999). The Department issued additional guidance on the availability of buprenorphine by instalment dispensing in 2001. In addition, the Department has funded the training of 800 GPs in a range of substitute opiates through funding of the Royal College of General Practitioners certificate course between 2002 and 2005.

The national treatment agency (NTA) for substance misuse has produced clinical guidance, "Prescribing services for drug misusers" (Research into practice briefing No. 2, January 2003), that includes a review of the evidence base concerning a range of pharmacological treatments for drug misusers, including alternative opiate substitute drugs. Further clinical guidance, "Injectable heroin (and injectable methadone)—potential roles in drug treatment" (May 2003), also gives advice on alternatives to methadone substitution therapy.

East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey PCT

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of spending on acute services by the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey primary care trust was spent at *(a)* Epsom and St. Helier, *(b)* Guildford, *(c)* Kingston, *(d)* East Surrey and *(e)* St. Peter's hospitals in each of the last three years. [219407]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have become obese in the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey primary care trust area in each of the past three years. [219447]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Food Labelling

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards achieving a clear and simple contents labelling system for all prepared foods that includes essential nutritional information and an indicator of high, medium or low value in respect of fat sugar and salt content; and if he will make a statement. [218605]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The recently published White Paper, "Choosing Health", contains a commitment to introduce a straightforward system of front of pack "signpost" food labelling that will help consumers to make healthier choices more easily.

In November, the Food Standards Agency published the results of the qualitative phase of research to identify the preferred format for a signposting system. It is now planning quantitative research on the preferred formats, and will be consulting stakeholders on the study design shortly. The research is expected to include at least one format that rates the fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt contents of the food as "high", "medium" or "low".

Health Services (North Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses there were in North Durham *(a)* in 2001 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [214457]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table. Data are supplied at strategic health authority (SHA) level as practice nurse data are not available by trust for 2001.[1]

National health service hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff including practice nurses[1] in the County Durham and Tees Valley SHA area by organisation 30 September each specified year

Headcount

		2001[1]	2003
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley SHA total	8,600	9,084
5D9	Hartlepool PCT	82	170
5E1	North Tees PCT	138	307
5J8	Durham Dales PCT	n/a	213
5J9	Darlington PCT	n/a	131
5KA	Derwentside PCT	n/a	147
5KC	Durham and Chester-le-Street PCT	n/a	218
5KD	Easington PCT	n/a	184
5KE	Sedgefield PCT	n/a	170
5KM	Middlesbrough PCT	n/a	335
5KN	Langbaurgh PCT	n/a	218
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	n/a	1
QDE	County Durham HA	27	n/a
QDP	Tees HA	8	n/a
RCA	Northallerton Health Services NHS Trust	604	n/a
RCJ	South Tees Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	1,658	n/a
RR9	North Durham Health Care NHS Trust	1,139	n/a
RTA	South Durham Health Care NHS Trust	1,324	n/a

National health service hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff including practice nurses[1] in the County Durham and Tees Valley SHA area by organisation 30 September each specified year

Headcount

		2001[1]	*2003*
RTC	County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust	601	629
RTR	South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust	n/a	2,296
RVW	North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust	1,348	1,237
RVX	Tees and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust	1,200	882
RXP	County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	n/a	1,946

n/a = Not applicable.

Sources:

Department of Health non-medical workforce census.

Department of Health general and personal medical services statistics.

Hospital Debt

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in England are in debt; by how much in each case; and if he will make a statement. [217527]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

We have taken debt to mean the cumulative break-even position as reported in the final accounts of national health service trusts. We do not collect information at individual hospital level.

Imported Medicine

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much medicine the Government imported in the last year for which figures are available. [219368]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003, the United Kingdom world trade in pharmaceuticals was valued at £11.941 million for exports and £8.378 million for imports, which created a crude trade balance surplus of £3.563 million.

This information is collected and published by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

Ministerial Visits

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to visit Leicester general hospital. [220095]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are no current plans in my official diary to undertake a visit to Leicester general hospital. Should a request to do so be received in the Department, it will be given full consideration.

Mobile Phones

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's advice is on mobile phone use by under-16s. [217699]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 876W.

Independent Sector Treatment Centres

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many contracts the NHS has entered into with private diagnostic and treatment centres. [213756]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* A capacity planning exercise was undertaken to identify the capacity needed by the national health service to continue to drive down waiting times for patients and to meet waiting time targets. The need for procurement from the independent sector arose following that exercise. Ten contracts for independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs) have been signed to date with seven remaining. Full business cases, confirming the activity to be commissioned from the independent sector have been signed off by primary care trust boards, as have final agreements. The local NHS is expected to manage referrals to ensure that extra capacity available from ISTCs is used.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will provide a substantive reply to question reference 215855, tabled for answer on 10 February. [220083]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I answered the hon. Member on 2 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1226W.

Prosecutions (Non-entitlement to Treatment)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of civil action have been brought forward by the Counter Fraud and Security Management Service and its predecessors against those suspected of getting free treatment from the NHS to which they are not entitled since 1997; and how many of those cases have resulted in successful prosecution. [217438]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The penalty charge was introduced in August 2001 as a civil fine for patients who wrongly obtain help with national health service charges for themselves or someone else. The penalty is five times the amount owed, up to a maximum of £100, plus the original unpaid NHS charge. If the penalty charge is not settled within 28 days from the date of posting, a surcharge will be applied. The surcharge is calculated as 50 per cent, of the penalty charge.

Since the penalty charge was introduced, 164,133 penalty notices have been issued. Up to 9,000 cases are currently going through the debt recovery process. 9,954 cases have already been dealt with by judgments in county court. The rest have been paid or concluded without recourse to court proceedings. Repeat offenders are subject to criminal prosecution where that is appropriate.

Five patients have been prosecuted under section 29 of the Health Act 1999 for obtaining free NHS treatment to which they were not entitled.

The number of prosecutions is low as the penalty charge is found to be the most cost-effective way of dealing with high-volume but low-value fraud.

Renal Services

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans his Department has to audit the implementation of the Renal National Service Framework; [212331]

(2) whether the measurable benchmarks set out in the Kidney Alliance/British Renal Society's Criteria for Success document will be utilised by the Healthcare Commission to audit the Renal National Service Framework. [212333]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is the role of the independent Healthcare Commission to assess whether health organisations' plans include programmes to deliver national service frameworks. The development of a national audit around the national service framework for renal services fits within that programme of work. The use of particular tools for assessments is a matter for the Commission.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to increase the number of haemodialysis patients with permanent vascular access as opposed to catheters to 80 per cent. [212334]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We launched part one of the national service framework (NSF) for renal services in 2004. It sets standards and identifies markers of good practice for kidney dialysis and transplantation. Standard 3 of the NSF identifies arteriovenous fistulas as the best form of long-term vascular access. It is for primary care trusts commissioning renal services to set priorities for local action based on the standards, quality requirements and markers of good practice set out in the NSF for renal services. We are supporting delivery through various programmes and national health service pilots, including two work force pilots focused on the organisation of vascular access surgery. When this work is complete, the results will be shared with the NHS.

Residential Rehabilitation

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's targets are for the number of residential rehabilitation places over the next three years. [212337]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has not set targets for the numbers of residential rehabilitation places in each of the next three years.

The National Treatment Agency have conducted a needs assessment for Tier 4 Services, which includes residential rehabilitation, and this will be reporting this year. The findings of this assessment will be used to inform future service development.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to reduce the numbers of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216532]

Ms Rosie Winterton: About two-thirds of the Department's staff have no recorded sickness absence, but, as part of the work we are currently undertaking on maximising attendance and managing absence the Department is considering the findings of the report on "Implementing the recommendations of Managing Attendance in the Public Sector" alongside other leading research to ensure best practice.

Smoking

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over who have smoked in each year since 1975, broken down by gender. [218124]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The prevalence of cigarette smoking is shown in the table.

Prevalence of cigarette smoking among people aged 16 and over, by gender in England: 1976 to 2003

	Men	*Women*	*All persons*
Unweighted data			
1976	45	37	41
1978	44	36	40
1980	42	36	39
1982	37	32	35
1984	35	32	33
1986	34	31	32
1988	32	30	31
1990	31	28	29
1992	29	27	28
1994	28	25	26
1996	28	27	28
1998	28	26	27
Weighted data			
1998	29	26	28
2000	29	25	27
2001	28	25	27
2002	27	25	26
2003	27	24	25

Note:
Until 2000, questions on smoking were asked biannually in the General Household Survey.
Source:
Office for National Statistics—"Living in Britain: Results from the 1993 and 2003 General Household Surveys". Available at www.statistics.gov.uk/ghs.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of smoking on health in Liverpool. [217122]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The estimated percentages of deaths attributable to smoking in primary care trusts (PCTs) in Liverpool are shown in the table. The total figures for England are given for comparison.

Estimated percentages of all deaths attributable to smoking in Liverpool PCTs

Percentage

PCT	*Male*	*Female*	*All persons*
Central Liverpool	27	18	22
North Liverpool	28	21	24
South Liverpool	24	15	19
England	22	72	77

Note:
The percentage is based on the annual average estimate of smoking-attributable mortality across 1998–2002 and the observed number of deaths from all causes, all ages for 2002.

Source:
Information in the table is from the data underlying the publication of "The Smoking Epidemic in England, November 2004"—The Health Development Agency (HDA). Available on the HDA website at www.hda.nhs.uk/html/improving/smoking_epidemic.html.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215084]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of materials in replacing a departmental staff identity pass is approximately £2.15 plus value added tax.

Records of the number of staff identity cards reported lost or stolen are not available for the period requested.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animal Experimentation

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the impact of the Human Genome Project on *(a)* the total number of animals, *(b)* the number of genetically modified mice and *(c)* the number of genetically modified primates, that will be used in the next few years. [218611]

Caroline Flint: It is assumed that the question refers to animals used in scientific procedures. It is not possible to estimate the total number of genetically modified animals that will be used in that way over the next few years as a result of the Human Genome Project. That will be largely dependent on strategic research and funding decisions by the funding councils and the private sector, and the nature and quality of the resulting scientific proposals. Any impact the Human Genome Project does have may be offset by a reduction in the use of non-genetically modified animals.

During 2003—the latest year for which figures are available—genetically modified animals were used in 764,000 regulated scientific procedures representing 27 per cent. of all procedures for 2003 compared with 26 per cent. in 2002 and 8 per cent. in 1995. Rodents—nearly all mice—were used in 98 per cent. of these procedures. It is likely that this trend of a gradually increasing use of such animals over the last decade will continue as advances in genetic science open up new avenues of research, and this may well include work arising from the Human Genome Project.

At present there is no use of genetically modified non-human primates licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, and we do not expect that to change in the foreseeable future. Any applications for licences to conduct such work would be referred for advice to the Animal Procedures Committee.

Whatever the impact of the Human Genome Project, we will continue, in administering the 1986 Act, to license use of animals only when we consider there is no alternative, and then only when both the number of animals to be used and any resulting suffering are minimised.

Child Poverty

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020 and *(b)* halving it by 2010; and if he will make a statement. [219345]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* The Home Office is supporting the Treasury in meeting the ambitious targets this Government have set on child poverty. Children born into poverty are more likely to be victims of crime and more likely to offend. The Child Poverty Review highlighted the strong associations between youth crime, parental crime and child poverty.

In order to tackle the poor outcomes associated with child poverty, and to improve the life chances of poor children, the Home Office has invested in a number of prevention programmes for children at risk of involvement in crime or substance misuse.

To break the cycle of youth offending and deprivation, the Home Office Strategic Plan includes a commitment to increase youth crime prevention programmes. This includes multi-agency Youth Inclusion and Support Panels, targeting high-risk, children and their families, providing them with support and improving their access to mainstream services. It also includes the Youth Inclusion Programme, which targets the 13 to 16-year-olds most at risk of crime in 72 of the most deprived neighbourhoods. The numbers of both will be increased by 50 per cent. by 2008. We have also increased the coverage of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSPs).

Children living in poverty are a key risk group for substance misuse. We are targeting young people in the most deprived neighbourhoods at risk of substance misuse through "Positive Futures", a national sports-based social inclusion programme aimed at marginalised 10 to 19-year-olds. Positive Futures aims to "have a positive influence on participants' substance misuse, physical activity and offending behaviour". The Positive Futures projects have proved successful in building relationships, engaging and providing developmental opportunities for young people living in deprived areas.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 14 October 2004 from the hon. Member for Brent, East regarding Ms Varsha Edeis. [215630]

Caroline Flint: I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 22 February 2005.

Criminal Justice Intervention Panels

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the National Offender Management Service will interrelate with the Criminal Justice Intervention Panels; and what impact on crime rates he expects to result from such interrelation. [203544]

Paul Goggins: The Drug Interventions Programme (formerly Criminal Justice Interventions Programme) is a critical part of the Government's national strategy for tackling drugs. Its implementation is being phased and delivery at a local level is through community-based Criminal Justice Integrated Teams (CJITs) which adopt a case management approach to offer access to drug treatment and support for drug misusing offenders.

With the creation of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) we envisage the drugs case manager acting as the link to and, in some areas, provider of drug treatment services. Regional Offender Managers will be responsible for ensuring that effective links are established within their regions between offender managers and CJITs. This will avoid duplication and ensure a fully integrated package of support and management for drug misusing offenders before, during and after sentence.

Research shows that engaging offenders in drug treatment significantly reduces offending and impacts on crime. The successful co-operation of the Drug Interventions Programme and NOMS will contribute to the planned overall reduction of 15 per cent. in offences recorded by the British Crime Survey by the end of 2007–08.

Drug Seizures

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what baseline figures will be used to measure his Department's targets to increase the proportion of *(a)* heroin seized from 10 per cent. in 2003 to 16 per cent. in 2006 and *(b)* cocaine seized from 21 per cent. to 26 per cent. in 2006, as set out on page 85 of the Home Office Strategic Plan 2004 to 2008; and if he will make a statement. [214982]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office HMCE PSA 3 of increasing the proportion of heroin seized from 10 per cent. in 2003 to 16 per cent. in 2006 and cocaine from 21 per cent. to 26 per cent. is based upon the following Customs and Excise information.

(a) Heroin

The taking out of 3,379 kg of heroin in 2001–02.

The targets for 2003–04 through to 2005–06 for heroin then are as follows:

	Kilograms
2003–04	4,000
2004–05	4,600
2005–06	5,300

(b) Cocaine

The taking out of 10,930 kg of cocaine in 2001–02.

The targets for 2003–04 through to 2005–06 for cocaine then is as follows:

	Kilograms
2003–04	12,000
2004–05	12,600
2005–06	13,200

Extradition Treaty

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects that the US Congress will ratify the amendment to the extradition treaty between the US and the United Kingdom; on what basis the United Kingdom has agreed to fulfill its obligations under the amended treaty prior to ratification by the US; and if he will make a statement. [217776]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* The extradition treaty signed between the US and the UK in 2003 is a completely new treaty, and requires the advice and consent of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee before it can be ratified by the US Government. We have been advised by the US State Department that, although the Committee has a heavy schedule, the US State Department has asked it to consider the treaty at the earliest possible time.

Some of the important, modernising provisions of the new treaty were given effect in the Extradition Act 2003 (and are therefore available generally in extradition, and are not linked solely to the US-UK treaty.) Secondary legislation was required under the new Act to designate all our extradition partners for the purposes of extradition to those states. The United States was, of course, included in that legislation.

Inquests

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many days on average in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004 (i) coroners, (ii) deputy coroners and (iii) assistant deputy coroners in the north-east region sat on inquests. [212090]

Paul Goggins: This information is not available.

National Probation Service

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the budget for the National Probation Service for 2005–06 will provide for the additional employment of front-line staff. [218438]

Paul Goggins: The 42 local probation boards have been provided with an extra £20 million for the recruitment of extra staff to fund the full year effect of staff recruited in 2004–05 and to commence the recruitment of a further 1,000 staff in 2005–06. This amounts to approximately 37 per cent. of the probation boards' increase in budget for 2005–06.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff were employed in each probation area on 31 December 2004, broken down by grade; and how many vacancies there were on that date, broken down by grade. [218439]

Paul Goggins: The requested information will not be available until April 2005. Data as at 30 September 2004 is the most recent available, and is provided in the tables.

Table 1: Staff in post as at 30 September 2004

	Operational Grades			
	Senior probation officer	*Senior practitioner*	*Probation officer*	*Trainee probation officer*
Avon and Somerset	22.9	15.0	110.2	28.0
Bedfordshire	10.5	9.5	38.0	14.0
Cambridgeshire	14.8	10.3	50.5	18.0
Cheshire	21.3	7.0	85.5	31.0
Cumbria	10.0	7.0	35.9	17.0
Derbyshire	22.2	0.0	103.4	21.0
Devon and Cornwall	22.3	10.8	108.5	30.0
Dorset	13.9	0.0	48.7	16.0
Durham	23.0	0.0	66.5	21.0
Dyfed Powys	7.0	9.5	26.2	21.0
Essex	29.4	13.0	70.5	40.0
Gloucestershire	10.2	11.6	33.2	12.0
Greater Manchester	73.2	0.0	300.0	110.0
Gwent	0.0	15.7	49.4	33.0
Hampshire	23.8	14.2	130.5	47.0
Hertfordshire	11.0	12.0	49.7	24.0
Humberside	23.0	3.0	105.9	34.0
Kent	21.8	26.6	96.0	38.0
Lancashire	39.9	12.8	184.4	56.0
Leicestershire	25.0	9.8	106.0	34.0
Lincolnshire	19.0	0.0	45.0	10.0
London	196.1	0.0	678.5	216.0
Merseyside	32.0	0.0	205.4	77.0
Norfolk	15.7	7.2	54.8	22.0
North Wales	9.8	12.8	50.2	30.0
North Yorkshire	13.0	15.6	46.6	25.0
Northamptonshire	10.0	4.0	51.0	13.0
Northumbria	37.2	2.0	234.9	36.0
Nottinghamshire	29.0	0.0	139.0	25.0
South Wales	40.2	3.0	126.5	71.0
South Yorkshire	37.7	0.0	157.8	63.0
Staffordshire	26.4	0.0	130.0	23.0
Suffolk	16.3	8.9	57.6	14.0
Surrey	9.5	10.5	42.1	15.0
Sussex	20.9	11.0	95.9	21.0
Teesside	20.5	1.0	63.4	20.0
Thames Valley	36.0	0.0	133.3	38.0
Warwickshire	8.8	8.4	38.0	12.0
West Mercia	12.6	30.7	99.2	19.0
West Midlands	63.9	0.0	383.6	92.0
West Yorkshire	61.0	57.3	202.3	92.9
Wiltshire	2.0	13.0	26.5	16.0
Total	1,142.8	373.2	4,860.5	1,595.9

	Operational Grades			
	Probation service officers	*Psychologists*	*Other operational staff*	*Total operational grades*
Avon and Somerset	162.9	0.0	0.0	339.0
Bedfordshire	29.2	0.0	36.3	137.5
Cambridgeshire	61.9	0.0	1.4	156.9
Cheshire	92.1	0.0	81.2	318.1
Cumbria	38.8	0.0	6.3	114.9
Derbyshire	105.0	1.0	0.0	252.6
Devon and Cornwall	127.5	0.0	0.0	299.1
Dorset	59.7	0.0	0.0	138.2
Durham	105.7	3.0	0.0	219.2
Dyfed Powys	37.4	0.0	0.0	101.1
Essex	175.1	1.0	1.7	330.7
Gloucestershire	42.0	0.0	8.0	116.9
Greater Manchester	321.9	1.0	117.1	923.2
Gwent	67.3	0.0	0.0	165.4
Hampshire	126.5	0.0	29.0	371.0
Hertfordshire	58.1	0.0	0.0	154.8
Humberside	134.2	0.0	14.5	314.6
Kent	148.3	1.0	23.5	355.3
Lancashire	150.0	0.0	28.4	471.5
Leicestershire	174.2	3.0	1.5	353.5
Lincolnshire	76.5	0.0	11.4	161.9
London	686.3	7.0	2.0	1,785.9
Merseyside	207.6	0.0	10.2	532.3

	Operational Grades			
	Probation service officers	*Psychologists*	*Other operational staff*	*Total operational grades*
Norfolk	80.5	0.0	7.0	187.2
North Wales	74.2	1.0	0.0	178.0
North Yorkshire	41.1	0.0	24.5	165.8
Northamptonshire	69.0	0.0	7.0	154.0
Northumbria	168.1	0.0	4.7	482.9
Nottinghamshire	143.4	0.0	21.3	357.7
South Wales	147.4	0.0	18.4	406.5
South Yorkshire	203.3	1.0	0.0	462.8
Staffordshire	82.7	0.0	23.1	285.2
Suffolk	53.3	0.0	7.2	157.4
Surrey	97.5	1.0	0.0	175.6
Sussex	108.4	0.0	1.0	258.2
Teesside	123.1	2.0	3.0	233.0
Thames Valley	203.9	1.0	27.4	439.6
Warwickshire	32.4	0.0	15.0	114.5
West Mercia	100.1	0.0	0.0	261.7
West Midlands	260.9	3.0	43.3	846.7
West Yorkshire	297.0	0.0	0.0	710.5
Wiltshire	37.3	1.0	0.2	96.0
Total	5,511.7	27.0	575.6	14,086.7

	Support Grades			
	Deputy chief officers/ directors	*ACO and equivalent*	*Area/district managers or equivalent*	*Managers-Section or function heads*
Avon and Somerset	0.0	5.0	10.8	11.3
Bedfordshire	0.0	4.5	0.0	7.1
Cambridgeshire	0.0	6.0	0.0	6.8
Cheshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Cumbria	0.0	4.7	0.0	3.8
Derbyshire	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Devon and Cornwall	2.0	6.6	9.0	5.0
Dorset	0.0	1.5	2.0	4.5
Durham	0.0	4.0	0.0	5.0
Dyfed Powys	0.0	3.0	1.0	2.0
Essex	0.0	1.6	0.0	15.2
Gloucestershire	0.0	3.0	0.0	8.5
Greater Manchester	4.0	12.0	16.0	41.0
Gwent	0.0	4.0	11.0	12.0
Hampshire	0.0	4.0	8.4	2.7
Hertfordshire	0.0	4.0	0.0	9.6
Humberside	0.0	8.0	2.0	11.0
Kent	0.0	7.2	0.0	14.9
Lancashire	1.0	8.0	4.0	12.0
Leicestershire	0.0	6.0	0.0	16.2
Lincolnshire	0.0	4.6	0.0	6.2
London	10.0	53.0	0.0	0.0
Merseyside	2.0	8.0	0.0	13.0
Norfolk	0.0	4.0	0.0	10.8
North Wales	0.0	4.0	0.0	2.0
North Yorkshire	0.0	5.0	1.0	8.1
Northamptonshire	0.0	3.6	0.0	7.0
Northumbria	3.0	7.0	1.0	18.0
Nottinghamshire	0.0	7.0	2.0	2.0
South Wales	3.0	6.0	6.0	8.8
South Yorkshire	2.0	11.0	9.0	28.7
Staffordshire	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.0
Suffolk	0.0	0.8	0.0	6.5
Surrey	2.0	0.8	0.0	2.6
Sussex	1.0	7.0	0.0	1.0
Teesside	0.0	6.0	0.0	5.4
Thames Valley	3.0	6.0	0.0	12.0
Warwickshire	0.0	4.0	2.0	6.5
West Mercia	0.0	5.4	5.0	12.5
West Midlands	5.7	14.9	7.8	18.5
West Yorkshire	3.0	12.0	10.0	34.3
Wiltshire	0.0	3.6	8.0	7.0
Total	41.7	276.8	116.0	419.4

	Support Grades				
	Support staff-Administration	*Support staff-Others*	*Other specialist workers*	*Total support grades*	*Total staff*
Avon & Somerset	95.7	9.0	0.8	132.6	471.6
Bedfordshire	23.7	1.0	2.3	38.5	176.0
Cambridgeshire	39.4	5.7	2.0	59.8	216.7
Cheshire	22.7	0.0	0.0	32.7	350.8
Cumbria	39.2	0.0	2.8	50.5	165.4
Derbyshire	76.5	0.0	16.2	102.7	355.3
Devon & Cornwall	79.8	4.2	21.6	128.2	427.3
Dorset	36.7	6.2	11.6	62.5	200.8
Durham	37.6	5.5	0.0	52.1	271.3
Dyfed Powys	26.4	0.0	10.8	43.2	144.3
Essex	52.5	0.0	6.5	75.8	406.5
Gloucestershire	38.3	0.4	4.8	55.0	171.9
Greater Manchester	253.6	0.6	18.1	345.2	1,268.3
Gwent	10.6	32.6	0.0	70.2	235.6
Hampshire	96.3	0.0	13.6	125.0	496.0
Hertfordshire	12.8	40.0	0.0	66.4	221.2
Humberside	69.9	0.0	14.6	105.5	420.0
Kent	66.2	0.4	3.0	91.7	447.0
Lancashire	79.1	2.0	5.0	111.1	582.6
Leicestershire	65.1	4.0	0.4	91.7	445.2
Lincolnshire	46.7	0.0	1.0	58.5	220.4
London	593.6	7.0	9.0	672.6	2,458.5
Merseyside	45.3	158.9	4.5	231.7	764.0
Norfolk	31.4	0.0	2.0	48.1	235.3
North Wales	45.4	0.0	6.0	57.4	235.4
North Yorkshire	42.6	0.0	0.0	56.7	222.5
Northamptonshire	29.5	10.9	5.0	56.0	210.0
Northumbria	131.7	0.0	6.0	166.7	649.5
Nottinghamshire	99.2	3.2	0.0	113.4	471.1
South Wales	112.4	0.0	0.0	136.2	542.7
South Yorkshire	126.3	0.0	0.0	177.0	639.8
Staffordshire	86.2	4.4	6.5	107.1	392.3
Suffolk	31.4	0.0	0.0	38.7	196.1
Surrey	47.8	0.0	9.4	62.6	238.2
Sussex	2.0	45.5	17.6	74.1	332.3
Teesside	57.5	2.7	0.0	71.6	304.6
Thames Valley	113.9	13.0	1.0	148.9	588.5
Warwickshire	30.8	0.0	0.0	43.3	157.9
West Mercia	79.9	3.0	0.0	105.8	367.5
West Midlands	280.0	0.0	39.4	366.3	1,213.0
West Yorkshire	231.9	3.7	7.0	301.9	1,012.3
Wiltshire	19.0	6.0	0.0	43.6	139.6
Total	3,506.3	369.8	248.5	4,978.5	19,065.1

Table 2: Active vacancies as at 30 September 2004

	Operational Grades			
	Senior probation officer	*Senior practitioner*	*Probation officer*	*Trainee probation officer*
Avon and Somerset	1.0	1.0	13.9	0.0
Bedfordshire	1.0	1 5	2.6	0.0
Cambridgeshire	2.0	0.0	3.7	1.0
Cheshire	4.0	0.0	1.5	0.0
Cumbria	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0
Derbyshire	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Devon and Cornwall	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0
Dorset	0.0	0.0	10.7	1.0
Durham	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Dyfed Powys	1.0	2.0	5.4	0.0
Essex	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.0
Gloucestershire	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Greater Manchester	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Gwent	0.0	0.5	4.0	0.0
Hampshire	1.0	1.0	4.6	2.0
Hertfordshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Humberside	14.0	1.0	1.0	0.0
Kent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lancashire	1.7	0.0	2.7	0.0
Leicestershire	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Lincolnshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
London	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 2: Active vacancies as at 30 September 2004

	Operational Grades			
	Senior probation officer	*Senior practitioner*	*Probation officer*	*Trainee probation officer*
Merseyside	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Norfolk	1.2	0.0	8.7	0.0
North Wales	0.0	1.0	5.9	3.0
North Yorkshire	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Northamptonshire	1.0	0.0	6.0	0.0
Northumbria	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nottinghamshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Wales	2.5	0.0	37.6	0.0
South Yorkshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Staffordshire	1.0	0.0	3.0	14.0
Suffolk	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0
Surrey	3.5	2.0	3.0	8.0
Sussex	1.0	2.0	12.8	0.0
Teesside	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Thames Valley	3.5	0.0	24.7	3.0
Warwickshire	1.2	1.4	-3.4	2.0
West Mercia	1.0	0.6	-7.3	14.0
West Midlands	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Yorkshire	0.5	5.5	19.0	8.0
Wiltshire	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Total	44.6	21.5	176.6	56.0

	Operational Grades			
	Probation service officers	*Psychologists*	*Other operational staff*	*Total operational grades*
Avon and Somerset	5.8	0.0	0.0	21.7
Bedfordshire	2.0	0.0	3.2	10.3
Cambridgeshire	6.4	0.0	0.0	13.1
Cheshire	11.1	0.0	3.2	19.8
Cumbria	8.4	0.0	0.0	12.9
Derbyshire	8.8	0.0	0.0	9.8
Devon and Cornwall	12.0	0.0	0.0	14.8
Dorset	7.1	0.0	0.0	18.8
Durham	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
Dyfed Powys	2.8	0.0	0.0	11.2
Essex	2.0	0.0	0.0	3.5
Gloucestershire	1.7	0.0	0.0	2.7
Greater Manchester	3.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Gwent	4.0	0.0	1.0	9.5
Hampshire	7.5	0.0	0.0	16.1
Hertfordshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Humberside	7.5	0.0	1.0	24.5
Kent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lancashire	4.5	0.0	0.3	9.2
Leicestershire	3.1	0.0	0.0	5.1
Lincolnshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
London	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Merseyside	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Norfolk	8.6	0.0	1.5	20.0
North Wales	1.5	0.0	0.0	11.4
North Yorkshire	12.0	0.0	0.0	13.0
Northamptonshire	5.0	0.0	0.0	12.0
Northumbria	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nottinghamshire	9.7	0.0	3.1	12.8
South Wales	12.7	0.0	1.0	53.8
South Yorkshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Staffordshire	11.5	0.0	0.9	30.4
Suffolk	4.1	0.0	0.0	7.3
Surrey	18.2	0.0	0.0	34.7
Sussex	12.7	0.4	0.0	28.9
Teesside	6.4	0.0	0.0	6.4
Thames Valley	15.1	0.0	0.0	46.3
Warwickshire	1.7	0.0	0.0	2.9
West Mercia	2.7	0.0	0.0	11.0
West Midlands	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Yorkshire	30.9	0.0	0.0	63.9
Wiltshire	8.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Total	260.4	0.4	15.2	574.7

	Support Grades			
	Deputy chief officers/ directors	*ACO and equivalent*	*Area/district managers or equivalent*	*Managers-Section or function heads*
Avon and Somerset	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Bedfordshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cambridgeshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cheshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cumbria	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Derbyshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Devon and Cornwall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dorset	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Durham	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dyfed Powys	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Essex	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gloucestershire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Greater Manchester	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gwent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hampshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hertfordshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Humberside	0.0	0.0	6.0	0.0
Kent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lancashire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Leicestershire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lincolnshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
London	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Merseyside	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Norfolk	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
North Wales	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
North Yorkshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Northamptonshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Northumbria	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nottinghamshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Wales	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Yorkshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Staffordshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Suffolk	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
Surrey	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Sussex	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Teesside	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Thames Valley	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Warwickshire	0.0	1.0	-1.0	0.0
West Mercia	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
West Midlands	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Yorkshire	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Wiltshire	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Total	1.0	1.0	11.0	2.6

	Support Grades				
	Support staff-Administration	*Support staff-Others*	*Other specialist workers*	*Total support grades*	*Total active vacancies*
Avon and Somerset	10.4	0.0	0.0	12.4	34.1
Bedfordshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.3
Cambridgeshire	2.2	0.0	0.0	2.2	15.3
Cheshire	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	20.8
Cumbria	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.9
Derbyshire	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	10.8
Devon and Cornwall	8.5	0.0	3.0	11.5	26.3
Dorset	4.8	0.0	0.0	4.8	23.6
Durham	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.0
Dyfed Powys	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	11.7
Essex	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	4.0
Gloucestershire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7
Greater Manchester	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Gwent	7.8	0.0	1.0	8.8	18.3
Hampshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.1
Hertfordshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Humberside	3.0	0.0	0.0	9.0	33.5
Kent	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Lancashire	4.5	0.0	0.0	4.5	13.7
Leicestershire	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	7.1
Lincolnshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
London	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Merseyside	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Norfolk	5.6	0.0	0.0	6.6	26.6
North Wales	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.5	12.9

	Support Grades				
	Support staff-Administration	Support staff-Others	Other specialist workers	Total support grades	Total active vacancies
North Yorkshire	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	15.0
Northamptonshire	2.0	1.0	0.0	3.0	15.0
Northumbria	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Nottinghamshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.8
South Wales	12.5	0.0	0.0	12.5	66.3
South Yorkshire	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Staffordshire	10.7	0.0	0.0	10.7	41.1
Suffolk	3.2	0.0	1.0	4.7	12.0
Surrey	3.0	0.0	1.0	6.0	40.7
Sussex	11.5	0.0	0.0	11.5	40.4
Teesside	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4
Thames Valley	16.8	3.0	0.0	19.8	66.1
Warwickshire	3.7	0.0	0.0	3.7	6.6
West Mercia	4.6	0.0	0.0	4.7	15.7
West Midlands	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
West Yorkshire	21.2	0.0	0.0	23.2	87.1
Wiltshire	3.5	0.0	0.0	4.5	14.5
Total	148.9	4.0	6.0	174.5	749.2

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation staff he expects will be employed in each probation area in England and Wales by 30 March 2006, broken down by grade. [218440]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is as follows:

By March 2006, it is anticipated that there will be more than 21,000 probation staff, an increase of at least 1,880 (9.8 per cent.) on the 19,120 FTE employed at 30 September 2004.

It is not possible to provide this information by area or grade at the present time.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the performance of the National Probation Service in meeting its targets for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* April to September 2004. [203406]

Paul Goggins: The performance of the National Probation Service (NPS) in meeting its targets for 2003–04 and April to September 2004 is set out in the table.

	2003–04		April to September 2004–05		
Performance measure	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Percentage point change
Enforcement within 10 days (percentage)	90	77	90	85	+8
Compliance	70	63	70	65	+2
Compliance including orders allowed to continue (Target = 70 per cent.)	—	—	70	79	—
Offending Behaviour Programme Completions	15,000	13,136	7,500	6,827	—
Percentage	—	88	—	91	+3
ECP completions	—	—	11,850	17,518	—
Percentage	—	—	—	148	—
DTTO starts	9,000	8,519	6,078	4,847	—
Percentage	—	95	—	80	-15
Basic Skills Starts	16,000	14,971	11,520	13,353	—
Percentage	—	94	—	116	+29
Basic Skills Awards	4,000	2,815	2,960	3,302	+44
Percentage	—	70	—	112	—
Sickness (days)	9	12.3	9	11.5	−0.8
Victims contacted (percentage)	85	91	85	[1]93	+2

[1] April-June 2004

The figures illustrate the real improvement that the NPS has achieved on most of its main service delivery targets.

It should be noted that the targets for:

DTTOs have increased from 9,000 to 13,000

Basic Skills starts have increased from 16,000 to 32,000

Basic Skills completions have increased from 4,000 to 8,000

The results for the first six months are very promising and show that the NPS can achieve all of its targets this year, provided that the good work done so far is maintained across all the 42 areas.

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of probation staff in England and Wales were from ethnic minorities in the year ended March 2003. [204004]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 15 December 2004]:* The information requested is as follows:

The percentage of probation staff from black and minority ethnic groups at the year ended March 2003 was 10.1 per cent. A further 4.0 per cent. of staff did not have their ethnicity recorded.

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation board members are from ethnic minorities; and how many were from ethnic minorities in March 2001. [204005]

Paul Goggins: *[holding answer 15 December 2004]:* The information requested is as follows:

Probation board members—England and Wales

	Number	*Percentage of total number of board members*
April 2001[1]	78 (of 531)	14.7
December 2004	79 (of 599)	13.2

[1] The information supplied is from April 2001, the date when board members were appointed to the National Probation Service. Prior to this date, no information is available.

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of senior probation officers are from ethnic minorities. [204006]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 15 December 2004]:* The information requested is as follows:

The percentage of senior probation officers from black and minority ethnic groups as at 31 December 2003 was 10.8 per cent. of staff within that grade. A further 4.2 per cent. of senior probation officers did not have their ethnicity recorded.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Home Office has conducted stress surveys amongst staff in the probation service in England and Wales. [204132]

Paul Goggins: The National Probation Directorate has not conducted stress surveys amongst staff in the probation service in England and Wales. However, a number of probation areas may have conducted such surveys.

The National Probation Directorate has been working closely with the local employers, trade unions and the Health and Safety Executive to deliver a first class health and safety policy to the National Probation Service.

A recent study carried out by the Work Foundation on behalf of the Cabinet Office identified the working relationship between the National Probation Directorate, Employers and Trade Unions in developing the Health and Safety Strategy as National Best Practice.

As part of the strategy, the National Probation Directorate has recently published a stress policy to be adopted by areas that is considered by the trade unions, employers and the Health and Safety Executive as a best practice model. This policy was created in accordance with the Health and Safety Executives launch of the Stress Management Standards in November 2004.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions during 2003–04 the *(a)* National Probation Service's and *(b)* local probation area bullying and harassment policies were invoked. [204133]

Paul Goggins: There is no National Probation Service national bullying and harassment policy as such. The National Probation Service comprises forty-two probation boards that are bodies corporate in their own right and the employers of all staff working for that Board.

The National Negotiating Council of the National Probation Service which comprises representatives of the employers, trade unions and National Probation Directorate issued a "model" harassment and bullying policy that the individual Boards might wish to introduce. Boards are free to adopt the "model" policy or to develop a policy of their own.

The National Probation Directorate does not monitor the number of grievances or allegations of bullying or harassment made within the employing Boards as these are matters for the employer i.e. the individual Board.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps will be taken to improve morale within the National Probation Service. [204890]

Paul Goggins: In 2003–04 attrition rates within the National Probation Service (NPS)—the number of staff who leave the NPS, not including those who transfer within the service—stood at 8 per cent. for professional staff and 15 per cent. for support staff. This is well below the national average across the public sector. At the same time, the NPS has experienced little difficulty in recruitment, with total staff numbers rising by over 5,000 since 1997.

The performance of the NPS, which is another good indicator of morale, has undergone a sustained period of improvement since 2001.

Each probation area will receive a significant budget increase in 2005, with around 2,000 new members of staff to be recruited over the course of the year. This reflects the commitment the Government have to effective community supervision and will make a real difference to the management of offenders.

We will continue to encourage constructive dialogue with probation staff in order to ensure that they are fully engaged in the future development of the National Offender Management Service.

Immigration

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what checks are made by his Department of whether non-European Union citizens who enter the United Kingdom *(a)* take-up illegal employment and *(b)* live on benefits. [219761]

Mr. Browne: Nationals of countries outside the European Economic Area who are subject to immigration control are examined by the Immigration Service on arrival in the United Kingdom to establish whether they qualify for leave to enter under the Immigration Rules. Certain nationalities require prior entry clearance at British diplomatic posts overseas. Checks are carried out into the cases of individual non-EEA nationals who have entered the United Kingdom where there is particular reason to suspect they are committing immigration offences or breaching their conditions of stay. Enforcement operations against illegal migrant working and suspected benefit fraud are intelligence-led, and in some cases involve joint action with other Government Departments.

Overseas Bribery

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library the minutes of the meeting that took place on 27 October between his officials and the Confederation of British Industry at which legislation on overseas bribery was discussed. [201648]

Paul Goggins: This was an informal meeting in the context of a visit from officials of the Government of the Netherlands who were seeking to learn from UK experience in the implementation of anti-bribery legislation. No minutes were made by the Home Office.

Police IT

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in the integration of police IT systems. [218616]

Caroline Flint: My right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) announced on 22 June 2004 that the Government accepted the recommendations of Sir Michael Bichard's report following the Soham murders, including the introduction of a national IT system to support police intelligence. Work on introducing a national information-sharing system, safeguarding the future of the central information services currently provided by the Police National Computer, and implementing the business process changes in the police service required to make the new systems effective is being taken forward under the IMPACT Programme. As an interim solution, a National Nominal Index (NNI) gives police forces access to data held by the Criminal Records Bureau's Interim Police Local Cross-Check (I-PLX) system, which flags which forces hold information in specified systems about an individual. The NNI is currently being piloted in three forces and will be rolled out to other forces during 2005. The aim is to complete the IMPACT Programme by March 2007.

Prisoners (Resettlement)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are taken to involve families in the arrangements for the resettlement of prisoners upon their release; and what plans he has to change the system. [217112]

Paul Goggins: The Government recognise that helping to keep families together during sentence can contribute to successful resettlement and is firmly committed to promoting family ties. The Prison Service has a statutory obligation to encourage and assist prisoners to maintain contacts with their families and the wider community. It has strengthened its partnership with the voluntary and community sector, recognising the invaluable contribution it makes to services to families. There are now over 100 visitor centres and conditions have improved significantly in recent years, with more prisons adopting an imaginative approach in providing for extended family visits and play areas for children. The Assisted Prison Visits Scheme, funded by the Prison Service, also provides help with travel costs to prisoners' families and partners.

Prisoners' families are involved in sentence planning at certain establishments, where family members and outside probation staff are invited to attend sentence planning boards, in preparation for release. Family members are also invited to attend post-course reviews following the completion of offending behaviour programmes such as PASRO, a cognitive behavioural programme for substance misusers. The DfES Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit also supports a range of family literacy and parenting programmes within prisons, working closely with the voluntary sector to provide support to prisoners and their families.

The Government are seeking to develop a more strategic approach to engaging the children and families of offenders, both to maintain family ties and to support resettlement. Work is being taken forward under the Reducing Re-offending National Action Plan to establish best practice within a regional pathfinder. This is being taken forward in partnership with a wide range of voluntary and statutory organizations. In support of this collaborative working, the Probation Service is developing a national framework for working effectively with children and families of offenders.

Prison Staff

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prison officers and staff *(a)* were tested for HIV/Aids and *(b)* tested positive for HIV/Aids, following an incident in which they were injured (i) in each year since 1997 and (ii) from 1 January to 1 December; [203714]

(2) how many prison officers and staff were waiting on 6 December for the outcome of a test for HIV/Aids following an incident in prison in which they were injured. [203715]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* The Prison service does not hold information on the number of prison officers or staff tested for Aids/HIV or the results of any such tests. This information is confidential to the member of staff and is not normally available to the Prison Service.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with prison governors about the ability of prison officers to carry out front-line duties beyond the age of 60 years; and if he will make a statement. [218187]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service has been involved in a range of discussions with prison governors and their representatives on the ability of prison officers to work beyond the age of 60, through the formal Whitley Council structure as well as in other forums. These discussions continue. Prison Officers are currently able to work beyond the age of 60 in exceptional circumstances where the Governor is satisfied that retention is necessary to meet the overriding needs of the Service.

Serious Organised Crime Agency

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the proposed objectives of the Serious Organised Crime Agency have changed since the decision to establish it. [218359]

Caroline Flint: The proposed objective for the Serious Organised Crime Agency continues to be to reduce the harm caused by serious organised crime to the United Kingdom, as set out in the Government White Paper, "One Step Ahead: A 21st Century Strategy to Defeat Organised Crime", published on 29 March 2004.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what costs have been incurred in the establishment of the Serious Organised Crime Agency to date; and what estimate he has made of the total costs. [218361]

Caroline Flint: Costs incurred within the 2004–05 financial year towards the establishment of the Serious Organised Crime Agency have been met from within the existing Home Office budget. Costs to be incurred within 2005–06 will be funded from a transition budget of up to £13.5 million resource and £10 million capital agreed as a result of SR 2004.

Sexual Assaults

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to extend the network of sexual assault referral centres to *(a)* Leeds and *(b)* Yorkshire. [218660]

Paul Goggins: Plans are under way to develop a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Leeds which would provide forensic examination and link in with the support and counselling offered by the STAR (Surviving Trauma After Rape) project. STAR was established in 1994 by the Police and the four health authorities in West Yorkshire to provide co-ordinated support and counselling for victims of sexual assault. In addition, I understand that the voluntary and community sector are considering developing a SARC in Halifax.

We are committed to increasing the number of SARCs in England and Wales and Home Office funding from the Victims Fund is to be made available for the establishment of new SARCs in 2005–06. Projects in Leeds and in Yorkshire will be invited to apply for grants along with all other areas of England and Wales. Details of the application process will be made available in March.

Unpaid Fines

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were imprisoned because of *(a)* unpaid fines and *(b)* uncompleted community orders in each year since 1997. [217110]

Paul Goggins: The number of persons received into prison establishments in default of payment of a fine in each year from 1997 to 2003 is as follows:

	Number
1997	6,336
1998	5,374
1999	3,727
2000	2,476
2001	1,453
2002	1,192
2003	1,250

Information for 2004 is available only to 30 November at present, during which period there were 1,719 receptions of fine defaulters into prison establishments, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system.

The available information on persons imprisoned for uncompleted community orders is for persons[1] sentenced to immediate custody following breach of a community sentence[2] and is as follows:

[1] Includes a person more than once if sentenced to immediate custody for a breach of more than one type of community sentence on the same day.

[2] Includes probation orders (community rehabilitation orders from April 2001), supervision orders (but not available for 1997–99), community service orders (community punishment orders from April 2001), attendance centre orders, combination orders (community punishment and rehabilitation orders from April 2001), curfew orders, reparation orders (from June 2000), action plan orders (from June 2000) and drug treatment and testing orders (from October 2000). It does not include referral orders (from April 2002).

	Number
1997	7,205
1998	6,401
1999	7,573
2000	8,317
2001	8,094
2002	9,071
2003	9,526

Statistics for persons sentenced in 2004 are due for publication later this year.

Victim Support (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the victim support scheme in the Greater London area. [206184]

Paul Goggins: The Greater London area is not serviced by one individual Victim Support scheme. Victim

Support services are organised by individual London boroughs and the London Crown Court Witness Service is managed by Victim Support's National Office.

The Home Office assesses the effectiveness of individual Victim Support schemes by monitoring the outcomes of area inspections, undertaken by Victim Support's Quality and Standards Department. Several London boroughs and the London Crown Court Witness Service have been reviewed since the new inspection process was introduced in 2003. Victim Support's inspection reports are public documents and can be viewed on their website.

The Home Office also reviews Victim Support's statistical information for the Metropolitan area on an annual basis. In 2003–04 Victim Support schemes and Witness Services in the Metropolitan area received a total of 236,683 referrals. The community-based services made 249,905 successful contacts and achieved a personal contact rate which exceeded the national average.

Visas

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the request from the Visa Section of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the clearance of Mr. Abdulazeem Morsy (GV100/102307/DL) to enter the UK. [219387]

Mr. Browne: The information requested was forwarded electronically to the Visa Section of the British Embassy in Khartoum on 1 March 2005.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 7 March 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with countries affected by the Asian tsunami regarding the sexual exploitation of children left *(a)* orphaned and *(b)* otherwise vulnerable, by the disaster; and what assistance the Government have given to help combat sexual exploitation of vulnerable children. [219717]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has talked at length with affected governments and humanitarian agencies operating on the ground to ensure that the needs of all vulnerable groups are adequately met. In particular, DFID is supporting programmes through the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). This includes £2,250,000 to UNICEF's Child Protection programmes in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. This programme includes assessments of the needs of children, the monitoring of vulnerable groups and advocacy on behalf of children with the relevant government bodies. DFID has also provided £400,000 to the Save the Children Fund's programme in Sri Lanka that includes child protection activities.

DFID continues to monitor the situation, and its country offices are retaining strong links to non-governmental organisations and United Nations agencies as we move into the recovery phase.

Malawi

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has received from the Malawi Government on the time scale for commencement of funds for the six-year health programme. [218045]

Hilary Benn: DFID has been clear that UK aid under the new six-year programme will be available from the beginning of the UK 2005–06 financial year. No representations have been received about the time scale for the commencement of payments. DFID spending on health in Malawi in financial year 2004–05 on existing commitments to Government and NGO programmes will be £11 million and is expected to increase by 50 per cent. with the new programme in 2005–06 and subsequent years.

DFID signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Health and other collaborating partners, Norway/SIDA and the World Bank on 29 October 2004, and an exchange of letters on DFID's health sector support on 9 December 2005. An initial disbursement of funds into the Donor Pool to support the Sector Wide Approach was made in December by Norway/SIDA. DFID is due to add its disbursement into this pool on 1 April 2005, once agreement is reached on a plan of action to reform Central Medical Stores.

TRANSPORT

Metrolink (Manchester)

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will determine the bid for the upgrading of phases 1 and 2 of Manchester's Metrolink. [220394]

Mr. McNulty: We are discussing the bid in detail with the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive and will make a decision as soon as we are able to.

Transport Projects

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what major transport projects have been approved in the last year, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [215839]

Mr. Darling: The major local authority schemes (outside London) listed in Table 1 were approved fully during the course of 2004:

Table 1: Full approval

Scheme	*Constituency*
Rugeley Eastern Bypass	Cannock Chase
A167 Chilton Bypass	Sedgefield
A158 Partney Bypass	Louth and Horncastle
Cradley Heath Town Centre Strategy	Halesowen and Rowley Regis
Sunderland Southern Radial Route	Sunderland S
Barnstaple Western Bypass	North Devon
South Lowestoft Relief Road	Waveney
A429 Barford Bypass	Warwick and Leamington
Stoke Hammond and Linslade Bypass, Bucks	Buckingham South West Bedfordshire
Northfield Regeneration Route, Birmingham	Birmingham Northfield

Table 1: Full approval

Scheme	*Constituency*
West Midlands Red Route	Wolverhampton North East Wolverhampton South West Wolverhampton South East Walshall North Aldridge-Brownhills Walshall South Dudley North West Bromwich West/ East Birmingham Perry Barr Birmingham Erdington Sutton Coldfield Dudley South Stourbridge Halesowen and Rowley Regis Warley Birmingham Edgbaston Birmingham Ladywood Birmingham Hodge Hill Birmingham Yardley Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath Birmingham Northfield Birmingham Selly Oak Birmingham Hall Green Solihull Meriden
North West Taunton	Taunton
Primelines (Coventry quality bus network)	Coventry North West Coventry South Coventry North East
Wolverhampton Centre access Interchange	Wolverhampton North East Wolverhampton South West Wolverhampton South East
Derby Inner Ring Road Maintenance	Derby North Derby South
Plymouth A386 Northern Corridor Improvements, Park and Ride	Plymouth Sutton Plymouth Devonport
Salisbury Integrated Transport Package	Salisbury

The major local authority schemes (outside London) listed in Table 2 were provisionally approved during the course of 2004. These schemes are approved with conditions, the main ones being that costs do not increase, statutory and consultative procedures are completed satisfactorily and their designs and appraisal do not change significantly.

Table 2: Provisional Approval

Edge Lane West, Liverpool	Liverpool Wavertree Liverpool West Derby
Bexhill To Hastings Link Road	Hastings and Rye Bexhill and Battle
Sittingbourne Northern Developer Route	Sittingbourne and Sheppey
Watford Junction	Watford
Castle ford Interchange	Pontefract and Castleford
Copnor Bridge, Portsmouth	Portsmouth South

The schemes listed in Table 3 were added to the Highway Agency's targeted programme of improvements during 2004.

Table 3

A27 Southerham to Beddingham Improvement	Eastbourne Lewes
M1 J21–30	Loughborough Blaby North West Leicestershire Bosworth Bolsover Broxtowe Ashfield Nottingham North North East Derbyshire Erewash Sherwood Leicester West Chesterfield Charnwood
M25 J1b-3 Widening	Dartford Orpington Bexleyheath and Crayford
M25 J5–7 Widening	Sevenoaks East Surrey

Table 3

M25 J16–23 Widening	Hertsmere St. Albans Uxbridge South West Hertfordshire Ruislip Northwood
M25 J23–27 Widening	Enfield North Epping Forest Broxbourne Welwyn Hatfield Hemel Hemstead
M25 J27–30 Widening	Thurrock Romford Hornchurch Chipping Barnet Chingford and Woodford Green
A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst Bypass	Bexhill and Battle Hastings and Rye Tunbridge Wells
A23 Handcross to Warninglid Widening	Crawley Horsham Mid Sussex
A453 Widening (M1 J24 to A52 Nottingham)	North West Leicestershire Rushcliffe Nottingham South

Decisions on road projects in London have been devolved to the London Mayor.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport *(a)* how many and *(b)* what types of unmanned aerial vehicles have been licensed to operate over land in civilian airspace by the Civil Aviation Authority in each of the last five years. [220167]

Charlotte Atkins: To date, the Civil Aviation Authority has not issued any Certificates of Airworthiness to unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Business Regulatory Costs

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to review the cost of regulation to businesses. [217347]

Nigel Griffiths: Previous budgets have taken measures to reduce the costs of regulation to business. For instance our flat rate VAT scheme has helped cut payments for up to 700,000 businesses.

Our raising the mandatory audit threshold has helped up to 219,000 businesses save up to £270 million per annum. Our abolition of automatic fines for VAT have helped too—in 1996–97 this cost business £99 million.

Future budgets can be expected to provide further help.

Russian Economic Forum

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether *(a)* she and *(b)* a representative from her Department will be meeting the Russian Federation's Minister of Energy and Industry during his visit to London to address the Russian Economic Forum in London on 10 to 12 April. [219500]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, met Viktor Khristenko, the Russian Federation's Minister of Energy and Industry, in June during a visit to Moscow. Also, the Director-General Energy met Mr. Khristenko in Moscow in November. The Department is hoping that a further meeting can be arranged with the Secretary of State the next time Mr. Khristenko visits London. This could be during the Russian Economic Forum in London on 10 to 12 April but there could be an earlier meeting. The general position is that DTI Ministers are happy to meet Ministers from the Russian Federation on matters of mutual interest whenever opportunities arise and diaries permit.

UK Economy

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in which industries the UK enjoys a significant comparative advantage relative to *(a)* the US, *(b)* China, *(c)* India and *(d)* EU accession countries. [219440]

Mr. Alexander: I am not aware of any analysis that would show in which industries all these countries enjoy a significant comparative advantage relative to each other. However estimates of revealed comparative advantage suggest that the following countries especially specialise in the following sectors:

UK: Financial and insurance, creative and media, aerospace and pharmaceuticals

USA: Aerospace

China: Clothing, textiles, household goods especially brown and white electronic goods, accessories such as suitcases, watches, jewellery, tableware.

I am not aware of an analysis for India and the EU accession countries.

PRIME MINISTER

Annual Report

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister when he plans to publish the Government's Annual Report. [220504]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) on 12 July 2001, *Official Report*, column 638W.

Intercept Evidence

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 23 February, *Official Report*, column 302, on intercept evidence, when he saw the advice received by the Leader of the Opposition when he was Home Secretary. [220241]

The Prime Minister: It is a matter of public record that there have been a number of reviews of intercept as evidence, including under the previous administration. None of these recommended a change in the law.

Iraq

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister whether minutes were made of each meeting his special advisers held with the Attorney-General in March 2003 on the preparation of legal advice on the legality of engaging in military action against Iraq. [219448]

The Prime Minister: The meeting which the Attorney-General held with Lord Falconer and Baroness Morgan on 13 March 2003 did not discuss the preparation of legal advice on the legality of engaging in military action against Iraq. I refer the hon. Members to the answer given by my noble Friend the Attorney-General (Lord Goldsmith) to Baroness Hanham on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column WA1 and the answer given by my noble Friend the Leader of the House of Lords (Baroness Amos) to Earl Attlee on 7 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns WA96–97.

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister which members of the Cabinet were shown the full text of the Attorney-General's legal advice on the legality of the war of 7 March 2003. [212314]

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister what criteria he used in making his decision on whether to show the full advice from the Attorney-General on military action in Iraq to every member of his Cabinet. [219512]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Lynne Jones) on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 923W.

Legal Advice

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Prime Minister whether he is required under the Ministerial Code of Conduct to show full legal advice received from the Attorney-General relating to matters before the Cabinet to each member of the Cabinet. [219511]

The Prime Minister: Section 1 of the Ministerial Code provides guidance to Ministers on the conduct of Cabinet Business, and advice received from the Law Officers.

September 11

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what representations he has received from the families of British victims of September 11 2001 concerning the investigation of *(a)* the events that took place in New York, Washington DC and Pennsylvania on that day and *(b)* the circumstances leading to those events; and if he will make a statement; [220254]

(2) what representations he has made to President Bush concerning the investigation of the events of September 11 2001; and if he will make a statement. [220255]

The Prime Minister: I received over 7,000 letters following the September 11 terrorist attacks, including some from the families of British victims. A number of these raised the US Government investigation into those attacks and the circumstances leading to them. The Government have had extensive discussions with the US Government, at many levels, about circumstances surrounding the events of 11 September 2001.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Biodiversity

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact termination of the EU Life Nature Fund would have on her Department's ability to meet its public service agreement target of achieving favourable conditions for 95 per cent. of sites of special interest in England by 2010. [200579]

Mr. Bradshaw: It has not yet been possible to make an assessment of the impact because the European Commission has yet to provide member states with answers to detailed questions about their proposals, including the scope of the proposed LIFE+ Regulation to replace the LIFE Nature Regulation.

Moreover, applications for funding under Life Nature are made by a variety of organisations. I am unable to say which among those with responsibility for aspects of SSSI condition have been expecting to rely on a Life Nature contribution in taking this forward.

Countryside Access

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the transitional arrangements which will be put in place when section 53 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 is implemented will require surveying authorities to process to a conclusion all applications for definitive map modification orders on their registers at the cut-off date. [216913]

Alun Michael: There is provision for regulations in section 56(2) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to allow the making of transitional provisions and savings in respect of applications outstanding at the time of the cut-off date.

It is our intention that the regulations under section 56 will provide that all applications entered on the register at the cut-off date will be processed to their conclusion by the surveying authority.

Global Warming

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of possible benefits arising from global warming in respect of *(a)* lower energy costs and *(b)* higher crop yield. [218965]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* The information is as follows:

(a) The UK's energy projections take account of the effect of increasing temperatures on energy demand, although we have not identified the impact separately. We are not aware of any detailed studies of the potential for higher temperatures to reduce energy usage globally, although space heating and cooling are both key users of energy, so rising temperatures, whilst reducing winter heating requirements, will lead to increased use of air conditioning, which will counteract and possibly outweigh any gains.

(b) A study entitled Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture was carried out for Defra in 2004 by the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER). Among its findings, the study demonstrated that warmer temperatures resulting from climate change will increase the potential growing season of arable and other crops, earlier sowings will be possible, and crops will grow and ripen faster. In particular, maize will have a higher yield potential in an extended growing season.

GM Crops

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the final results of the winter oilseed rape field scale evaluations will be published; in what form they will be published; and whether her Department will consult stakeholders before responding to the results. [219527]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The results from the farm-scale evaluations of winter oilseed rape are expected to be published in the journal "The Proceedings of the Royal Society" on 21 March 2005. On that day the Scientific Steering Committee, which oversaw the evaluations, and members of the research consortium, who undertook the research, will present the results at an open meeting at the Royal Institution in London. Details of the event are available through the Defra website. The committee is also arranging for a non-technical summary to be published on the same day; this will be available both as a free publication and to download from Defra's website.

The Government intend to refer the results to the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment for advice on their implications. ACRE is proposing to hold an open meeting on 25 May 2005 at which it will take evidence to assist it with formulating the advice required for our response to the results. Details of this event will be finalised shortly and placed on Defra's website. There will also be provision on the web for stakeholders to submit evidence for ACRE's consideration.

Green Taxes

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the effects of EFTA Surveillance Authority Decision No. 148/04/COL of 30 June 2004, 2004/C 319/08, OJ C319 of 23 December 2004, on the ability of EU states to adjust green taxes under single market competition provisions. [215238]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The Government support effective control of distortive state aids within the Single Market. The Government have been active in using environmental taxes, along with other approaches, to achieve environmental outcomes and do not believe that the EFTA Surveillance Authority decision alters the ability of the UK and other EU member states to make changes to their environmental taxes within the scope of the EU state aid rules.

Planning Inspectorate

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the consistency guidelines produced by the Planning Inspectorate that relate to rights of way and definition map orders; how they may be amended; and who monitors their accuracy. [220471]

Alun Michael: The Planning Inspectorate has produced a document entitled "Definitive Map Orders: Consistency Guidelines". These guidelines were developed in consultation with rights of way inspectors and Defra's rights of way policy division. The Rights of Way Review Committee and, more recently, various rights of way user groups have been consulted over the content of the guidelines. The Inspectorate, in conjunction with Defra, continues to monitor and update the guidelines as changes in legislation and case law make this necessary. Any individual or group that considers that a change to the guidelines is necessary can alert the Planning Inspectorate or Defra's rights of way policy division to this need.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to protect society from the impact of animal diseases; [219978]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the health and welfare of kept animals; [219979]

(3) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the spread of bovine TB to new parishes to below the incremental trend of 17.5 confirmed new instances per annum by the end of 2008 will be met; [219980]

(4) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to eradicate BSE by 2010 will be met; [219981]

(5) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the prevalence of scrapie infection by 40 per cent. from 0.33 per cent. to 0.20 per cent. by 2010 will be met; [219982]

(6) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to eliminate fuel poverty in vulnerable households in England by 2010 will be met; [219983]

(7) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to care for the natural heritage; [219984]

(8) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target of moving towards a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010; [219985]

(9) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 12.5 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010 will be met; [219986]

(10) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the use of energy saving technologies; [219987]

(11) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to lead the integration of environment policies across Government and internationally; [219988]

(12) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement targets to protect and improve the *(a)* rural, *(b)* urban, *(c)* marine and *(d)* global environment; [219989]

(13) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement targets to deliver more customer-focused farming; [219990]

(14) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote sustainable, diverse, modern and adaptable farming through domestic and international action; [219991]

(15) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote a sustainable, competitive and safe food supply chain; [219992]

(16) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the accessibility of services for rural people; [219993]

(17) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to deliver the UK's World Summit on Sustainable Development commitments in the areas of *(a)* sustainable consumption, *(b)* sustainable production, *(c)* biodiversity, *(d)* oceans, *(e)* fisheries and *(f)* agriculture; [219994]

(18) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the electronic service delivery capability to Common Agricultural Policy payments to 95 per cent. by 31 March will be met; [219995]

(19) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the unit cost of administering Common Agricultural Policy payments by 10 per cent. by 2004–05 will be met; [219996]

(20) whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the time taken to clear up cases of poor welfare in farmed animals by 5 per cent. by March 2004 was met; [219997]

(21) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the annual incidence of BSE to less than 30 cases by 2006 will be met; [219998]

(22) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to improve air quality by meeting the National Air Quality strategy objectives for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1–3 butadiene; [219999]

(23) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to protect the public's interest in relation to environmental impacts and health; [220000]

(24) whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce fuel poverty among vulnerable households by improving the energy efficiency of 600,000 homes between 2001 and 2004 was met; [220001]

(25) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to enable 25 per cent. of household waste to be recycled or composted by 2005–06 will be met; [220002]

(26) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement targets to promote *(a)* sustainable management and *(b)* the prudent use of natural resources domestically and internationally. [220003]

(27) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to enable enhanced EU funding for rural development; [220004]

(28) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to enable enhanced EU funding for environmental conservation; [220005]

(29) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to secure Common Agricultural Policy reforms; [220006]

(30) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase agriculture's gross value added per person; [220007]

(31) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to deliver more competitive and sustainable farming; [220008]

(32) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the gap in productivity between the least well performing quartile of rural areas and the English median by 2006 will be met; [220009]

(33) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to enhance opportunity in rural areas; [220010]

(34) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to tackle social exclusion in rural areas; [220011]

(35) what recent assessment she has made towards the Public Service Agreement target to open up public access to mountain, moor, heath and down by the end of 2005 will be met; [220012]

(36) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to bring 95 per cent. of all nationally important wildlife sites into favourable condition by 2010 will be met; [220013]

(37) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reverse the long-term decline in the number of farmland birds by 2020; [220014]

(38) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to preserve biological diversity; [220015]

(39) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote sustainable development across Government and the country; [220016]

(40) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to make the countryside attractive and enjoyable for all; [220017]

(41) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to deliver thriving economies and communities in rural areas; [220018]

(42) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote economic prosperity through sustainable farming, fishing, food, water and other industries that meet consumers' requirements. [220019]

Alun Michael: The Department provides regular performance updates against its outstanding Public Service Agreement targets through its annual Departmental Report and its Autumn Performance Report published in spring and autumn respectively. The 2004 versions, which are the most recently published, are available in the House Libraries and online at:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/deprep/default.htm

A short summary of progress against our 2002 Spending Review targets can be found in Appendix 4 of the reports, with more detailed information available in Chapter 2.

The Department also gives regular updates on its performance via HM Treasury's website at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/performance/DEFRA.cfm

Defra's 2005 Departmental Report is due for publication late spring/early summer 2005.

Village Halls

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funding streams are available for village hall facility improvements; and if she will make a statement. [218609]

Alun Michael: Funding for village halls has traditionally come from local and charitable sources, with only a relatively small amount of support from central Government. Indeed, the amount of central funding assisting village halls now is very much higher than it was in the seventies, eighties and nineties. Since its inception in 1995, the Community Fund of the National Lottery has provided grants to the value of more than £138 million to around 4,500 village hall projects and the Millennium Fund supported over 500 village halls and urban community centres to the value of nearly £100 million. National funding sources including the Big Lottery Fund will continue to make an important contribution; but this must supplement and not be seen as a substitute for local leadership and fund-raising.

The variety of public funding includes the following:

Defra: Rural Enterprise Scheme; Village Halls Loan Fund; Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund; Landfill Tax Credit Scheme.

National Lottery Funds: Big Lottery Fund; Awards for All.

Local authorities provide grants in addition to the Parish Council precept and the access available from Parish Council to the Public Works Loan Board.

The above information refers only to the public funding which is available to supplement local fund-raising and donations which have always been the main source of finance for village halls.

Indirect sources of public funds to supplement private donations include Gift Aid, and some limited VAT reduction.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Betting Terminals

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what legal advice the Government have received on the legality of fixed odds betting terminals in high street locations; [220194]

(2) what legal advice the Gaming Board has received on the legality of fixed odds betting terminals in high street locations. [220195]

Mr. Caborn: Legal advice given to the Department on this matter will be subject to legal professional privilege, and confidential as a result. I believe the same would be true for any advice received by the Gaming Board.

I would, however, refer the hon. Member to paragraphs 1.24–1.25 of the Board's Report for 2003–04, which noted the uncertainty about the legal status of fixed odds betting terminals, as a matter of public record. The Report was laid in the House on 14 July 2004 and copies are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will estimate *(a)* the number of fixed odds betting terminals in operation and *(b)* the number of locations in town centres where fixed odds betting terminals are operating. [220196]

Mr. Caborn: We estimate that there are currently about 24,000 fixed odds betting terminals in operation, but are not in a position to estimate the number of betting shops located in town centres rather than elsewhere.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate her Department has made of the average amount of money lost per head on fixed odds betting terminals each week. [220197]

Mr. Caborn: We have made no such estimate. The only information available is included in the draft report prepared for the Association of British Bookmakers by Europe Economics, which indicates, on the basis of interviews with a sample of betting shop customers, that their average weekly spend on all forms of gambling (including using fixed odds betting terminals) is between £50 and £60.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the total amount spent in the last week for which figures are available on *(a)* fixed odds betting terminals and *(b)* the national lottery. [220198]

Mr. Caborn: Information about total weekly spend on fixed odds betting terminals is not available. National lottery sales for the week 20–26 February were £93,135,739.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the percentage of problem gamblers who attribute their problems mainly to fixed odds betting terminals. [220199]

Mr. Caborn: The information so far available on the relationship between problem gambling and use of fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) is contained in the draft of an independent report undertaken for the Association of British Bookmakers by Europe Economics, who are currently considering comments on it by two independent experts who reviewed it at the Department's request. The report does not provide a firm basis for estimating the percentage sought, but it indicates that, on the basis of a sample of 7,845 people who bet or gamed (excluding bingo) at least once a month, 48 used FOBTs at least once a month. It also notes that 29 people (0.4 per cent. of the total sample) could be classified as problem gamblers, but concludes that while nearly all participated in more than one form of gambling the numbers involved were too small to permit meaningful further analysis.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Coventry, South constituency, the effects in the constituency of changes to her Department's policies since 1997. [219820]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Coventry, South since 2 May 1997.

In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. One school sport partnership involving three School Sport Co-ordinators and 15 Primary Link teachers is based in Coventry, South. It has received a Sport England grant of £327,310. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Coventry, South have benefited from two Sport England Community Capital Lottery grants totalling £562,787, two Sport England Active Sports Lottery grants totalling £1,665,612 and a further two awards worth £905,655 in total from the £108 million investment in innovative sports facilities through the Active England programme.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 funding to Arts Council England, West Midlands increased from £5.6 million to £32.5 million, including from 1 April 2003, funding to major national arts organisations in the West Midlands.

In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England, West Midlands investment in regularly funded organisations will be £35.4 million. Coventry, South has benefited from grants to arts organisations and individuals, including the Belgrade Theatre and Arts and Media Training which is based in Coventry.

Since September 2004, schools in Coventry, South have been included in the second phase of the Creative Partnerships programme which began in 2002. Creative Partnerships aims to give school children and their teachers the opportunity to explore their creativity by working on sustained projects with creative organisations and individuals, including artists, theatre companies, dance studios, museums, orchestras, film-makers and historic buildings. Funding of £65 million was allocated for the period 2002–05 to develop Creative Partnerships, and the programme will receive at least a further £86 million in 2005–08.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Coventry, South will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Coventry, South also benefits in the museum sector from Renaissance in the Regions.

Coventry Arts and Heritage is a partner in the West Midlands regional hub, which, as a Phase 1 hub, received priority funding; it received £0.8 million in the 2003–04 financial year for Renaissance, with a further £0.62 million from the Education Strategy Fund. The total grant for the period 2003–06 will be £7.11 million from Renaissance and £3.14 million from the Education Strategy Fund, totalling £10.25 million. Of this money, Coventry Arts and Heritage has been allocated £1,068,075 to deliver Coventry's contribution to the West Midlands Hub's two-year plan.

In addition, the collections of the Coventry Transport Museum have been designated by Museums, Libraries and Archives Council as being a pre-eminent collection of national or international importance. The museum has received £445,000 through the Designated Challenge Fund, which is financed by DCMS, to improve interpretation and displays levering a substantial amount of investment from European funds and a huge commitment from the council to support the museum's work.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity in the Coventry, South area. Screen West Midlands has provided lottery funding to a number of film-related activities in the constituency including the Warwick Arts Centre and the Blink Film Festival Coventry.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in the Coventry, South constituency with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 5,715.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on new year's eve to 11 am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Coventry, South, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Coventry, South has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including Advantage West Midlands. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Coventry, South.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £265,168 to Coventry, South since May 1997, including £100,000 to 119–123 Spon Street and £97,414 to 123a/123b Upper Spon Street in 2001.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Coventry, South are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community and informal learning value of public libraries. Councils within the West Midlands area including Coventry city council have recognised this value and as part of a consortium took part in an initiative called Multinet, the result of which was to enable the participating public library authorities to enjoy the benefits of high bandwidth networking technology. Coventry's central library, which resides in the Coventry, South constituency, was one of the beneficiaries of the project's overall award of £324,439 from the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund in 1999–2000.

The DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund has also supplied an award of £124,761 in 2001–02 towards the Caring with Books initiative in the West Midlands. This entailed building relationships with books and reading between foster families, public care institutes and many of the 7,000 children currently in public care across the West Midlands, including the Coventry area.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Coventry, South has benefited from over 347 awards totalling over £55 million. Of these, 43 awards worth just under £5 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the Blackpool, North and Fleetwood constituency, the effect of her Department's policies and actions on the constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [219786]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Blackpool, North and Fleetwood since 2 May 1997.

In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. One school sport partnership involving eight School Sport Co-ordinators and 35 Primary Link teachers is based in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood. It has received a Sport England grant of £327,570. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities since 1997. Sports facilities in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood have benefited from two Sport England Community Capital Lottery grants totalling £514,330.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £67 million in 2004–50. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 funding to Arts Council England, North West increased from £7.6 million to £19.6 million including from 1 April 2003, funding to major national arts organisations in the North West. In 2005–06, the total Arts Council England North West investment in the

region will be £28.4 million. Blackpool, North and Fleetwood has benefited from grants to arts organisations and individuals in the North West, including the Blackpool Grand and the North West Disability Arts Forum.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity in the Blackpool, North and Fleetwood area. A considerable amount of television has been filmed in and around Blackpool since 1997, including the forthcoming television drama "Blackpool" and the comedy series "Max and Paddy". The film "Frozen" was filmed in Fleetwood at the end of 2003 and beginning of 2004. This film was launched at the London Film Festival last November and has just won the prize for best cinematography and the Audience Award at the Slamdance Film Festival in the US.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 7,800.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11pm on new year's eve to 11am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism across the country has benefited from Government-funded marketing and development activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and its successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Blackpool and Fleetwood. In April 2003, the Regional Development Agencies were given strategic responsibility for tourism in the regions, from which Blackpool and Fleetwood have benefited. In 2003, Blackpool borough council was one of six local authorities to participate in a pilot scheme to promote the Fitness for Purpose initiative to help drive up tourism accommodation standards.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £505,500 to Blackpool, North and Fleetwood since 2 May 1997, including £379,000 to North Shore Methodist Church, Blackpool from 2002 to 2004 and £126,500 to Wyre borough council for the Fleetwood Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme from 2002 to 2004.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million Lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community and informal learning value of public libraries. Councils in the Northwest area including Blackpool borough council have recognised this value and took part in an initiative called Blackpool Community Network, the result of which was to enable the participating public library service to give public access to a large range of IT facilities in 12 libraries, including Internet Access and MS Office applications. Public libraries in Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency were among those benefiting from the overall project award of £52,000.

The DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund has also supplied an award of £178,297 in 2001–02, towards the Smile initiative in Lancashire. This entailed setting up reader development activities aimed at children and young people who have learning difficulties and their families. These activities were supported by the development of 15 multi-media collections and a specially designed website. A proportion of this award was of benefit to the library service in Fleetwood.

Information from the National Lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Blackpool, North and Fleetwood has benefited from 177 awards totalling over £5.2 million. Of these, 45 awards worth over £2 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Licensing Fees (Amateur Sports Clubs)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many representations the Department has received on the proposed increase in licensing fees for amateur sports clubs; and what response the Department has made; [219521]

(2) what representations she has received from the Central Council for Physical Recreation on the proposed increases in licensing fees for amateur sports clubs. [219522]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* There were 97 responses to the consultation on fee levels to be set by the Secretary of State under the Licensing Act 2003 from sports clubs and their representative bodies, including the Central Council for Physical Recreation. We considered the views expressed to us by all respondents including those of sports clubs. On balance we concluded from the evidence that we had underestimated costs of the new regime and that it would be necessary to increase the fee levels generally. We set out our reasons for increasing the fee levels in detail most recently during the debate in the Second Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation on 23 February 2005.

Regional Sports Boards

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list *(a)* the budgets and *(b)* the operating costs for each of the Regional Sports Boards in the last year for which figures are available. [219520]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* Details of the 2004–05 budget for the public expenditure (Exchequer and lottery) of Sport England's regional offices are given in the table.

£000

	Awards distributed	*Direct delivery costs*	*Other running costs*	*Total*
East	9,128	39	989	10,156
East Midlands	14,868	44	1,041	15,953
London	12,802	60	1,066	13,927
North East	11,915	46	930	12,891
North West	26,849	74	1,249	28,172
South East	14,514	51	1,333	15,899
South West	10,394	38	952	11,384
West Midlands	13,183	46	1,061	14,290
Yorkshire	9,054	44	1,022	10,120

Sports' Reviews

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list reviews of sport which are in progress *(a)* which she has initiated and *(b)* to which the Department is contributing; and when she expects each to report. [219523]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* In July 2004, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State asked Lord Carter to undertake an independent review of funding for sport. The report is expected to be published shortly.

In 2004, the Football Association (FA) commissioned a structural review of the organisation. The Department expects to be consulted as part of the review. The review's Independent Chairman, Lord Burns, is expected to report to the FA in summer 2005.

The Cabinet Office's Regulatory Impact Unit is carrying out a review—of which the Department is co-sponsor—of funding of school and community sport. The report is expected to be published later this month.

TREASURY

Asset Transfers

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the transfer of resources to Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise to reflect transfers of office assets from the Treasury in central London will require additional cost savings to be made by those Departments. [220379]

Dawn Primarolo: The annual efficiency savings target of £507 million, to be achieved by 2007–08, was set in the 2004 Spending Review and applies to the integrated Revenue and Customs department. The changes to bring the Eastern end of the Government Offices Great George Street onto the Revenue and Customs balance sheets, as set out in the 2004–05 Spring Supplementary Estimates, do not affect this target.

Child Trust Funds

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many separate items of literature have been sent to parents of children entitled to child trust funds; how many parents have received these to date; how many more are expected to receive them by 5 May; and what the planned cost is of the production and postage of all items of literature about child trust funds to 5 May. [219797]

Mr. Timms: Three items of literature have been issued to parents of children eligible for the Child Trust Fund. A letter was sent in November 2004 to let parents know they would be contacted shortly about the Child Trust Fund and that there would be no need to make a claim. Detailed information packs and vouchers to open a Child Trust Fund account started to be sent out in January 2005.

The Inland Revenue will have sent these items to around 1.6 million parents of eligible children by the beginning of May 2005.

The planned cost of production and postage of these items is approximately £2,200,000.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* the cost to date and *(b)* the planned cost to May of the Government's advertising campaign for child trust funds is. [219868]

Mr. Timms: Total media spend on advertising the Child Trust Fund including any related media buying fees and VAT for the period January to March 2005 inclusive is approximately £3.75 million.

Plans for April are currently being worked on and have not yet been finalised.

Economic Growth

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the quarterly growth rates were for each of the last 17 years. [219895]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 4 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question requesting quarterly growth rates for each of the last 17 years. (219895)

The quarterly growth rates for the chained volume measure of GDP at market prices and GDP at current market prices for each of the last 17 years are shown in the attached table, which I am also placing in the House of Commons Library.

Quarterly growth rates for chained volume measure of GDP at market prices and GDP at current market prices, 1988–2004

		Chained volume measure of GDP at market prices	GDP at current market prices
1988	Q1	1.6	3.0
1988	Q2	0.5	2.2
1988	Q3	1.4	3.5
1988	Q4	0.7	3.1
1989	Q1	0.3	2.0
1989	Q2	0.6	1.5
1989	Q3	0.1	2.4
1989	Q4	0.1	2.1
1990	Q1	0.8	2.0
1990	Q2	0.5	3.1
1990	Q3	-1.2	1.5
1990	Q4	-0.6	0.1
1991	Q1	0.0	1.8
1991	Q2	-0.3	1.3
1991	Q3	-0.4	0.9
1991	Q4	0.1	1.5
1992	Q1	0.3	1.2
1992	Q2	-0.3	0.8
1992	Q3	0.6	0.5
1992	Q4	0.5	0.6
1993	Q1	0.6	1.8
1993	Q2	0.6	1.0
J993	Q3	1.0	2.2
1993	Q4	1.2	1.5
1994	Q1	1.1	1.4
1994	Q2	1.4	1.3
1994	Q3	1.0	1.0
1994	Q4	0.7	2.1
1995	Q1	0.4	1.1
1995	Q2	0.8	1.3
1995	Q3	0.4	1.2
1995	Q4	0.8	1.6
1996	Q1	0.8	1.8
1996	Q2	0.3	1.6
1996	Q3	0.9	1.3
1996	Q4	1.2	1.0
1997	Q1	0.5	2.3
1997	Q2	1.0	1.4
1997	Q3	0.4	0.9
1997	Q4	1.3	1.9
1998	Q1	0.6	1.3
1998	Q2	0,5	1.4
1998	Q3	1.1	2.1
1998	Q4	0.7	0.9
1999	Q1	0.4	0.8
1999	Q2	0.5	1.4
1999	Q3	1.1	1.6
1999	Q4	1.3	1.2
2000	Q1	1.2	2.0
2000	Q2	0.7	0.5
2000	Q3	0.7	1.2
2000	Q4	0.3	0.6
2001	Q1	0.8	1.7
2001	Q2	0.5	1.1
2001	Q3	0.5	0.7
2001	Q4	0.4	1.7
2002	Q1	0.3	0.8
2002	Q2	0.4	1.4
2002	Q3	0.9	1.9
2002	Q4	0.3	0.7
2003	Q1	0.4	1.5
2003	Q2	0.4	0.8
2003	Q3	0.9	2.2
2003	Q4	1.0	1.0
2004	Q1	0.6	1.2
2004	Q2	1.0	1.5
2004	Q3	0.5	0.8
2004	Q4	0.7	1.4

Employment Statistics

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the rate of *(a)* unemployment, *(b)* long-term unemployment and *(c)* youth unemployment in each borough of London has been in each year since 1997; and how many individuals this represented in each case. [212371]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Ms Sarah Teather, dated 7 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (212371)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following International Labour Organisation definitions. The attached three tables show the levels and rates for the unemployed, long-term unemployed, and youth unemployment for each of the Greater London boroughs.

These estimates from the LFS are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. The attached three tables show

the annual average number of JSA claimants resident in each of the London boroughs for each year from 1997 to 2004. This table also shows corresponding figures for JSA claimants aged 18–24 years and the total claiming for over 12 months.

Since the information in these tables is so extensive, copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average percentage change in lone parent employment was between *(a)* 1992 and 1997 and *(b)* 1998 and 2003. [219552]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Willetts, dated 7 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about lone parents in employment. (219552)

The attached table shows the information requested, based on estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

These estimates from the LFS are, as with any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Lone parents[1] in employment 1992 to 2003

Three month periods ending May	*Period*	*Lone parents in employment (Thousand)*	*Change (Thousand)*	*Percentage change*	*Annual average percentage change[2]*
1992	1992 to 1997	572	145	25.3	4.6
1997	1997 to 2003	716	234	32.6	4.8
1998	1998 to 2003	788	162	20.5	3.8
2003	—	950	—	—	—

[1] Defined as people who are not married or cohabiting with dependent children aged 0–15 or 16–18 and in full-time education.
[2] Annual average percentage changes calculated as annualised percentage increases over the relevant periods.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

EU Partnership Projects

Kate Hoey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list partnership projects with the institutions of the EU for which UK Government provided funding in the past two financial years. [218786]

Mr. Timms: A large number of lines within the European Communities' Budget support activities that are co-financed by member states. Examples include projects supported by the Union's Structural Funds, Trans-European Networks, and Police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters (AGIS) programmes. Individual Government departments are responsible for projects undertaken with EC Budget co-financing and the Government do not keep a centralised record of those which take place in the UK.

Gershon Report

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much and what percentage of the savings identified by the Gershon Report relate to *(a)* UK-wide expenditure, *(b)* Great Britain-wide expenditure, *(c)* Scotland only expenditure, *(d)* England only expenditure, *(e)* Wales only expenditure, *(f)* Northern Ireland only expenditure, *(g)* England and Wales expenditure and *(h)* other spending; and if he will make a statement. [212354]

Mr. Boateng: The remit for Sir Peter Gershon's review did not include the spending of the devolved Administrations. Where spending is not devolved, Sir Peter's report does not allocate savings to specific areas of the country.

Income Tax

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of income tax liabilities in the latest financial year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* gender and *(b)* 10-year age bands. [220438]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to table 3.2 "Distribution of median and mean income by age range and sex, 2002–03" on the Inland Revenue website http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/tables3_2.pdf

Job Creation

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the employment rate is; and what assessment he has made of the trend in the level of job creation in the last five years. [220296]

Mr. Timms: The current working age employment rate in the UK is 74.9 per cent. Over the last five years, employment levels have grown by 315,000 jobs a year on average, a growth rate of 1 per cent., and UK employment levels are at a record high.

National Insurance

Jon Trickett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the payment of national insurance by sub-postmasters. [220374]

Dawn Primarolo: The remuneration of a sub-postmaster is liable to Class 1 NICs as earnings from an office. When he or she runs a business in addition to the post office, they are also self-employed and therefore liable to pay Class 2 and Class 4 contributions up to an annual maximum. Changes, effective from April 2003, provide that where sub-postmasters include their salary in the profits from the retail business they will no longer pay Class 4 NICs on their earnings from the post office.

Palestine

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what role his Department is taking in international attempts to facilitate economic regeneration in Palestine. [219693]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor takes a keen interest in the economic aspects of the Middle East Peace Process and the economic regeneration of the Palestinian Territories. The Chancellor has held meetings with the Finance Minister of the Palestinian Authority and Israel, the World Bank and key private sector participants. The Treasury works closely with DFID and the FCO and the International Financial Institutions on the economic aspects of the regeneration of the Palestinian Territories.

Residence Changes

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the population changed residence in each year since 1979. [219557]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Willetts, dated 7 March 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what percentage of the population changed residence in each year since 1979. (219557)

The Census obtains information about address changes in the year before the Census. The percentages of people who were listed as having changed address in the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses are given in the table below.

All people—England and Wales

	All people	*Percentage of these who changed address in the year before the Census*
1981	48,521,596	9.45
1991	49,890,277	9.69
2001	52,041,916	12.18

Sources:
Table 2 in Census 1981 National Migration Great Britain part 2 (10% Tables), table 2 in 1991 Census Migration Great Britain part 2 (10% Tables) and Table KS24 Census 2001 National report for England and Wales part 2

The 1981 data has been taken from Table 2 in "Census 1981 National Migration Great Britain Part 2 (10% Tables)". The 1991 data has been taken from Table 2 in "1991 Census Migration Great Britain Part 2 (10% Tables)". The 2001 data has been taken from KS24 in the "Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales Part 2". All of these publications are available in the House of Commons Library.

Data are not available for the other years requested. While ONS produces estimates for internal migration, the main data source used only records the number of moves based on patients moving across Former Health Service Authority boundaries, patients changing their doctor and re-registering. Therefore many local moves are not recorded in this administrative source. This reason means that the percentage of the population moving cannot be calculated from these data.

Stamp Duty

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue impact for each of the next five years of raising the stamp duty threshold in Scotland to *(a)* £100,000, *(b)* £120,000 and *(c)* £150,000. [212355]

John Healey: A reliable estimate of the revenue impact of raising the stamp duty threshold is not available for countries and regions within the UK.

Tax Credits

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer why people are being advised not to contact their hon. Member if they have sought the adjudication route to deal with a tax credit query. [219785]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 1 'Putting things right' explains their procedure for handling complaints. It is neither their policy nor practice to advise claimants not to contact their MP.

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the impact of the child tax credit on the income levels of the poorest 20 per cent. of families. [220177]

Dawn Primarolo: Chart 5.1 of the Pre Budget Report 2004 (Cm 6408) shows that as a result of tax credits the average gains to families with children in the bottom two deciles of the overall income distribution will be about £37 per week by 2005. It would not be particularly meaningful to separate the impact of child tax credit from working tax credit, as together they form an integrated system of financial support.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many of the cases in 2004–05 where the Inland Revenue contacted child care providers to verify the details that had been provided by the claimant, the child care element of child tax credit was *(a)* reduced and *(b)* stopped. [220242]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested will not be available until later this year.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce a specific tax credit for volunteers during the year of the volunteer. [220085]

Dawn Primarolo: The Home Secretary and the Chancellor have asked Ian Russell, Chief Executive Officer of Scottish Power plc, to propose a new national framework for youth volunteering. His review is due to report to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Home Secretary shortly. The issue of financial support for volunteers is being tackled as part of that review.

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what basis his Department estimated the cost of increasing the subsidy rate in the child care element of the working tax credit from 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. in the pre-Budget report 2004. [219803]

Dawn Primarolo: The cost of increasing the proportion of eligible childcare costs covered from 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. was derived using the Department's tax-benefit model, which uses 2002–03 Family Resources Survey calibrated to tax credits administrative data. The figures are consistent with our latest December 2004 administrative data.

UK Population (Immigration)

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the likely increase in the population of the UK as a result of immigration in all forms over the next 30 years. [219750]

Mr. Timms: The latest (2003-based) population projections by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) were published in September 2004. A note

detailing the impact of the assumed level of net migration on projected population growth over the 28 year period from 2003 to 2031 is available from the GAD website at http://www.gad.gov.uk/Population/2003/methodology/mignote.htm.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

14–19 Reform

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost was of the working group on 14–19 reform chaired by Sir Mike Tomlinson; and how much was spent on *(a)* research and *(b)* administration costs. [219800]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The cost of the working group on 14–19 reform, chaired by Sir Mike Tomlinson, was some £1.3 million over the period of 18 months. This figure includes the cost of research, much of which was undertaken by members themselves. In addition, the running costs of the departmental staff supporting the working group amounted to some £400,000.

Broadband Access (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Coventry South have broadband internet access. [218969]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* By the end of December 2004, 100 per cent. of primary and secondary schools had broadband connections in Coventry LEA. This compares to 69 per cent. primary schools, 99 per cent. secondary schools and 72 per cent. all schools in England with high speed broadband connections. We are on track to connect all schools by 2006.

Class Sizes

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools was in 2004 in (i) Greater London and (ii) each Greater London borough. [220176]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: Average class size taught by one teacher[2]—January 2004 by London local education authorities

	Average class size	
	Maintained primary	*Maintained secondary*
London	26.6	21.8
Inner London	26.2	22.2
Camden	27.0	20.6
City of London	29.5	[3]
Hackney	26.1	22.7
Hammersmith and Fulham	25.2	22.6
Haringey	27.4	21.2
Islington	25.7	22.9
Kensington and Chelsea	26.0	22.0
Lambeth	25.7	22.0
Lewisham	25.8	21.9
Newham	27.3	23.8
Southwark	25.5	23.2
Tower Hamlets	26.0	22.9
Wandsworth	25.9	22.1
Westminster	25.9	20.0
Outer London	26.8	21.6
Barking and Dagenham	25.8	21.4
Barnet	27.0	20.3
Bexley	27.5	22.4
Brent	27.3	21.1
Bromley	27.2	21.0
Croydon	27.1	22.9
Ealing	26.5	22.7
Enfield	27.9	21.0
Greenwich	25.7	21.6
Harrow	26.3	23.0
Havering	27.1	22.0
Hillingdon	26.5	21.0
Hounslow	26.1	21.3
Kingston upon Thames	27.0	20.9
Merton	25.4	24.1
Redbridge	27.5	20.6
Richmond upon Thames	26.6	24.3
Sutton	27.6	20.8
Waltham Forest	26.1	22.9

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] A sample of classes being taught at a particular point in the school timetable on the day of the Census in January.
[3] Not applicable. No schools of this type.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Classroom Assistants

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time classroom assistants were (i) recruited and (ii) employed in each London borough in 2004. [220183]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Information on the number of teaching assistants recruited annually is not collected centrally.

The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants employed in each London local education authority in January 2004. (Separate totals for full and part-time teachers are not available).

Full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants in maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special and pupil referral units—January 2004

	Number
City of London	10
Camden	550
Greenwich	750
Hackney	610
Hammersmith and Fulham	360
Islington	520
Kensington and Chelsea	270
Lambeth	720
Lewisham	620
Southwark	900
Tower Hamlets	1,070
Wandsworth	590

Full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants in maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special and pupil referral units—January 2004

	Number
Westminster	330
Barking and Dagenham	560
Barnet	850
Bexley	550
Brent	560
Bromley	540
Croydon	950
Ealing	630
Enfield	970
Haringey	810
Harrow	480
Havering	590
Hillingdon	670
Hounslow	550
Kingston upon Thames	310
Merton	370
Newham	1,190
Redbridge	730
Richmond upon Thames	250
Sutton	370
Waltham Forest	670
London	19,900

Note:
Information is rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Annual School Census

Cross-border Tracking

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what cross-border tracking of children in education takes place between English and Welsh local education authorities. [220231]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* My Department has developed a secure data transfer site for schools and local education authorities, called 'School to School'. In co-operation with the Department for Training and Education in Wales, this facility has been available to Welsh schools and local education authorities since May 2004, thus enabling them to track cross-border movements of pupils. My Department does not itself track such movements.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Coventry South constituency, the effects on the constituency of changes to her Department's policies since 1997. [219821]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Coventry South constituency lies within Coventry local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents Achievement for pupils attending schools in Coventry South are given in the following tables.

Key Stage 2 Achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Coventry South constituency—Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above

	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2004
Coventry South—English[1]	60	76	16
Coventry South—Maths[1]	59	70	11
National average—English[2]	63	78	15
National average—Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Coventry South constituency.

[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] Achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Coventry South Constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997 to 2004
Coventry South—5 + A*-C	39.6	47.8	8.2
Coventry South—5 + A*-G	83.9	85.8	1.9
National average—5+ A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National average—5+ A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year, i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The Primary and Key Stage 3 National Strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offers comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority and Government Office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post-16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more

information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The In Your Area website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post 16.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Huddersfield constituency, the effects on Huddersfield of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997, with particular reference to *(a)* exam results, *(b)* university applications, *(c)* teaching staff numbers and *(d)* school funding. [216877]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Huddersfield constituency lies within Kirklees local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents achievement for pupils attending schools in Huddersfield are given in the following tables:

(a) Examination results:

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Huddersfield constituency

Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997–2004
Huddersfield—English[1]	51	68	17
Huddersfield—Maths[1]	51	66	15
National average—English[2]	63	78	15
National average—Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Huddersfield constituency.

[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Huddersfield constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	1997	2004	Percentage point improvement 1997–2004
Huddersfield—5+ A*-C	33.5	40.5	7.0
Huddersfield—5+ A*-G	81.4	86.2	4.8
National average—5+ A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National average—5+ A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

(b) University applications:

Applications are not held at constituency level. The available information is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers 18 to 20-year-old applicants accepted through UCAS to full-time first degree and HND courses.

18 to 20-year-old applicants accepted through UCAS to full-time undergraduate courses at UK institutions

	1996/97	2003/04	Increase (percentage)
Kirklees LEA	1,368	1,754	28
National (England)	170,016	218,640	29

Source:
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

(c) Teaching staff:

FTE[1] of regular qualified teachers in primary and secondary schools in England[2]

	Primary			Secondary		
	1997	2004	difference	1997	2004	difference
Huddersfield constituency[3]	350	340	-10	300	320	20
Kirklees LEA[4]	1,600	1,650	50	1,540	1,620	80
England[4]	190,000	195,100	5,100	189,430	211,000	21,570

[1] FTE—Full Time Equivalent is the total number of full-time teachers plus the equivalent number of part-time teachers based on the proportion of the full-time rate that they are employed.

[2] The position at January of each year, includes Middle Schools as deemed.

[3] Source : Annual School Census.

[4] Source: DfES 618G survey.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10

Number of teaching assistant[1] in maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units in England[2]

	1997	2004	difference
Huddersfield constituency[3]	170	310	140
Kirklees LEA[4]	580	1,280	700
National[4]	60,600	133,400	72,800

[1] Teaching assistants includes nursery assistants, special needs support staff and minority ethnic pupil support staff.

[2] The position at January of each year.

[3] Source: Annual School Census.

[4] Source: DfES 618G survey.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

(d) School funding:

Real terms[1] funding per pupil aged 3 to 19

	1997/98	2004/05	Change since 1997 £ Real	Change since 1997 Percentage Real
Kirklees LEA	2,770	3,790	1,020	37
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,770	3,750	990	36
National	2,900	3,850	950	33

[1] Real terms figures are based on GDP deflators as at 30 June 2004 (2003–04 prices).

Notes:

1. 2004–05 and 2003–04 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited. Updates will be available in the autumn.

2. Figures reflect education Standard Spending Assessment/ Education Formula Spending settlement (all sub-blocks) plus revenue grants in DfES departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to EFS pupils aged 3 to 19.
3. Figures exclude Education Maintenance Allowance and grants not allocated at LEA level and the pensions transfer to EFS and Learning and Skills Council for 2003–04 and 2004–05.
4. The pupil numbers used are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3yos maintained pupils, estimated 3 to 4-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.
5. 1997–98 figures for LEAs subject to local government reorganisation in that year have been estimated, pro-rata to their post LGR figures.
6. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 so may not sum.

At national level, standards have improved across all key stages. The Primary and Key Stage 3 National Strategies, together with the measures we have taken to help schools in the toughest areas are continuing to deliver better results.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

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The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE / GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post 16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The In Your Area website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post 16.

Education

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to increase the number of teachers in state schools in Battersea. [218523]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We are committed to improving recruitment and retention of teachers. Nationally, there are around 29,000 more qualified teachers working in schools than there were in 1997. In Wandsworth, the latest statistics show that teacher vacancies have fallen from 3.8 per cent. in 2002 to 2.1 per cent. in 2004.

We have put in place a number of measures nationally to improve recruitment and retention. For example, graduates training to teach receive bursaries of up to £6,000; and new teachers of shortage subjects receive golden hellos of up to £4,000 on starting teaching.

In London, the London Challenge seeks to make London a world leader for secondary education, including making London one of the most attractive places to teach. Significant changes have been made, including the introduction of a new inner London pay scale. For example, an experienced classroom teacher at the start of the upper pay scale in London now earns £34,851, compared to £29,385 outside London. From April 2004, teachers working in London have been able to apply for interest-free equity loans of up to £100,000, through the London Challenge Key Teacher Homebuy scheme, in order to be able to afford a home in London.

The Chartered London Teacher status is now available to teachers working in London. It rewards the skills and expertise of London teachers and provides a one-off payment of £1,000 for those who achieve the status, and provides recognition of professional achievement that teachers will carry with them throughout their careers. And a new 'Preferred Supply Agency' list has been established to make it easier for Headteachers to access agencies which endeavour to provide better trained teachers and better value for money.

Furthermore, London Challenge is funding a teacher recruitment project, to offer a free teacher recruitment service to London schools in challenging circumstances for September 2005. Through this project, GOL are working with Battersea Technology College. GOL has already met with the head teacher to discuss staffing needs and is creating a pool of candidates for vacant posts. Currently, the staffing picture across Battersea in both primary and secondary schools is stable.

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the budget was for the Brighton and Hove local education authority in each year since 1997–98. [220109]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is only available from 2000–01 onwards and is contained within the following table.

Brighton and Hove LEA's total net revenue education budget [1] since 2000–01 [2]

	Total Education Revenue Expenditure [3] (£)
2000–01	88,085,000
2001–02	95,533,000
2002–03	100,379,000
2003–04	106,061,000
2004–05	113,247,000

[1] Financial data is drawn from the net column of the Total Education Revenue Expenditure line of the Section 52 Budget Statement (Table 1) submitted by Brighton and Hove LEA to the department
[2] Section 52 budget data has only been collected since financial year 2000–01.
[3] Figures are as reported by the LEA in cash terms rounded to the nearest £1,000.

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were in classes of 31 or more in infant schools and infant classes in primary schools in Brighton and Hove in each year since 1996–97. [220110]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary schools [1]: number of pupils in key stage 1 classes of 31 or more pupils taught by one teacher—1997 to 2004

Position in January each year

	Brighton and Hove local education authority		
		Number of pupils in classes of 31 or more	
	Total pupils in all classes	*Number of pupils*	*Percentage of pupils [2]*
1997[3]	22,141	10,130	45.8
1998	7,080	3,422	48.3
1999	6,988	2,811	40.2
2000	6,709	2,262	33.7
2001	6,517	408	6.3
2002	6,432	0	0.0
2003	6,353	32	0.5
2004	6,795	31	0.5

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Percentage of pupils in those classes expressed as a percentage of pupils in all classes taught by one teacher.

[3] Before Local Government Reorganisation (was East Sussex LEA).

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many full-time equivalent teachers were working in maintained schools in Brighton and Hove in each year since 1996–97. [220111]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested has been published in the Statistics of Education, School Workforce in England Volume, 2004 edition, annex table A2 refers. A copy of this publication has been placed in the House of Commons Library. Alternatively it is available at the following URL: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000554/index.shtml

Mr. Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much capital funding was allocated to schools in Brighton and Hove in each year since 1996–97. [220159]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table sets out the total capital resources allocated to Brighton and Hove local education authority, and schools in its area, since 1997. Information is not held centrally for 1996–97 when Brighton and Hove was part of East Sussex LEA. Decisions on how resources should be invested in schools are taken by the local education authority in accordance with locally prepared asset management plans.

£000

LEA	*Brighton and Hove*
1997–98	3,926
1998–99	4,467
1999–2000	6,139
2000–01	8,161
2001–02	29,193
2002–03	6,856
2003–04	7,338
2004–05	13,357

Notes:

1. 2001–02 figures includes Private Finance Initiative credits of £24.5 million
2. 2004–05 figures include Targeted Capital Funding of £6.8 million

Further Education (Funding)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the funding gap is between school sixth forms and further education colleges; and what plans her Department has to reduce the funding spending gap. [219897]

Dr. Howells: In 2002/03 the difference between the AS/A2 base rates for school sixth forms and further education colleges was 10.5 per cent.

At the 2002 Spending Review a record funding increase for the FE sector was delivered. The increased funding enabled the Learning and Skills Council to deliver a 4.5 per cent. increase in funding rates in 2003/04 for all colleges that agreed development plans. In the same year, school sixth form funding rates increased by 3 per cent.—resulting in a narrowing of the funding gap to 9 per cent. FE colleges that delivered against their plans received a further 5 per cent. increase in funding rates for 2004/05 compared with a 4 per cent. increase for schools—a further narrowing of the gap to 8 per cent. We expect a similar step in funding rates in 2005/06, further reducing the gap to 7 per cent.

Our policy has been to raise the level of funding for colleges, as and when we are able to secure the resources to do so.

Qualifications

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough left school with no qualifications in 2004. [220182]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The table shows the proportion of pupils aged 15 at the start of the 2003/04 school year who did not achieve any passes at GCSE and other qualifications approved pre-16 (including entry level qualifications) in each London LEA.

Government Office Region local education authority	*Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]*	*Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving no passes at GCSE and equivalents*
London	73,425	3.7
Camden	1,429	3.9
Hackney	1,283	2.5
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,184	3.0
Haringey	2,164	7.3
Islington	1,411	4.4
Kensington and Chelsea	579	4.7
Lambeth	1,370	2.5
Lewisham	2,294	3.7
Newham	3,137	1.8
Southwark	2,057	5.0
Tower Hamlets	2,468	3.0

Government Office Region local education authority	Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving no passes at GCSE and equivalents
Wandsworth	1,868	4.6
Westminster	1,400	4.1
Barking and Dagenham	1,956	4.2
Barnet	3,549	4.1
Bexley	3,075	2.6
Brent	2,645	3.2
Bromley	3,618	3.1
Croydon	3,619	3.1
Ealing	2,682	2.5
Enfield	3,431	3.5
Greenwich	2,524	4.6
Harrow	2,222	2.7
Havering	3,068	2.3
Hillingdon	2,933	5.9
Hounslow	2,642	3.6
Kingston upon Thames	1,480	3.3
Merton	1,595	6.4
Redbridge	3,016	2.1
Richmond upon Thames	1,486	3.2
Sutton	2,628	2.9
Waltham Forest	2,612	6.5

[1] Aged 15 at the start of the 2003/04 academic year, ie. 31 August 2003.
[2] Including attempts and achievements by these pupils in previous academic years.

School Medical Facilities

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what requirement there is for medical facilities at *(a)* junior schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* further education establishments to be staffed. [209266]

Margaret Hodge: The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 require every school to have a room appropriate and readily available for use for medical and dental examination and treatment and for the caring of sick or injured pupils. How these are staffed is a matter for local determination. For example, medical and dental examination and treatment will be done by local health professionals under local NHS arrangements, while school staff (such as a first aider) may care for a sick or injured pupil. Further Education sector institutions, as independent corporations, are responsible for the health and safety of their learners and they are responsible for determining what medical facilities or accommodation they need to have in place. The Learning and Skills Council is accountable for ensuring that FE institutions with which it contracts have in place effective arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of learners.

School Toilets

Dr. Palmer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will discuss with the Office for Standards in Education extending its powers of inspection to cover school toilets for pupils; and if she will make a statement. [212338]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The draft framework for inspection, intended to take effect from September 2005, provides among other things, for the care, advice, guidance and other support provided to safeguard welfare, promote personal development and achieve high standards. This includes the arrangements made by a school to care for pupils, and promote and monitor their health and well-being.

The minimum number of toilets for pupils in maintained schools is controlled by the Education (School Premises) Regulation 1999. Local education authorities are responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulations. The condition of the facilities is a matter for the school's head teacher and governors as they are responsible for cleaning and maintenance.

Specialist Schools

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of secondary schools in London have applied for specialist status. [218991]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* Including schools that were designated from the last round in October 2004 as 2005 starters, there are now 262 specialist schools in London which is around 64 per cent. of London secondary schools. In the last round (October 2004) 33 applications were received from London schools of which 23 were successful and 10 did not meet the standard. The next application round is in March 2005.

Surveys

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost was to her Department of *(a)* the 2003 PISA survey and *(b)* the 2003 TIMSS survey. [219319]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The release of information related to contract costs for PISA and TIMSS would prejudice commercial interests during the current procurement exercises for PISA 2006 and TIMSS 2007. I am therefore withholding this information until contracts for both of these studies are in place. This is envisaged to be the end of April 2005 for PISA 2006 and the end of the current calendar year for TIMSS 2007, at which time the information can be disclosed. However, the participation costs between 2002 and 2005 payable to the international co-ordinating bodies, OECD in the case of PISA and IEA in the case of TIMSS, were:

£372,755.18 for PISA;

£114,214.56 for TIMSS.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether the Public Service Agreement target for 85 per cent. of 11-year-olds to achieve Level 4 or above and 35 per cent. to achieve Level 5 or above in maths and English by 2004, was met; [219203]

(2) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the number of schools in which fewer than 65 per cent. of 11-year-olds achieve Level 4 by 40 per cent. will be met by 2006; [219204]

(3) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target for 85 per cent. of 14-year-olds to achieve Level 5 or above in English, maths and ICT, will be met by 2007; [219205]

(4) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target for 80 per cent. of 14-year-olds to achieve Level 5 or above in science, will be met by 2007; [219206]

(5) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce significantly the number of schools in which fewer than 60 per cent. of 14-year-olds achieve Level 5 or above, will be met by 2007; [219207]

(6) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target for 90 per cent. of pupils to reach Level 4 in maths and English by age 12, will be met by 2007; [219208]

(7) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target for 85 per cent. of 11-year-olds to achieve Level 4 or above in maths and English by 2006, will be met; [219267]

(8) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target for 50 per cent. of pupils in all schools to achieve Level 5 or above in each of English, maths and science by 2008, will be met; [219268]

(9) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of those aged 16 who get qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A* to C by two percentage points each year on average between 2002 and 2006, will be met; [219211]

(10) whether the Public Service Agreement target for 2004 of at least 20 per cent. of pupils in all schools achieving qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A* to C, was met; and what recent assessment she has made of whether the target for 2006 of 25 per cent. achieving such qualifications, will be met. [219212]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department publishes progress against all its outstanding public service agreement targets (PSAs) in its annual departmental report and autumn performance report. Progress against PSAs was most recently reported in the 2004 autumn report, published in December 2004, together with the Department's assessment towards achievement of the targets. A copy of the report is available from the House of Commons Library.

The Spending Review 2002 PSA target for 90 per cent. of pupils to reach level 4 in maths and English by age 12 by 2007 was not assessed in the autumn performance report. In 2004, provisional data shows 82 per cent. of pupils aged 12 achieved level 4 and above in English, and 78 per cent. of pupils aged 12 achieved level 4 and above in maths.

The Spending Review 2004 PSA target for 50 per cent. of pupils in all schools to achieve level 5 or above in each of English, maths and science by 2008 was not assessed in the autumn performance report. Progress towards this target will be published in a Statistical First Release on 17 March.

The Spending Review 2004 PSA target of at least 20 per cent. of pupils in all schools achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C was not assessed in the autumn performance report. Figures published on 13 January 2005 show that in 2004, 71 schools had less than 20 per cent. of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C at GCSE—compared with 112 in 2003 and 361 in 1997. The amended figure for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C in 2004 is 53.7 per cent.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of 19-year-olds who achieve qualifications equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A* to C by three percentage points between 2002 and 2004 was met; and what recent assessment she has made of whether the target for 2006 to increase the proportion by a further three percentage points will be met. [219213]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: A Statistical First Release published on 24 February showed that the target for a three percentage points increase in the proportion of 19-year-olds achieving qualifications equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades A* to C had not been met. This is a disappointing result, though this was a very challenging target and there are signals from other sources that we are making some progress. This reinforces the importance of the radical proposals for 14–19 year old education announced in the recent White Paper on 14–19 education.

Achieving the 2006 target of a further three percentage points will be tough but achievable because of continuing improvement in attainment at 16 as well as our major investment in key reforms such as education maintenance allowances (EMAs) and apprenticeships.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the public service agreement target to make significant progress year on year to reduce rates of non-completion in higher education was met in 2004. [219256]

Dr. Howells: Information on non-completion rates is published annually by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The latest figures, which show that rates have decreased since 1997, are given in the table.

Projected non-completion rates[1] in English HEIs—students on full-time first degree courses

Students starting courses in:[2]	*Non-completion rate (percentage)*
1997	16.1
1998	15.8
1999	15.9
2000	15.0
2001	14.1

[1] HESA use a method of projection applied to the cohort of students starting full-time first degree courses in a particular year, based on the assumption that they will move through the system in the same way as current students.

[2] The majority of these students will be on three-year degree courses, so that those entering in 2001 will be scheduled to complete their courses in 2004.

Source:

"Performance Indicators in Higher Education", published by HESA.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the estimated cost to public funds is of achieving the public service agreement target to increase participation in higher education towards 50 per cent. of those aged 18 to 30 years. [219258]

Dr. Howells: The majority of the funding made available to the HE sector in England will contribute towards the target to increase participation in higher education. So, too, does funding provided outside of the HE sector which delivers improved attainment in pre-HE learning.

The following table sets out the details of the funding available to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for the three year period from 2005–06. This gives annual increases in total recurrent grant for teaching of £255/208/209 million and for research of £133/95/90 million. Costs beyond 2007–08 will be dependant on the outcome of the forthcoming spending review.

Financial year: all figures (except the unit of teaching funding which is £ real terms) are £ million in cash terms

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
(a) SR2004 outcome recurrent resources for HEFCE and TTA[1]	4,594	4,817	5,039
(b) Of which HEFCE[2]	4,339	4,547	4,753
(c) Public contributions to fees[3]	434	n/a	n/a
(d) Student contributions to fees[3]	508	n/a	n/a
Total (a+c+d)	5,536		
(f) Recurrent resources for research[4]	1,204	1,299	1,389
Resources for capital grants:			
(g) IT and other capital	442	468	472
(h) Research	207	236	266
(i) Cost of capital and depreciation[5]	-7	-7	-7
Total HEFCE (b+f+g+h+i)	6,186	6,544	6,874
Student numbers (FTEs in thousands)[6]	1,185	1,209	1,232
Real terms unit of funding for teaching[7]	3,490	3,490	3,490

[1] The amounts set out above are the council's resource budgets. They represent the maximum amount of resource that the council may consume in pursuance of the priorities agreed with the Department for the spending review period. The 2007–08 budget includes £9.5 million departmental end-year flexibility planned to be carried forward from 2005–06 and 2006–07. Figures are net of a £67/69/70 million transfer of AHRB resources.

[2] Figures assume a baseline transfer of £255/270/286 million to the TTA. The resources for each year include funding of £18 million from the Department of Health for clinical academicians' pay and £5 million funding transferred to HEFCE for the dance and drama scheme.

[3] Figures on the contribution to fees include students to be funded through the TTA.

[4] The resources exclude funding from DTI and OST for the Science Research Innovation Fund and HE Innovations Fund.

[5] Capital costs and depreciation are part of the council's resource budgets and the maximum amount of resources it may consume. The amounts shown are subject to review and will be discussed further with the council.

[6] Student numbers are net of students to be funded through the TTA.

[7] Figures are in 2003–04 prices rounded to nearest £10. The real terms level of funding for teaching costs are derived from the total level of recurrent resources available to HEFCE to support teaching (ie excluding research, capital and postgraduate stipends), full-time equivalent numbers of students estimated using the "whole year count" methodology discussed with HEFCE and the GDP deflators published by HM Treasury on 3 December 2004.

Undergraduates (Bankruptcy)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate students in Greater London declared themselves bankrupt in 2004; and if she will make a statement. [220174]

Dr. Howells: 68 student loan borrowers, whose awarding local education authority is in the Greater London area, notified the Student Loans Company of bankruptcy orders made against them in 2004. This figure includes both graduates and undergraduate borrowers.

University Admissions

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 858W on university admissions, whether the review of benchmarks for university admissions has commenced; and when the review will be completed. [219695]

Dr. Howells: I have asked the Performance Indicators Steering Group (PISG) (the body responsible for approving the content and methodology of the Performance Indicators (PIs) and associated benchmarks) to consider the potential for improvements to the way the current PIs can be presented. The PISG will be undertaking this work during this summer. I will look at any improvements that the PISG consider need to be made, in advance of the next annual publication in autumn 2005.

DEFENCE

Army Legal Services

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the structure is of the Army Legal Services (ALS); how many people are employed by the ALS; and what its duties are. [218049]

Mr. Caplin: Army Legal Services (ALS) is a branch of the Adjutant General's Corps. Its all-officer staff (currently 99) are solicitors or barristers, qualified in England and Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. Director Army Legal Services is a Major General. The duties of ALS are to provide military legal advice to the Army, be responsible for the conduct of all prosecutions before Army courts-martial and to provide legal advice to Service personnel and their families, where no other source of legal assistance is readily available.

Citizenship Applications

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the Army does not sponsor applications from UK armed forces' personnel from elsewhere in the Commonwealth who wish to apply for dual or full British citizenship. [208858]

Mr. Caplin: Immigration policy is a matter for the Home Office. British citizenship is not a requirement of service in the British Army. Whether a British Army soldier of Commonwealth nationality seeks to apply for naturalisation as a British citizen during their service is entirely a private matter.

Deaths in Service

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1254W, on military death (Amesbury), in what non-work related circumstances service personnel may be in control of a Saxon armoured vehicle on a public thoroughfare. [217802]

Mr. Caplin: Service personnel may only drive official vehicles during the course of their duties.

Defence Analytical Services Agency

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget the Defence Analytical Services Agency spent in Scotland in *(a)* monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2002–03; and if he will make a statement. [214751]

Mr. Caplin: As the Defence Analytical Services Agency does not employ any staff in Scotland, none of its personnel budget is spent there.

Defence Employment (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people worked for the Pay and Personnel Agency *(a)* in 2003–04 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available; how many were employed in Scotland in each case; and what the personnel costs of the agency (i) were in 2003–04 and (ii) are expected to be in 2004–05. [215945]

Mr. Caplin: The Pay and Personnel Agency (PPA) employed 790 full-time equivalent staff in 2003–04. The figures are published in UK Defence Statistics 2004 at Table 2.6. PPA's personnel costs are contained in the agency's annual report and accounts for 2003–04, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Our annual report and accounts for 2003–04 can also be viewed on our external website www.ppa.mod.uk and the main MOD website www.mod.uk/index.shtml

In 2004–05 the number of people expected to be working for the PPA is 800. The personnel costs in 2004–05 are expected to be £15.15 million. The final figures will appear in the annual report for 2004–05 which will be formally laid before the House before the summer recess at which time copies will be made available in the House of Commons Library and again on the PPA and MOD websites. The Pay and Personnel Agency had no staff working in Scotland in either 2003–04 or 2004–05.

Defence Expenditure (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year from 1997–98 to 2001–02 the RAF Training Group Defence Agency spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each year; and if he will make a statement. [215910]

Mr. Caplin: The following table details the civilian personnel employed by Training Group Defence Agency (TGDA) in Scotland. Details of Service personnel employed in this location are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, local figures for financial year 2004–05 indicate that there are no more than approximately 60 Service personnel employed by TGDA in Scotland.

	Personnel budget[1] spent in Scotland £ million	*Percentage of total TGDA personnel budget*	*TGDA civilian personnel employed in Scotland*
1997–98	2.260	1.4	30
1998–99	2.368	1.0	40
1999–2000	2.477	1.0	40
2000–01	2.588	1.0	40
2001–02	2.725	0.9	40

[1] Personnel budget includes salary, training, travel and subsistence and consumable costs.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 1999–2000, *(d)* 1998–99 and *(e)* 1997–98 the Defence Housing Executives spent in Scotland in (i) monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each year; and if he will make a statement. [216281]

Mr. Caplin: The Defence Housing Executive (DHE) was formed in 1999 and figures are only available from that date. Expenditure on personnel costs for DHE Scotland are given as follows; broken down as requested:

Serial (a)	*1*	*2*	*3*
Financial year (b)	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Personnel Expenditure (£ million) *(c)*	1.852	1.860	1.854
Percentage of Department Personnel Budget *(d)*	0.02	0.02	0.02
Number of full-time equivalent personnel working in DHE Scotland *(e)*	110	100	100

The number of personnel given in column *(e)* represent full-time equivalents (aggregating part-time posts) and not the actual number of people employed.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much and what percentage of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 1999–2000, *(d)* 1998–99 and *(e)* 1997–98 (i) the Defence Estates Agency, (ii) the Defence Dental Agency and (iii) the Defence Communications Services Agency spent in Scotland; how many personnel were employed by each Agency in Scotland in each year; and if he will make a statement. [216720]

Mr. Caplin: The figures for personnel budget spend for each agency, and staff figures, are shown in the following table.

	Personnel budget in Scotland			
Financial year	*(£ million)*	*Percentage of total personnel budget*	*Staff employed in Scotland*[1]	
Defence Estates (DE)				
2001–02	[2]3.440	7.53	Civilian	90
			Service	5
2000–01	[2]2.637	6.86	Civilian	80
			Service	1
1999–2000	[2]321	6.64	Civilian	70
			Service	0
1998–99	[2]1.244	3.92	Civilian	70
			Service	0
1997–98	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian	80
			Service	[3]—
Defence Dental Agency (DDA)				
2001–02	1.848	5	Civilian	10
			Service	41
2000–01	1.244	5	Civilian	10
			Service	[3]—
1999–2000	1.557	5	Civilian	10
			Service	[3]—
1998–99	0.939	3	Civilian	[4]—
			Service	[3]—
1997–98	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian	[4]—
			Service	[3]—
Defence Communications Services Agency (DCSA)				
2001–02	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian	100
			Service	[3]—
2000–01	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian	60
			Service	[3]—
1999–2000	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian	20
			Service	[3]—
1998–99	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian	[4]—
			Service	[3]—
1997–98	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian	[3]—
			Service	[3]—

[1] Civilian staff figures are provided by Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) and are quoted in full-time equivalent (FTE) terms, and based on new definitions agreed in 2004. Part-time staff hours are therefore counted proportionately to normal conditioned hours. Unless indicated otherwise, figures indicate staff strength at the start of each financial year. Service personnel figures for Scotland are not held centrally; however, where local figures are available these have been shown. It should be noted that the purpose of collating staff figures, and the statistical method of measurement, may vary between individual agencies and DASA.

[2] The personnel costs of the Defence Estates Agency includes salaries, performance pay or bonuses, overtime, allowances, social security costs and other pension costs but excludes the cost of early retirements.

[3] The Defence Communication Services Agency was formed in April 1998; therefore figures for 1997–98 cannot be provided.

[4] fewer than 5.

[5] not known, or available only at disproportionate cost.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 1999–2000, *(d)* 1998–99 and *(e)* 1997–98 the Defence Aviation Repair Agency spent in Scotland (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [217238]

Mr. Ingram: DARA was launched on 1 April 1999.

The table shows the personnel budget spend and number of personnel employed in Scotland in the Defence Aviation Repair Agency by Financial Year since 1999.

Financial year	*Personnel budget in Scotland (£ million)*	*Percentage of total personnel budget spent in Scotland*	*Staff employed in Scotland*[1]
2001–02	[2]10.141	[2]7.90%	Civilian 370
			Service 0[2]
2000–01	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian 360
			Service 0[2]
1999–2000	[3]—	[3]—	Civilian 340
			Service 0[2]

[1] Civilian staff personnel figures are provided by the Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) and are quoted in full-time equivalent (FTE) terms. Figures indicate staff strength at the start of each financial year and are based on the new definition of civilian personnel which came into effect on 1 April 2004.

[2] Information provided by the Defence Aviation Repair Agency from locally held records.

[3] Not known, or available only at disproportionate cost.

Both civilian and Service personnel data by Agency are collated annually at 1 April and presented in Table 2.6 of UK Defence Statistics, a copy of which is held in the House of Commons Library. Further information on personnel figures is also available on the DASA website at www.dasa.mod.uk.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 1999–2000, *(d)* 1998–99 and *(e)* 1997–98 the Defence Clothing Integrated Project Team spent in Scotland (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [217239]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Clothing Integrated Project Team, which formed in April 2001, had no expenditure on personnel in Scotland for 2001–02. Its predecessor, the Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency (DCTA), had no expenditure on personnel in Scotland in 1998–99, 1999–2000 and 2000–01.

Local records held on the Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency (DCTA) indicate that there was an overall personnel budget in 1997–98 of £11.8 million of which approximately £1.3 million was spent in Scotland, equating to about 11 per cent. of its budget. Of the 550 full-time equivalent civilian personnel in the Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency (DCTA) in 1997–98, 40 were employed in Scotland.

Both civilian and Service personnel data by Agency are collated annually at 1 April and presented in Table 2.6 of UK Defence Statistics, a copy of which is held in the House of Commons Library. Further information on personnel figures is also available on the DASA website at www.dasa.mod.uk.

Defence Service Agencies (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 the Army Personnel Centre spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each case; and if he will make a statement. [215455]

Mr. Caplin: Staff costs and staff numbers are included in the Annual Report and Accounts for the Army Personnel Centre, copies of which are held in the Library of the House. The proportion of staff based outside Scotland is less than one percent.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many acres of vacant, dormant, unused and under-utilised land are owned by his Department; and if he will estimate the number of homes that could be built on the land if it was made available. [219680]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* Ministry of Defence Land and property in excess of 9,635 acres (3,900 hectares) has been identified as surplus to operational requirements. Given favourable planning frameworks, this amount of land could accommodate between 16,000 to 20,000 new homes over the next decade. It is possible that there are other dormant, vacant or under-utilised MOD sites that have not been declared surplus to operational requirements. The future of such sites will be considered as part of the Department's estate rationalisation studies.

Departmental Records Office (Hayes)

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many agency staff commissioned by TNT have been dismissed from working on the Departmental records office site at Bourne Avenue, Hayes on the grounds of drug abuse on site in the last nine months. [220247]

Mr. Caplin: TNT have a strict policy of zero tolerance for drug and alcohol abuse, and random searches of staff entering and leaving the Hayes site are carried out by TNT's security personnel. Two members of TNT's agency staff have been dismissed because they were found in possession of an illegal substance. Five further members of the agency staff have had their employment with TNT terminated because they were suspected of such possession. However, drug abuse on the Hayes site was not substantiated in any of these cases.

Geneva Conventions

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether further investigations are taking place in relation to alleged breaches of the Geneva Convention arising out of Operation Ali Baba; and if he will make a statement. [210701]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* No criminal investigations are taking place into alleged breaches of the Geneva Convention in relation to Operation Ali Baba although administrative action in relation to potential breaches of the Army's values and standards remains a possibility.

Gulf War-related Illnesses

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what medical testing is available for veterans claiming Gulf War-related illnesses. [220490]

Mr. Caplin: In order to adjudicate a claim for a War Pension, a diagnosis of the claimed condition is required. In claims where entitlement is awarded, an up to date description of the accepted condition is necessary to determine the correct assessment of disablement. Wherever possible this information is obtained from service medical documents, a report from a claimant's General Practitioner, relevant hospital case notes or a report from the Gulf Veterans' Medical Assessment Programme in cases where a veteran has been referred to this unit by a General Practitioner.

In those cases where these sources of evidence do not provide the necessary information, a medical examination report, specialist report or audiological report is requested. These reports are based on the results of the clinical history and examination, together with non-invasive tests of function such as pure tone audiometry or simple tests of respiratory function where appropriate. More invasive tests such as blood tests, endoscopy and X-rays are not sanctioned for the purpose of adjudicating claims for war pensions.

Any Gulf veteran who has concerns about their health may be referred by their doctor to the Gulf Veterans' Medical Assessment Programme where they will be interviewed and given a full medical examination.

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many claims of Gulf War-related illnesses are waiting to be processed. [220491]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not available in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Iraq

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much financial compensation has been paid to Iraqi citizens for damage done to Iraqi property as a result of the actions undertaken by British military forces in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [212307]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has paid approximately £183,000 since cessation of hostilities on 1 May 2003 on compensation claims relating to property damage in Iraq as a result of incidents involving members of HM forces.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list *(a)* armoured regiments and *(b)* artillery regiments that have been deployed in Iraq in an infantry role since the end of hostilities; what the reasons for deployment in this role was in each case; and what assessment he has made of the potential risks of using armoured regiments in an infantry role; [219062]

(2) what the training time is for artillery and armoured units to *(a)* re-role in an infantry role and *(b)* revert to their original roles. [219063]

Mr. Ingram: Details of Royal Armoured Corps and Royal Artillery units that have deployed in an infantry role in Iraq since the end of hostilities are set out in the following table. It is not unusual for non-infantry units to deploy in an infantry role as every soldier in the British Army is trained as infanteer first, and as a specialist second. Such units would not, however, primarily be deployed in an infantry role during war fighting operations. My hon. Friend may be assured that there is assessed to be no increased risk in deploying such units in this role and that they receive the same pre-deployment training as Infantry Battalions. All units, upon return from an 'out of role' operational tour, will undertake a routinely planned training programme designed to bring it back up to competency in its specialism. The duration of such a training programme will vary according to an individual unit's specialism.

Arm (a)	*Unit (b)*	*Date (c)*
Royal Artillery		
	40th Regiment Royal Artillery	July 2003 to November 2003
	26th Regiment Royal Artillery	November 2003 to May 2004
	1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery	May 2004 to November 2004
	4th Regiment Royal Artillery	November 2004
Royal Armoured Corps		
	2nd Royal Tank Regiment	June 2003 to November 2003
	Queens Royal Hussars	November 2003 to May 2004
	Queens Royal Lancers	May 2004 to November 2004
	Royal Dragoon Guards	November 2004

Missile Defence

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions have taken place between the US and UK about RAF Menwith Hill becoming a component of the American Missile Defence System; and if he will make a statement. [218904]

Mr. Hoon: There has been no request from the United States to use facilities at RAF Menwith Hill for missile defence purposes. The position remains as set out in my answer of 26 April 2004, *Official Report*, column 727W, to the hon. Member.

Parachutists

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the parachute battalions are in receipt of parachute pay. [219049]

Mr. Caplin: Figures for the members of parachute battalions in receipt of parachute pay are as follows:

Number of members of the three parachute battalions in receipt of parachute pay as at the 1 January 2005

Parachute battalion	*Number receiving parachute pay*
1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment	540
2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment	515
3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment	505

Notes:
1. The figures quoted are as at 1 January 2005 and are for UK Regular Trained Army Officers and Soldiers only and therefore exclude TA, Mobilised Reserves, Full Time Reserve Service, Gurkhas and Home Battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment.
2. The figures do not include officers and soldiers in the Parachute Regiment that are serving outside the battalion, or personnel from other cap badges that are attached to the battalion. The officer element excludes personnel with the rank of colonel and above.
3. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

RAF

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the drop-out rate for 16 to 24-year-olds from the Royal Air Force has been in each year since 1997. [212359]

Mr. Caplin: The outflow of 16 to 24-year-olds from the Royal Air Force for each year since 1997 is as follows:

	Percentage outflow rate
1997–98	7.1
1998–99	7.5
1999–2000	7.0
2000–01	7.9
2001–02	7.2
2002–03	6.8
2003–04	7.2

Figures are based on all outflow from the untrained and trained start strength and intake for RAF regular personnel aged 16 to 24 for each financial year. They exclude Full Time Reserve Service and mobilised reserves personnel.

Figures on outflows by age are published annually in Tri-Service Publication (TSP) 19 'Intake to and Outflow from UK Regular Forces'.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many RAF recruits in 2004 were from *(a)* London and *(b)* Essex. [212360]

Mr. Caplin: In financial year 2004–05, the number of personnel who applied to join the RAF at Armed Forces Career Offices located in London and Essex, and were subsequently recruited, are set out in the following table:

	London	*Essex*
Officers and non-commissioned aircrew	13	3
Other ranks	26	25

Regiments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many representations he has received supporting the separate future of each of the three regiments due to merger into the Kings, Lancashire and Border Regiment; [219060]

(2) which *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* officials and *(c)* members of the Army Board (i) visited and (ii) met with representatives of each of the three regiments to discuss the merger into the Kings, Lancashire and Border Regiment. [219061]

Mr. Ingram: As I have made clear in my previous answers to the hon. Member, the process of infantry restructuring involved a wide-ranging and detailed consultation exercise with the infantry being invited to express their views on how the restructuring should be implemented. As part of that process, Colonels Commandant of the Divisions of Infantry represented their views to the Executive Committee of the Army Board both in writing and in person.

I am not aware that any officials have met representatives of the regiments to which the hon. Member refers, but both the Defence Secretary and I have met representatives of various regiments and regimental associations. In addition I have received numerous representations from hon. Members and members of the public in support of all our infantry regiments.

Trident

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will allow independent monitors to test for radioactive contamination at the Trident nuclear base on the Clyde. [218343]

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether testing for radioactive contamination takes place at sites up to *(a)* one mile, *(b)* five miles and *(c)* 20 miles from the Trident nuclear base on the Clyde; [218354]

(2) what the current level of radioactive contamination in the *(a)* water, *(b)* air and *(c)* land around the Trident nuclear base on the Clyde is. [218352]

Mr. Hoon: Routine independent sampling for radioactive contamination around HM Naval Base Clyde is carried out annually by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and involves a wide range of tests on air and land samples at numerous sites up to five miles from the naval base. These tests are environmentally diverse and involve rigorous scientific testing of the entire terrain. The results are published annually in SEPA's Radioactivity in Food and Environment Report, which is available on their website at www.sepa.org.uk. The latest available report, which was published in 2003, verifies that existing discharge arrangements between SEPA and the Ministry of Defence provide effective control over the levels of radioactivity that are discharged into the environment. No tests are carried out of water samples, as this source would not yield a reliable indication of the impact of contamination.

As an additional measure, the MOD carries out its own annual routine air and land samples, the results of which are published in the Marine Environmental Radioactivity Surveys at Nuclear Submarine Berths report (ISBN 11773019X). The latest version was published in December 2004 and is available from www.tso.co.uk.

CABINET OFFICE

Alcohol Policies

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will publish the report, "Alcohol Policies", produced in 1979 by the Central Policy Review Staff. [217727]

Mr. Miliband: In common with other Cabinet Office records, the report will be considered for transfer to the National Archives after 30 years. The 1979 report is due to be transferred to the National Archives in 2010.

Civil Servants

Kate Hoey: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when he expects to issue guidance on the conduct of civil servants during and in the period leading up to the referendum on the European Constitution; and who will be responsible for enforcing the guidance. [218853]

Mr. Miliband: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Hornchurch (John Cryer) on 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 899W.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many civil servants were *(a)* suspended and *(b)* sacked in each year since 2001 for gross professional misconduct; and in which Department each was employed. [220237]

Mr. Miliband: Information on the numbers of civil servants who were suspended and sacked for gross professional misconduct is not collected centrally.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many civil servants were *(a)* suspended and *(b)* sacked in each year since 2001 under suspicion of breaching the Official Secrets Act 1989; and in which department each was employed. [220238]

Mr. Miliband: Information on the numbers of civil servants who were suspended and sacked for breaching the Official Secrets Act 1989 is not collected centrally.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total subsidy provided by central Government to fund the transitional regime in respect of business rates was for the period 2000–01 to 2004–05. [219506]

Mr. Raynsford: The 2000 transitional scheme was designed to be revenue neutral but the Exchequer has had to make good the shortfall in revenue as follows:

	£ million
2000–01	415
2001–02	262
2002–03	41
2003–04	111
2004–05	[1]59

[1] Estimated

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average Band D level of council tax was in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* 2004–05 in (i) two-tier local government areas, (ii) unitary councils in England, (iii) Metropolitan boroughs and (iv) London boroughs. [217877]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is shown in Table 2.2f of "Local Government Financial Statistics, England, No. 15 2004", a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. The table can also be found at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/lgfs/lgfs15/tables/lgfs15-2-2f.xls.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who the ministerial design champion for his Department is. [215645]

Yvette Cooper: I am the ministerial design champion for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, as established under my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Better Public Buildings Initiative in 2000.

High Hedges

Mr. Horam: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he expects antisocial behaviour legislation relating to high hedges to be implemented before Easter. [219694]

Phil Hope: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Solihull (Mr. Taylor) on 1 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1127W.

Housing (Fylde)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultations are being conducted between the management of the Northern Way and local authorities in Fylde on targets for future house building; and when they began. [220265]

Keith Hill: The regional spatial strategy for the North West is currently being reviewed by the North West Regional Assembly. Key elements of this review will be the appropriate level of housing provision in the region and links with the Northern Way.

Housing Stock

Lynne Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities in England have decided their stock options appraisal in favour of *(a)* stock transfer, *(b)* arm's length management organisation, *(c)* private finance initiative and *(d)* stock retention by the council; how many homes each authority has in each case; which authorities have yet to advise his Office of their intentions; and how many homes they own in each case. [220451]

Keith Hill: 58 local authorities have had whole stock Options Appraisals signed off by the relevant Government Office. The tables, made available in the Library of the House, show which options they have chosen.

192 local authorities were subject to the requirement to have an Options Appraisal signed off by the relevant Government Office. Other authorities will have chosen an option prior to the introduction of this requirement.

Some local authorities have opted for more than one solution for their stock and they are listed separately, with the options they have chosen, in the mixed model table available in the Library of the House. Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is never a whole stock solution, and so authorities who have chosen PFI are also found in this table.

Local Government

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the 20 least populous lower tier local authorities in England are, measured by population per hectare; what the average annual earnings per capita in each of those local authorities was in the last year for which figures are available; what the Band D council tax is in 2004–05 in each of those authorities; and what percentage of average annual earnings Band D council tax represents in each authority. [220676]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is tabled as follows. The table includes the 24 least populous lower tier local authorities under the definition used in the question so as to include all authorities with an average at the lower level threshold of 0.8 people per hectare.

	Population per hectare[1]	*Mean gross annual earnings in 2004*[2]	*Average Band D area council tax for 2004–05*	*Average Band D area council tax for 2004–05 as a percentage of mean gross annual earnings in 2004*
Eden	0.2	16,507	1,227	7.4
Berwick-upon-Tweed	0.3	12,329	1,254	10.2
Tynedale	0.3	20,134	1,268	6.3
Alnwick	0.3	17,285	1,259	7.3

	Population per hectare[1]	Mean gross annual earnings in 2004[2]	Average Band D area council tax for 2004–05	Average Band D area council tax for 2004–05 as a percentage of mean gross annual earnings in 2004
Teesdale	0.3	21,891	1,242	5.7
Ryedale	0.3	17,919	1,215	6.8
Richmondshire	0.4	20,782	1,219	5.9
South Shropshire	0.4	17,517	1,264	7.2
West Devon	0.4	n/a	1,255	n/a
Craven	0.5	19,176	1,199	6.3
West Somerset	0.5	20,115	1,177	5.9
Torridge	0.6	16,964	1,203	7.1
Hambleton	0.6	22,716	1,128	5.0
South Lakeland	0.7	23,362	1,237	5.3
North Cornwall	0.7	16,887	1,144	6.8
Cotswold	0.7	23,166	1,206	5.2
West Lindsey	0.7	18,445	1,152	6.2
Allerdale	0.8	19,121	1,222	6.4
East Lindsey	0.8	18,213	1,085	6.0
Mid Devon	0.8	19,569	1,240	6.3
Kennet	0.8	23,277	1,171	5.0
Castle Morpeth	0.8	20,950	1,292	6.2
Herefordshire	0.8	17,371	1,178	6.8
North Devon	0.8	16,828	1,234	7.3

n/a = not available, because the earnings figure for West Devon is unreliable.
[1] Population figures are ONS mid-year estimates for 2003.
[2] Figures for all employee jobs where the person has been in post for at least a year, taken from the 2004 ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (including supplementary information). The figures are for residents of the area shown.

Local Government Finance

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list those local authorities for whom the revenue budget settlement for 2005–06 has been based on 1991 Census data; and if he will make a statement. [218373]

Mr. Raynsford: The main indicators used in the Formula Spending Share formulae are the population estimates. The population estimates from mid-2001 onwards have been based on the 2001 Census. They are then adjusted for births, deaths and both internal and external migration. The population estimates used in the Local Government Finance Settlements from 2003–04 onwards have been based on the 2001 Census.

The formulae also use other socio-demographic indicators derived from the Census, for example population sparsity and population density. 1991 Census data is used for these other indicators in the 2005–06 Formula Spending Share formulae for Education, Personal Social Services, Police, Highway Maintenance and Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services. This Census data is not used in either the Fire or the Capital Financing Formula Spending Share formulae, and is therefore not used in the calculation of RSG for single service fire authorities only, i.e. LFEPA, metropolitan fire authorities and combined shire fire authorities.

I announced on 21 July 2004 that we would not be amending the other socio-demographic indicators to incorporate 2001 Census data in the 2005–06 settlement (21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 30WS). This is because it would have been technically incorrect to have simply introduced the data without first amending the statistical models underlying the Formula Spending Share formulae. Changing the formulae in this way would have broken the formula freeze that we have introduced to provide funding stability for authorities. Further research is being undertaken on the formula changes needed to incorporate the 2001 Census data into the Formula Spending Share formulae.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be consulting local authorities during the summer of 2005 on the formulae for the 2006–07 settlement.

London Safety Plan

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many responses to the public consultation that the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority has conducted on the Draft London Safety Plan *(a)* supported and *(b)* opposed the proposals; and if he will make a statement. [219787]

Mr. Raynsford: I understand the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority's 12 week consultation on the Draft London Safety Plan ended on Monday 7 February 2005. Responses from stakeholders are currently being analysed and will be reported to the Authority meeting on 17 March 2005, at which time the Authority will consider the final Plan in the light of the views expressed.

Select Committee Report

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on progress with the implementation of the recommendations of the Ninth Report of session 2003–04 of the Committee on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions; and if he will make a statement. [220691]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government's response to the Committee's recommendations was set out in Cm 6321, presented to the House on 11 October. Copies are available in the Library of the House. The response said that the Committee's report would be a valuable input

to the independent inquiry by Sir Michael Lyons into local government funding. The response also said that, in view of that inquiry, it would not be appropriate for the Government to take a final view on many of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations at that stage.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to promote better policy integration nationally, regionally and locally; [219179]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to work with Departments to help them meet their public service agreement floor targets for neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion; [219180]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to reduce the persistent gap in growth rates between the English regions over the long-term; [219183]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to improve the delivery and value for money of local services by introducing comprehensive performance assessments and action plans; [219184]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to secure progressive improvements in local authorities' scores in performance assessments; [219185]

(6) whether the public service agreement target to secure overall annual improvements in the cost effectiveness of local services by 2 per cent. or more was met in 2004; [219186]

(7) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to assist local government in achieving 100 per cent. capability in electronic delivery of priority services in ways that customers will use will be met by 2005; [219187]

(8) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to achieve a better balance between housing availability and the demand for housing in all English regions while protecting valuable countryside around our towns, cities and in the green belt and the sustainability of existing towns and cities; [219188]

(9) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target for all local planning authorities to have completed local development frameworks by 2006 will be met; [219189]

(10) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target for all local planning authorities to perform at or above best value targets for development control by 2006 will be met; [219190]

(11) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to bring all social housing into decent condition by 2010 will be met; [219191]

(12) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to increase the proportion of private housing in decent condition occupied by vulnerable groups by 2010 will be met; [219192]

(13) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to deliver better services; [219193]

(14) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to promote high-quality, customer-focused services; [219195]

(15) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the number of accidental fire-related deaths in the home by 20 per cent. by 2010 will be met; [219198]

(16) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the number of deliberate fires by 10 per cent. by 2010 will be met; [219199]

(17) what assessment he has made of his Department's success in meeting the public service agreement target to provide the opportunity by the end of this Parliament for a referendum on regional government in regions where there is a demand for it. [219233]

Yvette Cooper: Performance against all the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's public service agreement (PSA) targets are reported in our departmental reports. Since 2002, performance has also been reported in our autumn performance reports. For these PSA targets, set during the 2002 spending review, the most recent assessment of progress was published in the autumn performance report 2004 (Cm 6421, published December 2004). The next assessment will be given in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's annual report for 2004–05, due to be published in spring 2005.

The SDA targets, revised in 2003, for accidental fire related deaths and deliberate fires were reported against in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's annual report 2004 and will next be reported against in the 2005 annual report. From April 2005, these SDA targets have been included in a new PSA target adopted under the 2004 spending review and will then be reported against in both the future autumn performance and annual reports.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to narrow the gap in health, education, crime, worklessness, housing and liveability outcomes between the most deprived areas and the rest of England by 2010; [219181]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to make sustainable improvements in the economic performance of all English regions by 2008; [219182]

(3) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local government in leading and delivering services to all communities by 2008, will be met; [219200]

(4) what recent assessment has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to ensure that the planning system delivers sustainable development outcomes at national, regional and local levels; [219201]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to lead the delivery of cleaner, safer and greener public spaces. [219202]

Yvette Cooper: These public service agreement (PSA) targets, set during the 2004 spending review do not become live until April 2005. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister shall report progress against these targets in our autumn performance report for 2005, and then in subsequent annual and autumn performance reports.

Work began last year preparing for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's new and revised PSA targets and technical notes, setting out how we were to measure progress against these targets. These have been published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: (http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_about/documents/divisionhomepage/031997.hcsp).

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also recently published its five-year plans, Sustainable Communities: People Places and Prosperity (Cm 6425) and Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (Cm 6424), which set out how we will be tackling major challenges over the next five years.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to devolve decision making to the most effective level; [219194]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to clarify the roles and functions of local government and its relationship with central Government. [219197]

Mr. Raynsford: These are both elements of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Strategic Priority 4 which is underpinned by PSA targets 1 and 4. The case for greater devolution both to and through councils is being taken forward in the work that we are undertaking on the development of a 10-year vision for local government, which picks up the recommendations of the report produced last year by HM Treasury and the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit on devolving decision making. We have published a number of discussion papers, including proposals for piloting local area agreements, and we intend to publish a further document on the development of a new performance framework shortly.

Water Mills

Ms Walley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in what circumstances planning permission may be given for water mills to provide renewable energy where they are located in green belt areas. [220544]

Keith Hill: "Planning Policy Guidance note 2: Green Belts" (PPG2) sets out the Government's policies on development in the green belt. Most forms of development are regarded as inappropriate development in the green belt (and by definition harmful). It would be for an applicant to show that very special circumstances existed which clearly outweighed the harm that inappropriate development would cause. PPG2 sets out the forms of development that would be not inappropriate in the green belt. Water mills are not among these.

"Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy" advises that very special circumstances which might outweigh the harm caused by inappropriate development in the green belt could (and it will depend on the facts of the case) include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Housing

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made with investigations established to examine the actions of the Accounting Officer of the Housing Executive in relation to the absence of proper contract procedures. [219518]

Mr. Spellar: There have not been any investigations, nor are any planned, in relation to the absence of proper contract procedures within the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

The House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts Report "Housing the Homeless" (Twenty first Report of Session 2003/04) referred to a specific contract concerning the removal and storage of furniture for the homeless households. The Housing Executive fully acknowledged the shortcomings in the procurement of the particular contract and has fundamentally changed its contract policy and procedures to reflect Government's Constructing Excellence programme.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total investment by Invest Northern Ireland in each Northern Ireland parliamentary constituency was in each of the last five years. [219817]

Mr. Gardiner: The following table provides information relating to offers made to clients by parliamentary constituency area during the five years up to end March 2004. Included is the total amount of planned investment to which these offers contributed. Invest NI's information is provided for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04. Information prior to 2002–03 is based on funding provided by two of Invest NI's legacy agencies—the Industrial Development Board and the Local Enterprise Development Unit.

Parliamentary constituency	1999–2000 Number of offers	1999–2000 Assistance (£)	1999–2000 Investment[1] (£)	2000–01 Number of offers	2000–01 Assistance (£)	2000–01 Investment[1] (£)
Belfast East	97	15,849,537	91,916,715	49	1,607,142	5,587,276
Belfast North	111	4,372,363	13,098,466	47	11,735,957	25,691,738
Belfast South	180	23,151,235	81,459,645	93	8,492,267	32,968,940
Belfast West	61	7,155,105	21,276,136	41	3,021,986	11,947,752
East Antrim	86	4,872,375	37,709,491	41	21,309,617	168,909,759
East Londonderry	120	10,226,718	62,696,675	64	8,242,683	37,925,715
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	171	10,457,547	46,837,774	87	3,065,387	22,995,241
Foyle	229	7,748,567	28,755,865	88	11,344,169	35,429,187
Lagan Valley	156	1,650,378	8,471,809	69	1,506,181	10,573,848
Mid Ulster	269	2,364,510	12,100,912	144	3,274,312	18,874,843
Newry and Armagh	171	2,019,032	11,641,076	91	4,348,743	15,427,292
North Antrim	172	1,641,886	9,953,677	78	2,689,389	16,831,426
North Down	91	3,376,556	14,995,659	56	778,026	4,101,844
South Antrim	132	5,226,745	33,726,003	79	4,650,258	51,409,794
South Down	146	1,728,083	10,014,158	62	1,228,539	5,951,029
Strangford	113	2,225,269	11,308,744	63	2,956,846	10,707,120
Upper Bann	159	4,224,261	30,813,380	85	2,159,066	9,723,463
West Tyrone	107	1,160,461	3,850,897	73	1,798,859	6,833,958
Yet to be determined[2]	2	19,000	20,000	0	0	0
Grand total	2,573	109,469,628	530,647,082	1,310	94,209,427	491,890,225

Parliamentary constituency	2001–02 Number of offers	2001–02 Assistance (£)	2001–02 Investment[1] (£)	2002–03 Number of offers	2002–03 Assistance (£)	2002–03 Investment[1] (£)
Belfast East	46	5,760,102	29,021,415	58	2,103,025	8,512,108
Belfast North	58	5,670,981	14,380,030	45	7,565,191	20,071,672
Belfast South	78	5,780,647	33,336,606	137	15,943,868	38,581,673
Belfast West	29	4,978,855	26,254,575	47	4,154,127	16,518,873
East Antrim	46	1,633,322	11,499,761	66	6,249,254	21,210,100
East Londonderry	44	2,006,291	6,984,996	59	4,168,042	13,950,428
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	70	4,660,406	28,325,773	69	5,720,677	22,971,162
Foyle	69	5,230,250	20,922,057	94	14,414,920	105,655,505
Lagan Valley	64	1,385,337	7,418,796	54	1,462,738	6,682,614
Mid Ulster	111	3,596,184	18,695,873	143	4,056,819	20,082,706
Newry and Armagh	98	2,460,108	14,561,864	84	6,258,098	22,320,265
North Antrim	68	2,261,799	12,919,845	72	2,387,964	14,215,617
North Down	43	960,839	4,989,873	44	1,347,025	6,467,355
South Antrim	72	7,033,902	76,712,254	86	22,877,977	142,862,810
South Down	63	5,417,186	20,525,114	70	2,439,960	12,649,429
Strangford	46	2,277,552	10,315,133	62	2,148,990	9,258,178
Upper Bann	67	5,061,360	26,992,790	78	16,626,275	73,276,818
West Tyrone	52	4,348,708	31,648,319	52	4,786,843	20,172,661
Yet to be determined[2]	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand total	1,124	70,523,829	395,505,074	1,320	124,711,793	575,459,974

[1] Investment totals include assistance offered.
[2] 'Yet to be determined' relates to offers made to businesses which have not as yet determined a precise location.

Note:
An additional £21,211,335 was offered in 2002–03 that could not be allocated by area.
Figures for 2003–04 remain provisional until the publication of the Invest NI Annual Report 2003–04.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total Northern Ireland Tourist Board investment in each Northern Ireland parliamentary constituency was in each of the last five years. [219818]

Mr. Gardiner: Information requested in relation to funding provided by Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is provided in the following table:

£

Constituency	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Across all constituencies and cross-border[1]	76,143	54,740	34,842	101,934	101,558	369,216
Belfast East	2,200	2,000	10,500	17,500	20,000	52,200
Belfast North	232,515	15,529	5,000	4,000	1,000	258,044
Belfast South	1,335,651	1,941,769	16,686	13,801	0	3,307,907
Belfast West	20,000	741,500	20,000	20,000	0	801,500

£

Constituency	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
East Antrim	74,613	1,004,280	132,330	400	500	1,212,123
East Londonderry	680,564	424,041	394,880	10,189	30,014	1,539,688
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	513,891	1,529,299	216,671	9,977	41,858	2,311,695
Foyle	671,388	516,529	2,606,564	76,113	11,655	3,882,249
Lagan Valley	73,716	23,837	27,788	3,800	2,022	131,163
Mid Ulster	37,786	230,574	119,655	118,765	20,790	527,571
Newry and Armagh	387,311	1,442,727	1,749,394	57,275	23,991	3,660,697
North Antrim	952,746	1,060,944	119,013	68,066	36,120	2,236,889
North Down	43,939	12,527	10,700	28,700	8,000	103,866
South Antrim	52,856	93,735	98,842	8,000	0	253,433
South Down	2,335,992	821,966	286,707	18,490	10,552	3,473,707
Strangford	69,390	248,675	5,000	46,737	57,376	427,177
Upper Bann	2,059	46,136	13,806	500	0	62,501
West Tyrone	356,287	235,418	4,369	4,369	0	600,443
Total	7,919,045	10,446,226	5,872,748	608,614	365,435	25,212,068

[1] This relates to projects which bridges more than one parliamentary constituency.

An additional £8,621,404 was provided during the period 2000–04 but could not be allocated by parliamentary constituency.

Financial assistance to accommodation projects was funded by the NITB up until March 2002. Since April 2002 this assistance has been administered through Invest NI.

Neighbourhood Renewal Programme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* applications and *(b)* expressions of interest have been received by the Belfast Regeneration Office in relation to the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme; how many of these applications or expressions of interest have been received from (i) North Belfast, (ii) South Belfast, (iii) East Belfast and (iv) West Belfast; which groups have applied for funding; how much funding has been applied for in each case; and what the total budget available for each is. [212328]

Mr. Spellar: The following table gives details of the number of applications/expressions of interest, received by Belfast Regeneration Office, made under Neighbourhood Renewal Phase I & II. A more detailed table giving details of each individual group who has applied, in each of the areas, has been placed in the Library. It should also be noted that the total budget available for each of the constituencies is still under consideration.

Area	Number of Applications received under Phase I of NR	Total amount applied (£)	Number of Applications/ Expressions of Interest received under Phase II of NR	Total amount applied (£)
North	6	81,066.26	69	10,228,292.05
South	2	29,340.17	27	6,324,318.08
East	10	208,148.55	39	4,872,585.25
West	24	756,372.02	168	19,210,113.39

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Iraq

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Solicitor-General whether she has read the legal opinion on the case for war in Iraq. [219698]

The Solicitor-General: As the Prime Minister explained in a written reply on 9 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1433W to my hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith) it is established practice not to disclose details of the circulation of papers to Ministers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Solicitor-General whether the Attorney-General provided written advice that the invasion of Iraq could be illegal. [219754]

The Solicitor-General: The advice given by the Attorney-General on the legality of the use of force against Iraq is described in paragraphs 378–386 of the Report of the Butler Review of Intelligence on Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Attorney-General set out his view that the use of force would be lawful in a written answer in Parliament on 17 March 2003.

HEALTH

Agency Nurses (Sussex)

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust paid for agency nurses in each year since 2002. [219055]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect separate expenditure information on agency nurses.

The table shows expenditure by the Brighton and Sussex University hospitals national health service trust on non-NHS nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff for 2002–03 and 2003–04 (the latest year for which data is available).

	Expenditure (£)
2002–03	8,086,450
2003–04	6,236,799

Source:

Annual financial returns of the Brighton and Sussex University hospitals NHS trust.

Ambulance Service

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the proposed restructuring of its ambulance service by Westcountry Ambulance Trust. [219412]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I am aware that the Westcountry Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust is currently considering ways to improve and modernise the service it provides. The Department has not made any assessment of the proposed restructuring. In line with our policy of Shifting the Balance of Power, the responsibility for the provision of ambulance services rests with local ambulance trusts and it is for local trusts to ensure that these services meet the needs of their local communities.

Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his statement of 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 528, on the fall in the premature death rate from cancer since 1997, if he will list the figures from which this statement was derived for each year since 1985. [216332]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* Cancer mortality rates in England for people aged under 75 are shown in the table. The figures are averaged over three-year periods and indicate the number of deaths from cancer each year for every 100,000 of the population aged under 75.

The 12.2 per cent. reduction in cancer mortality rates was arrived at by calculating the difference between the 1995–97 baseline figure and the latest available figures (2001–03). This figure is then divided into the baseline figure, thus showing the percentage reduction.

Data period	*Three-year average data*
1984–86	160.95
1985–87	159.42
1986–88	158.85
1987–89	158.37
1988–90	157.29
1989–91	155.53
1990–92	153.78
1991–93	151.32
1992–94	148.35
1993–95	146.80
1994–96	144.36
1995–97	141.24
1996–98	138.51
1997–99	134.97
1998–2000	132.12
1999–2001	128.83
2000–02	126.55
2001–03	124.06

Note:
Data from 1993 onwards are not directly comparable with data from 1992 and earlier years due to changes in coding.
Source:
Office for National Statistics mortality data.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218585]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All employees of the Department who are ill, including any staff with cancer, are supported through the Department's occupational health and rehabilitation policies. These policies can include counselling, re-arranging work, introducing flexible or home working or transfer to a different post.

Cardiac Care (Essex)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many trained medical *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses specialising in cardiac care there are in Romford and Havering hospitals. [219364]

Dr. Ladyman: Data is collectively held on medical staff within the cardiology speciality at Barking, Havering and Redbridge hospitals national health service trust, which operates in Romford and Havering. This data is shown in the table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS):medical staff within the cardiology specialty in Barking, Havering and Redbridge hospitals NHS trust

As at 30 September 2003	*Numbers (headcount)*
Barking, Havering and Redbridge RF4 Hospitals NHS trust	5

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Children's Hospices

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much NHS funding has been allocated to children's hospices in each year since 1997; and what estimate he has made of the proportion of the total children's hospice funding that represented in each year; [219661]

(2) many children's hospices there are in England; and how many of them receive *(a)* funding and *(b)* the majority of their funding through the NHS; [219662]

(3) how many children's hospices receive less than 10 per cent. of their core funding from the NHS. [219663]

Dr. Ladyman: There are currently 35 children's hospices registered with the Healthcare Commission in England. The Department does not collect information on hospice funding. I supplied my hon. Friend with the most up-to-date estimate we have of the proportion of total children's hospice funding that came from the national health service in my reply to him of 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 1760W.

Children's hospice services are funded from a number of sources, including services commissioned by primary care trusts on the basis of their assessment of children's needs and their priorities. There is no upper limit to the amount of funding which the NHS can provide.

In our ongoing dialogue with representatives of children's hospices, the Department continues to encourage them to engage actively with local NHS bodies over the contribution that hospices can make to the overall pattern of palliative care they commission for children and young people in their localities.

Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213783]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of the Department's cleaning contract in each year from 1997 is shown in the table.

	Cost £
1997–98	941,243.60
1998–99	751,185.20
1999–2000	871,286.10
2000–01	924,290.60
2001–02	873,940.70
2002–03	923,718.00
2003–04	883,721.70
2004–05	734,586.10

Complementary and Alternative Health Care

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on general practitioners prescribing complementary and alternative medicine and treatments. [220268]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* National health service access to complementary and alternative medicine is a matter for local clinical judgement, based on the available evidence. It is, therefore, a matter for the general practitioner to decide if a specific treatment should be made available to a patient.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pieces of guidance his Department has issued to primary care trusts (PCTs) in the last year regarding targets that need to be met for signing up dentists to the personal dental services contract; what action he will take against those PCTs who fail to meet the 25 per cent. target; and what discussions his Department has had with PCT chief executives about this target. [218297]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* By this April, we anticipate that, across England as a whole, 25 per cent. of dental practices will have moved to the personal dental service (PDS). We have not set any targets for primary care trusts, but have been very encouraged by the numbers of dentists who, at their own volition, have sought to move to the PDS scheme in order to gain advanced benefit of the new contractual arrangements which we are to introduce to national health service dentistry by April 2006.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has conducted into *(a)* the NHS-private mix and *(b)* the age of dentists moving over to the personal dental service contract. [218308]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* Data are not collected on the split between national health service and private patients.

The number and age ranges of dentists with open personal dental service (PDS) contracts as at 31 December 2004 is shown in the table.

Personal dental service (PDS) by age as at 31 December 2004

Age	*Dentists*
<25	53
25–29	537
30–34	566
35–39	560
40–44	570
45–49	523
50–54	388
55–59	212
60+	139
All PDS dentists	3,548

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental practices are accepting new *(a)* children, *(b)* pensioner and *(c)* adult NHS patients, broken down by primary care trust. [217164]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Summary figures for dental practice in England, which were extracted from the nhs.uk website on 10 February 2005, are shown in the table. Figures at primary care trust level have been placed in the Library. Information is not available for practices accepting pensioners, but most adults exempt from charges are exempt on the grounds of low income.

Groupings	*Total*
Registering children aged 0–18 for national health service treatment	3,699
Registering charge-exempt adults for NHS treatment	2,758
Registering charge-paying adults for NHS treatment	2,412

Some practices are registering more than one category of patient.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Coventry, South constituency, the effects on the constituency of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [219822]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Coventry, South constituency. For example:

At the end of December 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for inpatient treatment within the Coventry primary care trust (PCT) has fallen to 0, from 437 in June 2002.

At the end of December 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for outpatient treatment within Coventry PCT has fallen to 134, from 3,441 in June 2002.

In June 2003, at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, 86.3 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in Accident and Emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 97.4 per cent.

Between September 1997 and June 2004, the number of consultants at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust has increased from 126 to 228. Between September 1997 and September 2003 the number of nurses has increased from 1,538 to 2,087.

Between September 2001 and June 2004, the number of general medical practitioners within Coventry PCT has increased from 185 to 198.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Coventry PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a general practitioner within two working days and a primary care professional within one working day.

Work has started on a £379 million private finance initiative scheme at Walsgrave Hospital. Some parts of the new hospital are open already. The scheme is due to be completed in 2006.

A £40 million Local Improvement Finance Trust project, including a number of primary care centres across Coventry, has been approved. There is also a new walk-in centre in Coventry.

Geraint Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the Croydon, Central constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on the Croydon Central constituency. [219296]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government have put in place a programme for national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded benefits for the Croydon, Central constituency. For example:

At the end of December 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for In-patient treatment within Croydon Primary Care Trust (PCT) fell to one, from 733 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients, waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Croydon PCT has fallen to 566, from 1,420 in June 2002.

Figures for June 2002 show that 67.5 per cent. of patients within Croydon PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days, in December 2004 the figure was 100 per cent.

In June 2003, at Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust 82.8 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer, or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 94.7 per cent.

In the Croydon local authority area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen to 164.6 in 2003, from 196.5 in 1997.

In the Croydon local authority area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen to 104.5 in 2003, from 120.5 in 1997.

Between September 1997 and June 2004, the number of consultants at Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust has increased from 79 to 110.

In September 2001, figures show 180 general practitioners within Croydon PCT. Figures for June 2004 show an increase to 225.

In September 2002, figures show 153 dentists within Croydon PCT. Figures for September 2004 show an increase to 161.

For 2004–05, Croydon PCT received an allocation of £324 million an increase in cash terms of 9.8 per cent.

At Mayday Hospital the £22 million Jubilee Ward opened in December 2004. It houses 306 new beds and a day care facility with four full size operating theatres and 18 recovery beds.

Digital Hearing Aids (Gloucester)

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been allocated to help improve the delivery time for digital hearing aids in Gloucester. [218670]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2004–05, Gloucester Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust has received £472,000 through the modernising hearing aid services programme to sustain its modernised hearing aid service, and to implement capacity initiatives such as public private partnership schemes.

This funding is in addition to the historical audiology funding which is locally determined.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what input he has had to the review of the disabled facilities grant; [218840]

(2) what assessment he has made of the health benefits of accessible housing for *(a)* children with disabilities, *(b)* adults with disabilities and *(c)* family carers of disabled people; [218841]

(3) what financial allocation his Department makes to vital housing adaptations for disabled adults and children; and how much has been allocated in the past three years. [218842]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department of Health is working with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Department for Education and Skills as one of the three Government Departments undertaking the review of the disabled facilities grant. The ODPM is the lead Department in the review.

The Department of Health has not made any specific assessment of the benefits of accessible housing. However, we have commissioned a piece of work on the outcomes and costs of community based care for people with learning disability and mental health problems, which includes accommodation issues.

The Department of Health makes no direct financial allocations for housing adaptations. Primary care trusts and social service departments make funding decisions regarding minor adaptations to peoples' homes and equipment services. Since 9 June 2003, all community equipment loaned or given to people is free of charge, as are adaptations costing under £1,000 (minor adaptations) provided by councils. This change was brought about by regulations associated with the Community Care (Delayed Discharges) Act 2003.

Housing authorities are allocated funding by the ODPM for disabled facilities grants in order to fund adaptations to individuals' houses.

Distalgesic and Co-proxamol Prescriptions

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what advice is given to general practitioners who are unwilling or discouraged from re-issuing prescriptions for distalgesic and Co-proxamol; [218451]

(2) what advice his Department gives with regard to the prescription of distalgesic and Co-proxamol. [218452]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) having considered all the available evidence, including the results of a public request for information, has advised that co-proxamol should be withdrawn from the market on the grounds that the benefits of co-proxamol are not considered to outweigh the risks. The Licensing Authority has accepted this advice and a public announcement on the decision to withdraw co-proxamol was made on Monday 31 January. The Marketing Authorisation holders have agreed to withdraw co-proxamol over an extended period of time in order to allow long term users an opportunity to adopt suitable alternative pain management strategies.

There are a number of alternatives to co-proxamol for managing pain and the CSM has issued advice on pain management options to assist prescribers together with their individual patients, in choosing appropriate pain management strategies. This guidance also refers to a number of sources of additional advice including the British National Formulary, which is sent to all doctors and pharmacists.

The CSM's overview of alternative analgesic options was communicated though the Chief Medical Officer's public health link to all health care professionals, accompanying the communication on the withdrawal of co-proxamol and is available on the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's website (www.mhra.gov.uk). Copies have been placed in the Library.

East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey PCT

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many non-clinical staff are employed by the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust. [219403]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The most recent figures for the number of non-clinical staff employed by the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust (PCT) is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: All specified medical and non-medical staff by main staff group in East Elmbridge and Mid-Surrey PCT as at 30 September 2003

	Headcount
5KP total	1,593
Professionally qualified clinical staff total	743
All general medical practitioners[1]	188
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	388
Of which:	
Practice nurses	73
Qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical (STT)staff	167
Of which:	
Qualified allied health professionals (AHPs)	121
Other qualified STT staff	46
Support to clinical staff total	291
Support to doctors and nurses	220
Support to STT staff	71
Of which:	
Support to AHPs	28
Support to other STT staff	43
NHS infrastructure support total	505
Practice staff (excluding practice nurses[2])	414
Central functions	21
Managers and senior managers	70
Other staff or those with unknown classification	54

[1] All practitioners include GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted general practitioners, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, GP registrars, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other, GP retainers, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

[2] Practice staff (excluding practice nurses) includes direct patient care, administrative and clerical and other.

Sources:

Department of Health non-medical workforce census.

Department of Health general (QMS) and personal (PMS) medical services statistics.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the total budget of the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust was spent on administration in each of the last three years. [219405]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The percentage of total operating expenditure spent on administration by the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust (PCT) is shown in the table. The PCT was established on 1 April 2002. Therefore, figures are only available for two years.

	Percentage
2002–03	2.8
2003–04	1.7

Source:

Audited summarisation schedules of the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey PCT: 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust owes to the NHS Bank. [219406]

Ms Rosie Winterton: To assist in financial recovery, Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority (SHA) has received £90 million from the NHS Bank over the past three years. The SHA advises that East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey Primary Care Trust has not received any of the £90 million.

Epilepsy

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialist epilepsy nurses have been working in the NHS in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [219739]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

FSA Eat Well Campaign

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on the Food Standards Agency Eat Well campaign; and how much of this money was spent on each aspect of expenditure on the campaign. [218171]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been advised by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) that a total of £64,999 has been spent on the FSA's campaign to promote the "eatwell" website (February 2005), www.eatwell.gov.uk, to a total targeted audience of 2.5 million people. This total splits as follows:

Design work and print: £23,646

Inserts in four targeted women's magazines (Woman, Woman's Own, Now and Hello whose readers demonstrate medium/high internet usage): £40,531

Mailings to health promotion units, dieticians and nutritionists and colleges: £822.

GP Service (Southend)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have registered with general practitioners in Southend in each year since 1997. [219431]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not collect information on the numbers of people newly registered with general practitioners. Information is collected only on the total number of patients registered. This is shown in the table.

Patients of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] for specified organisations: 1997–2003

numbers (headcount)

		of which:	
	Essex	*Southend-on-Sea Primary Care Trust*	*Southend-on-Sea Primary Care Group*
	Q03	5AK	4KH89
1997	1,603,543	n/a	n/a
1998	1,618,117	n/a	n/a
1999	1,640,784	n/a	173,529
2000	1,648,879	n/a	174,881
2001	1,641,100	174,263	n/a
2002	1,646,695	173,457	n/a
2003	1,690,519	177,522	n/a

[1] UPEs include general medical service (QMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs and PMS salaried GPs.

Note:

2003 Patient data has been revised from previously published figures.

Data as at 1 October 1997–99 and 30 September 2000–03.

n/a = not applicable.

Source:

Department of Health QMS and PMS statistics.

Meat Imports

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what procedures the Food Standards Agency has in place to ensure that meat imported into the UK from EU countries is fit for human consumption; [219004]

(2) what representations the Food Standards Agency has received in the last three years concerning imports from or via the EU, with particular reference to the standards of hygiene and inspection in operation in abattoirs. [219005]

Miss Melanie Johnson: European Union (EU) Hygiene Directives regulate intra-community trade in meat and meat products and these apply uniformly across the EU. Directive 89/662 places the onus on the originating member state to ensure that meat for intra-community trade is compliant with EU legislation and fit for human consumption. The receiving member state may only carry out non-discriminatory spot checks. To that end, meat received into the United Kingdom from other member states is subject to the same inspection requirements as domestically produced meat, although there are additional checks in licensed meat plants for the presence of specified risk material in imported beef and sheep meat.

The Food Standards Agency has received a number of representations seeking reassurance that meat sent to the UK from other member states and from third countries complies with legislative and food safety requirements.

Mr. Alan Milburn

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what inquiries he has made into payments made to the right hon. Member for Darlington by companies involved in major commercial deals with the NHS; and if he will make a statement. [220234]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* None. Any arrangements between my right hon. Friend and commercial companies are subject to the ministerial code and to the requirement on all hon. Members to make appropriate declarations in the Register of Members' Interests.

Mr. W. A. Wood

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the position of Mr. W. A. Wood of Solihull on the waiting list for hearing appliances with Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull Hospital Hearing Department. [218374]

Dr. Ladyman: Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull National Health Service Trust has advised Mr. Wood of his appointment.

NICE Appraisal

Mr. Havard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance has been issued on the use by NHS trusts of treatments within a class of treatments during the period of the appraisal of that class of treatments by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence; and what steps are taken to ensure that guidance is followed. [219014]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Health Service Circular 1999/176, issued in August 1999, indicates that national health service bodies should continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where guidance from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is not available at the time the technology first becomes available. These arrangements should involve an assessment of the available evidence on clinical effectiveness.

Following the Department's "Shifting the Balance of Power" initiative, responsibility for local health services lies with the local NHS. It is now for primary care trusts, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to plan, develop and improve services for local people in accordance with national standards that include following NICE guidance.

Paddington Health Campus

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken to address the shortcomings in the management of the Paddington Health Campus Project identified in the National Audit Office, Treasury and Department of Health Review of September 2004. [220327]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* Since the publication of the review, revised project management governance structures have been set up to strengthen the management and oversight of the project team, and ensure there is proper accountability to the strategic health authority and the Department. The governance of the project, and the strength and skill set of the project team is kept under constant review.

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons the land arrangement set out in the December 2004 outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus was rejected by his Department. [220328]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The Department did not reject the land proposal set out in the December 2004 outline business case (OBC). As part of the process of testing the robustness of the OBC, the Department questioned the overall value for money of the land transaction. This challenge resulted in a counter proposal being put forward, which involved Westminster city council undertaking land swaps with the private sector property developer, Paddington Development Corporation Ltd. This counter offer is currently being evaluated by the Paddington Health Campus project team. The result of this evaluation is scheduled to be with the Department by the middle of March.

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether it remains the intention that the Paddington Health Campus will have 1,088 in-patient NHS beds. [220329]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus submitted to the Department in December 2004 included provision for 923 in-patient beds. This is made up of 835 national health service in-patient beds and 88 private beds. This figure compares with an earlier estimate of 1,088 in-patient beds made in 2003. In the intervening time, the Paddington Health Campus has been subjected to a major review of the clinical needs. This review had a major focus on activity that could be redistributed into the community in line with recent NHS policy. It is a reflection on the success of that review, and the commitment of local primary care trusts to take on the activity, that bed numbers have reduced.

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the outturn costs of the Paddington Health Campus Project set out in the outline business case of December 2004. [220330]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus project is currently being evaluated by the Department. This evaluation includes a robust testing of the accuracy and affordability of the costings underpinning the business case.

Prostate Cancer Treatment

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to increase expenditure on treatment of prostate cancer. [219334]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Funding for cancer services is included in primary care trust (PCT) baselines. It is for PCTs, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities. Their decisions need to be based on the specialised knowledge they have of the local community, this includes the need for treatment of prostate cancer in their area. 80 per cent., of funding is devolved to PCT level.

There are a number of initiatives under way to improve treatment of prostate cancers as set out in "Making Progress on Prostate Cancer", published in November 2004. PCTs will need to take any funding implications of these initiatives into account. Copies of "Making Progress on Prostate Cancer" are available in the Library.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long the waiting time is for treatment for prostate cancer at the Leicester General Hospital; and what the equivalent time was in 2004. [219333]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available in the format requested. Data is not available centrally on waiting times for all cancer patients. A two week out-patient waiting time standard from urgent general practitioner referral with suspected cancer to first out-patient appointment with a specialist was introduced in 2000.

At the University Hospitals of Leicester national health service trust in the last quarter, quarter 2 of 2004–05, 100 per cent. of urgent referrals for suspected urological cancers, including prostate cancer, were seen within two weeks of urgent referral by their GP. The same performance was achieved for quarter 2 of 2003–04.

The NHS cancer plan sets out our strategy to reduce waiting times for cancer patients. From 2005, all cancer patients will wait a maximum of one month from diagnosis to treatment and two months from urgent referral for suspected cancer to treatment except for a good clinical reason or through patient choice. Data on achievement of NHS cancer plan waiting times targets are published for strategic health authorities and trusts on the Department's website at http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/cancerwaits/.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211688]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the expenditure on major information campaigns and advertising commissioned by the Department's communications directorate for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05 (estimated). The figures include the costs of campaign-related publishing, television, radio, poster, newspaper and magazine advertising.

There have been a number of new campaigns since 1999–2000. These include:

Tobacco control—1999–2000

Flu immunisation—2000–01

Social care/worker recruitment—2001–02

Sexual health—2002–03 to date.

The tobacco control campaign was launched in December 1999. Expenditure has increased from £15.5 million (total campaign) in 1999–2000 to £27.5 million (estimated) in 2004–05 as shown in the table.

£ million

Financial year	*Total campaign expenditure (all campaigns)*	*Tobacco control campaign*	*Advertising expenditure (all campaigns)*	*Tobacco control campaign*
1996–97	15.13	—	2.50	—
1997–98	6.63	—	2.04	—
1998–99	22.96	—	8.53	—
1999–2000	35.97	15.5	15.17	6.18
2000–01	25.32	13.73	20.80	8.97
2001–02	37.23	12.3	20.41	7.79
2002–03	34.85	11.56	23.13	7.87
2003–04	52.35	23.83	38.98	17.76
2004–05 (estimated)	49.40	27.5	37.48	25.00

Future expenditure has not been decided yet.

Treatment Abroad (NHS Funding)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients living in the London borough of Wandsworth have had operations or other medical treatments funded by the NHS in European countries in each of the last three years. [218202]

Dr. Ladyman: Under the London patient choice overseas treatment direct referral scheme, no such patients have been referred by the national health service for treatment overseas in the last three years. Treatments in other countries of the European Economic Area for United Kingdom residents may also be publicly funded through the co-ordination arrangements in Regulation (EEC) 1408/71 eg via the E111 scheme for temporary visitors and the E112 referral arrangements. Data on these patients' UK area of residence are not separately recorded centrally.

Waiting Times (Mental Illness)

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the median waiting time is for a patient with a mental health illness to receive an initial out-patient appointment with a consultant, following referral by a general practitioner. [218759]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the median waiting times for an outpatient appointment with a mental illness consultant is shown in the table.

Out-patient provider and commissioner waits for mental health specialities—June 2004 to December 2004: provider only

	Waited (seen)				
	Quarter	*Month*		*Middle of list*	*Median (weeks)*
2004–05	1	June	Provider	14,972	2.95
2004–05	2	September	Provider	14,441	2.87
2004–05	3	December	Provider	14,736	2.71
2004–05	1	June	Commissioner	9,476	2.88
2004–05	2	September	Commissioner	9,591	2.75

Aggregated specialties:
710—Mental illness
711—Child and adolescent psychiatry
712—Forensic psychiatry
713—Psychotherapy
715—Old age psychiatry

Waiting Times (Rochdale)

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for surgery for patients in Rochdale was in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [217370]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Inpatient waiting list and time bands figures for the following trusts: fourth quarter ending March of each year

Month end	*Unit name*	*Estimated median waiting time (months)*
1997	Oldham NHS trust	4.30
1997	Rochdale Healthcare NHS Trust	4.08
1997	North Manchester Healthcare NHS Trust	4.08
1997	Bury Healthcare NHS Trust	3.25
2004	Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	2.78
December 2004[1]	Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	1.93

[1] Please note changes in the time bands for this quarter.
Source:
Department of Health KH07.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum and Immigration

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures he is taking against legal advisers facilitating unfounded claims for *(a)* asylum and *(b)* applications for work permits. [219840]

Mr. Lammy: The Government take this matter very seriously. The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) and the Law Society, which regulate immigration advisers, have a duty to ensure that advisers act properly.

Since they became fully operational in May 2001, the OISC has successfully prosecuted 30 illegal advisers, refused registration applications from 126 would-be advisers and withdrawn regulation from a further 20.

The Law Society has put in place a raft of measures to ensure that immigration advisers are acting properly, ranging from investigations to referral to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

Child Support

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on progress in assisting Jane Green, the constituent of the hon. Member for Stafford, in securing the payment of child support for her daughter from the father in Tobago. [219312]

Mr. Lammy: The United Kingdom is a signatory to several international conventions for the cross-border recovery of maintenance, including the recognition and enforcement of existing maintenance decisions made by courts in the UK. Trinidad and Tobago is not a signatory to any of these conventions.

The UK's arrangement with Trinidad and Tobago in this field is based on what is often referred to as the "Commonwealth scheme", which dates back to 1920 and effectively operates on the basis that the judicial systems of Commonwealth countries are—in general—sufficiently similar to allow maintenance orders made in the courts of one jurisdiction to be registered and enforced in the courts of another jurisdiction. Since there is no treaty regulating these arrangements, however, there is no formal mechanism by which the authorities of the initiating jurisdiction can put pressure on the authorities of the receiving jurisdiction if things go wrong or if a lengthy delay occurs.

This particular application was to register and enforce an English maintenance order in Trinidad and Tobago, and the application was first made in February 2002. The Trinidad and Tobago authorities acknowledged the application in October 2002, and the Department has forwarded correspondence and sent follow-up letters and email reminders to the authorities in Trinidad and Tobago at approximately two-month intervals ever since.

The Trinidad and Tobago authorities have responded at various times with hearing dates that were subsequently adjourned, and—in June 2003—with news that the respondent had lodged an appeal against the English order being registered and enforced in Trinidad and Tobago. The last information received from the Trinidad and Tobago authorities was that a date was awaited for the matter to come before the Court of Appeal.

The Office of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is aware of our concern at the significant delays that have occurred in this case, but my Department is unable to intervene in the affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, nor to insist on a timeframe in which this matter should be resolved.

Officials in my Department do continue, however, to seek clarification from the Trinidad and Tobago authorities of the present state of the matter, and in particular the grounds of the respondent's appeal and whether a date has been set for the appeal hearing.

More generally, efforts are under way internationally to improve the system of dealing with cross-border maintenance claims. The UK is taking an active part in this work, and we would hope that as many countries as possible are able to join in the new treaty arrangements in this area, once they are established.

In the meantime, I shall be happy to write to the hon. Member with further details of my Department's efforts on behalf of his constituent.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Arms Exports (EU Code of Conduct)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 21 December 2004, *Official Report;* column 171WS, on EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, what legal remedy through *(a)* national courts and *(b)* the European Court of Justice exists if an EU member state breaches the Code of Conduct. [219735]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The domestic consequences of a member state breaching its obligations under the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports will depend upon its national laws. For the UK, I refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the written statement of 21 December 2004, *Official Report,* column 171WS. The EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports is not justiciable in the European Court of Justice.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 21 December 2004, *Official Report,* column 171WS, on EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, what legal remedy exists if a supplier in an EU member state breaches the current arms embargo. [219736]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The EU embargo on the sale of arms to China reflects a political commitment by member states. It sets a high common standard for all member states' assessment of applications to export all items on the EU Common Military List. All EU member states have incorporated the Code of Conduct into their export licensing procedures, according to their national laws. There is no common interpretation of this commitment among member states. In the UK, exporters are required to seek a licence before exporting controlled goods or technology. A licence will not be issued if approval would be inconsistent with, inter alia, the UK's interpretation of the China embargo. The UK's interpretation of the embargo was set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in a reply on 3 June 1998, *Official Report,* columns 240–41 to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker). The legal penalty under the Export Control Act 2002 for exporting controlled goods or technology without a licence may be imprisonment for up to 10 years. I am sending the information the right hon. and learned Gentleman requested on penalties which apply in other member states and placing a copy in the Library of the House.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 171WS, on EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, whether the Code of Conduct will forbid the export to China of *(a)* machine guns, *(b)* large calibre weapons, *(c)* bombs, *(d)* torpedoes, *(e)* rockets, *(f)* missiles, *(g)* ammunition, *(h)* military aircraft, *(i)* helicopters, *(j)* vessels of war, *(k)* armoured fighting vehicles, *(l)* command and control systems and *(m)* logistics management systems. [219737]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The EU Code of Conduct sets a high standard for all member states' assessment of applications to export all item on the EU Common Military List. All EU member states have incorporated the Code of Conduct into their export licensing procedures, according to their national laws. The list includes all the items listed in the question, although some helicopters and logistics management systems may be purely for civil use, and therefore not licensable. To ask what specific equipment the code 'forbids' is to misunderstand the way it functions. The code obliges member states to refuse to license the export of any item on the list if, inter alia, there is a clear risk that it might be used for internal repression, aggressively against another country, or to assert by force a territorial claim. There is also a provision in the code which provides for denial of export licences for equipment which may affect "the national security of the UK, of territories whose external relations are the UK's responsibility, and of allies, EU member states and other friendly countries". The code applies to exports to China and all other countries, and has proved effective since its inception in 1998. It is the criteria in the Code of Conduct, rather than the Arms Embargo on China, which have formed the basis for the clear majority of the licence refusals made by EU member states in respect of China.

Attorney-General (Iraq Advice)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he had a role in the *(a)* framing, *(b)* drafting and *(c)* drawing up of the parliamentary answer given by the Attorney-General on 17 March 2003 on Iraq. [218592]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary had no role in the framing, drafting and drawing up of the Parliamentary Answer given by the Attorney-General on 17 March 2003 on Iraq.

Bolivia

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the Bolivian Congress's decision to charge former Bolivian President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada and members of his former cabinet with genocide. [218961]

Mr. Rammell: We are aware that former President of Bolivia, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada and members of his cabinet are charged with genocide. We believe this is an internal affair and a matter for Bolivian authorities. We trust that the case will be pursued with full respect for the due process of the rule of law.

China (Arms Embargo)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has held with the US Administration on the lifting of the EU's arms embargo on China; what the US's position was; and if he will make a statement. [220361]

Mr. Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1055–56W to the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (Mr. Wilkinson).

Craig Murray

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what redundancy package was negotiated with Mr. Craig Murray; and whether confidentiality clauses were included. [218578]

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Murray applied for early severance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in accordance with the terms of the FCO's current programme to reduce its staff numbers. The terms for all early departures, including Mr. Murray's, are those laid down under standard Cabinet Office-approved rules. No officer who has departed under these terms has been asked to agree any confidentiality clauses. It would not be appropriate for us to go into the detail of the terms received by individuals.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the attack on UN peacekeepers in the Ituri region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and what additional help the British Government plans to offer in support of peace-keeping activities there. [220270]

Mr. Mullin: We condemn the attack on a patrol of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in Ituri province by local militias and offer our condolences to the families of those killed. We remain determined to support the United Nations in ensuring that those responsible are brought to justice.

An additional UK officer will shortly be seconded to the UN peacekeeping force (MONUC). The Ministry of Defence are also making a contribution to training staff at the newly-established divisional headquarters in Kisangani. We await the UN Secretary-General's next report on the Democratic Republic of Congo and will carefully consider its recommendations on additional support that might be required to continue to improve MONUC's effectiveness.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people are employed in the FCO Services: Visits section; and what training they received in advance of taking up their position. [219276]

Mr. Rammell: There are 34 full-time staff and 43 part-time contract staff employed in Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Services: Visits. The part-time contract staff are Liaison Officers and Interpreters employed on a visit by visit basis to accompany the visitors to their official appointments.

On joining FCO Services: Visits, all staff receive full on the job training from experienced colleagues covering all elements of the role.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how individuals were recruited by the FCO Services: Visits section in the last year for which figures are available. [219277]

Mr. Rammell: In the last year all Foreign and Commonwealth Office Services: Visits vacancies have been filled from within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Europe Day

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department has made for the celebration of Europe Day on 9 May. [212383]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has no plans to celebrate Europe Day.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what budget his Department has allocated for the celebration of Europe Day on 9 May. [212384]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not allocated a budget for the celebration of Europe Day.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which Ministers in his Department will be involved in activities to mark or celebrate Europe Day on 9 May. [212385]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* Ministers' plans for involvement in activities to celebrate Europe Day are not yet confirmed.

Falklands

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what the situation is regarding air links between the Falkland Islands and the South American mainland; and if he will make a statement; [219811]

(2) how many charter flights operate to the Falkland Islands using Argentine airspace, for the purposes of cruise ship passenger exchange. [219814]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* No charter flights currently operate between the Falkland Islands and the South American mainland. Charter flights between the Falkland Islands and the South American mainland have been halted since the end of 2003, when the Argentine Government stopped granting permission for charter flights to the Falkland Islands to use Argentine airspace. The scheduled LAN Chile flight is not affected by discussions over charter flights and continues to operate on a weekly basis between Southern Chile and the Falkland Islands.

I also refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Rammell) to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Redcar (Vera Baird) on 3 March 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1381–82W.

Iraq

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received regarding the export of oil from the Iraqi port of Khor al-Amaya in January and February 2003; and if he will make a statement. [217502]

Mr. Rammell: Under the UN sanctions regime, Iraq was not permitted to export oil from the Khor al-Amaya terminal. In February 2003 the UK mission to the UN in New York was informed that several tankers had evaded the US-led Multinational Interception Force which was tasked with upholding sanctions against Iraq and entered the Iraqi port of Khor al-Amaya. This was reported to the relevant UK authorities and shared with the US.

Israel

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli authorities on the extension of the Nationality and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order) prohibiting residents or citizens of Israel who are married to residents of the Occupied Territories from living in Israel with their spouses. [218216]

Mr. Rammell: We are concerned about the extension to the Citizenship and Entrance to Israel Law, which was made on 31 January, and its impact on Arab Israelis and Palestinians from the Occupied Territories. We have raised our concerns with the Israeli Government over this law, including with our EU partners on 21 July 2004. We will continue to monitor the situation and make appropriate representations.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning *(a)* the assassination of two members of the Al Asqa brigade and *(b)* the killing by shooting of children in Kuta Dahil, Bertniya Sabn al-Rjoub and Ratah during the ceasefire declared between Israel and Palestine. [218720]

Mr. Rammell: We recognise Israel's right to defend itself against terrorism but it must act in accordance with international law. In this context we have made representations at every level to the Israeli authorities raising our concerns regarding the disproportionate use offered by the Israeli defence forces in Gaza, and the number of civilian casualties, particularly children, which have resulted from their actions. We have not made specific representations concerning the cases detailed by the hon. Member.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning *(a)* the

planned construction of a new settlement, Gvast Wan Bethlehem, *(b)* the new settlement on Jayyous Village land in Qalqilya and *(c)* the planned expansion of the Alfei Menashe settlement in Qalqilya; [218721]

(2) what representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning the expansion of *(a)* the Betan Unit settlement and *(b)* the Hat Homa settlement in Bethlehem district; [218722]

(3) whether he plans to take action against the Israeli Government following their refusal to abide by the International Court of Justice ruling on the separation barrier. [218724]

Mr. Rammell: We have made frequent representations to the Israeli Government expressing our concern over continued settlement activity and the routing of the separation barrier. While Israel has a legitimate right to defend itself against terrorist attacks, we consider construction of the barrier on occupied land to be unlawful and we note that this was also the conclusion of the International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion. We have also made clear our view that settlements are illegal under international law. The Roadmap requires that Israel freeze all settlement expansion and dismantle outposts erected since March 2001.

The barrier and settlements were raised most recently by my right hon. Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean during her meeting with the Israeli ambassador on 22 February. The British embassy in Tel Aviv has also made representations to the Israeli Government on construction in Jayyous. We have not made representations on the other individual settlements specified.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning the evacuation and dismantling by the Israeli army of Israeli settler outposts in the West Bank. [218723]

Mr. Rammell: We believe that settlement expansion is a major obstacle to the peace process. We welcome Prime Minister Sharon's commitment in the Roadmap to freeze construction in settlements and to dismantle settlement outposts that are illegal even under Israeli law. We expect to see these commitments met. The Israeli Government are currently working on both mapping the outposts and investigating the legal framework for evacuating them. We are monitoring their work closely.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205805]

Mr. Alexander: Breaches of IT policy have been monitored periodically since April 2003. Between April and December 2003, 69 staff received official warnings. Between January and December 2004, 36 staff received official warnings. These warnings form part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office disciplinary process.

Kenya

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support the Government have given to Kroll in its work to recover moneys obtained through corruption in Kenya. [218458]

Mr. Mullin: None. I understand that Kroll has been engaged by the Government of Kenya. Neither the Government of Kenya nor the company have sought our assistance in identifying or recovering corruptly obtained money or assets in the UK.

Kyrgyzstan

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the UK is taking to promote a democratic and pluralistic society in Kyrgyzstan. [219013]

Mr. Rammell: We work closely both bilaterally and through the EU and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to support a variety of projects aimed at promoting a democratic and pluralistic society in Kyrgyzstan. We similarly encourage the Kyrgyz Government publicly and privately towards this end. In January this year, our Ambassador publicly expressed support for the election-related work of the OSCE in Kyrgyzstan.

In the build-up to the recent elections we supported a range of projects including several voter education campaigns, exit polling, training for independent domestic election observers and promoting open dialogue between Government officials and NGOs. Through the UN Development Programme we also contributed to updating the Kyrgyz Central Election Committee's electronic voter system.

We have also supported the ombudsman and other projects on the media, rights of the child, OSCE police reform and alternatives to the use of prison.

Kyrgyzstan is a focal country for the Department for International Development (DfID). Through their £3.35 million development programme, DfID engage with the Government on several policy areas including governance and anti corruption. Kyrgyzstan has also signed up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative which aims to promote Government and corporate accountability in the extractive industries.

Ministerial Visits

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what factors determined his Department's selection of Lahore and Gujarat for inclusion in the itinerary of his 2005 South Asia tour; and what the cost was of including those destinations in the tour. [220566]

Mr. Straw: I visited Lahore at the longstanding invitation of the Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri, with whom I had a working dinner; the guests at which included a wide range of senior representatives from business, Government and the media. I also used the visit to deliver a keynote speech to an invited audience of over 200 in Pakistan's second largest city. The additional cost of the Lahore element was £14,116.

I visited Gujarat in Pakistan's Punjab province to pursue consular and visa objectives, and to develop further the important people to people links between that part of Pakistan and the Pakistani communities in the UK. I was hosted in Gujarat by the Chief Minister of Punjab, whose home town it is, and I used the opportunity to develop my links with this important political family. The additional cost of the Gujarat element was £1,307.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what rules apply to the conduct of Ministers in the selection of foreign destinations for ministerial visits. [220567]

Mr. Straw: All arrangements for overseas travel by Ministers are in accordance with the ministerial code.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact on the UK Muslim community of the scheduling of Ministerial visits to Lahore and Gujarat. [220605]

Mr. Straw: As is usual in respect of ministerial visits, no formal assessment has been made of the impact on the British Muslim community of my recent visit to Lahore and Gujarat in Pakistan, but it appears to have been well received by both the central and provincial governments, and by the media in Pakistan.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who in his Department took the decision to include Lahore and Gujarat in the itinerary of his recent visit to South Asia. [220607]

Mr. Straw: I made the decision to visit Lahore and Gujarat in Pakistan, as I had to visit Islamabad, taking into account advice from officials.

Public Diplomacy Unit

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs within what Directorate in his Department the Public Diplomacy Unit is based; and what the remit of the Unit is. [218646]

Mr. Straw: The Public Diplomacy Group of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) forms part of the Directorate for Strategy and Information. The remit of the Group is to influence positively foreign perceptions of the UK, in line with FCO strategic priorities and to strengthen the FCO's relationships with Parliament, Whitehall, the British Council, the BBC World Service and the devolved administrations, and its outreach to civil society.

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the budget for the Public Diplomacy Unit *(a)* is in 2004–05 and *(b)* was in 2003–04; and how many staff work in the Public Diplomacy Unit. [218652]

Mr. Straw: The budget for the Public Diplomacy Group of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is £15,768,100 in the current financial year and was £15,534,494 in 2003–04. 63 staff are employed in the Group.

Uganda

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received relating to the commissioning by President Museveni of members of the paramilitary Kalangala Action Plan Youth Brigade for the purpose of intimidating the opposition in Uganda. [218265]

Mr. Mullin: We have heard reports of the reactivation of the Kalangala Action Plan Youth Brigade, which according to Uganda's own Parliament was implicated in violence during the 2001 elections. We have raised our concerns with the Ugandan authorities, who have assured us that any illegal activity will be handled by the police. We shall take a close interest in the activities of this group.

Uzbekistan

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent steps he has taken to investigate alleged human rights abuse in Uzbekistan. [219281]

Mr. Rammell: We remain disturbed by reports of human rights abuses in Uzbekistan and have consistently made clear to the Uzbek Government the extent of our concern.

On 1 March 2005 I drew to the attention of the Uzbek ambassador our concern at reports that Uzbekistan continued in 2004 to execute those prisoners on death row with appeals lodged with the UN Human Rights Committee.

As we prepare to assume the Presidency of the EU, we will look to remain actively—and where necessary critically—engaged on questions of economic and political governance, including human rights, in Uzbekistan and Central Asia as a whole.

Venezuela

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the relationship between Venezuela and the United States of America, with particular reference to the effects of arms purchases by Venezuela from Russia. [218960]

Mr. Rammell: Bilateral relations between Venezuela and the US are a matter for the two countries concerned.

Venezuela has stated its intention to purchase a number of assault rifles from Russia for use by army reservists. Venezuela is committed to the politically binding United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted in July 2001. Under this Programme of Action Venezuela has a right to import weapons for its self-defence and security. It is also required to ensure that these weapons are properly stored and managed and that proper records are kept.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between the Government and *(a)* the

US Administration, *(b)* EU member states and *(c)* the South African Government on the forthcoming parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe. [218962]

Mr. Mullin: We regularly discuss the situation in Zimbabwe with the US Administration, our EU partners and the South African Government. Our immediate priority remains free and fair elections on 31 March.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions have taken place between the Government and the UN regarding election monitoring in Zimbabwe; [218963]

(2) what discussions have taken place between the Government and the Southern African Development Community regarding election monitoring in Zimbabwe. [218978]

Mr. Mullin: We are in regular touch with the UN Secretariat and the members of the Southern African Development Community over the election in Zimbabwe. We want Zimbabwe to honour in full its commitment to the Southern African Development Community electoral principles.

We also want Zimbabwe to invite a wide range of international observers, including the UN; they have made clear they do not intend to do so. These actions speak for themselves.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Chinese Government concerning the recent shipment of assault rifles, military vehicles, riot equipment and tear gas to Zimbabwe. [219896]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The Government regularly discusses export control and counter-proliferation issues with the Chinese Government. In January 2005 officials participated in an EU-China export controls seminar, and later this month a Chinese delegation will travel to the UK to continue this cooperation. These talks stress the importance of taking account of the use to which strategic exports are to be put in the country of final destination and the importance of refusing exports where there is a clear risk that they might be used for internal repression. The Government has not to date raised with China the specific shipment that the right hon. and learned Gentleman refers to. But the Government would not approve export of goods which might be used for internal repression or external aggression, or where we were concerned that equipment would be re-exported and used for these purposes. We have serious concerns about the export of arms to Zimbabwe, a country with a track record of armed internal repression. It is also a further indictment of the skewed priorities of the Mugabe regime if they believe arms purchases of this kind matter more than relieving the woeful humanitarian situation.

WORK AND PENSIONS

APW Pension Scheme

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the additional voluntary contributions which some APW scheme members paid will be combined with ordinary scheme benefits in order to calculate a person's benefits for the purposes of deemed buyback. [218996]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* In order to judge whether some of the Deemed Buyback conditions are met, three figures have to be calculated:

(a) the scheme must calculate the amount of scheme rights that are actually available in respect of this member;

(b) the scheme then calculates how much this would be if the scheme had been funded to the level of the statutory minimum funding requirement;

(c) the Inland Revenue calculate the amount required to restore State Scheme rights to the level they would have been had the person never been contracted-out.

In order to take advantage of the Deemed Buyback process, the full amount of scheme rights that are actually available in respect of the member held by the scheme must be paid over to the Inland Revenue before the member is restored into State Earnings Related Pension Scheme/State Second Pension. This includes voluntary contributions which are held by the scheme.

The full amount of cash in the scheme should be paid to the Inland Revenue because Deemed Buyback works by giving a member more SERPS than the payment represents. It would not be appropriate for a scheme member to keep some of the funds held in the scheme and thus give them a larger subsidy than needed at the expense of the taxpayer.

Alternatively, as Deemed Buyback is one of a number of options available to a member for securing their accrued rights, they may decide it is in their best interest to keep their voluntary contributions and scheme rights and, for example, use them to secure an annuity.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the Oral Statement of the Minister of State for Pensions on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 22WH, on APW Pension Scheme, from which pension schemes data returns were received in relation to the Financial Assistance Scheme but do not appear to be eligible for assistance under the scheme; for what reason each is not eligible; and how many members are affected *(a)* in total and *(b)* in each scheme. [219697]

Malcolm Wicks: The majority of those schemes referred to were ineligible for inclusion on the list of schemes potentially eligible for the FAS because insufficient information, in some cases including information on the solvency position of the employer, had been provided. Omission from the list does not determine whether those schemes will or will not be qualifying pension schemes for the purposes of the FAS, nor therefore whether members of those schemes will or will not qualify for assistance. Schemes will be given the opportunity of providing further information in due course. It would therefore be inappropriate at this stage to publish the information requested.

Benefits

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department spent on *(a)* male and *(b)* female recipients of (i) the basic state pension, (ii) SERPS and (iii) pension credit. [219559]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the table.

£ million

Expenditure 2003–04	*Male*	*Female*
Basic state pension	16,872	22,907
SERPS	4,694	1,984
Pension credit	1,981	2,812

Notes:

1. Figures are for Great Britain and rounded to the nearest million.

2. Expenditure is taken from departmental accounting systems, while the data to divide this between male and female recipients is taken from a 5 per cent. sample of benefit records and is subject to a degree of sampling variation.

3. Expenditure on pension credit includes minimum income guarantee for April to September 2003.

4. Benefit expenditure forecast information is published on the Internet at: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp

Child Support Agency

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases in Midlothian have been submitted to the Child Support Agency since its inception; and how many cases in Midlothian are before the agency now. [218255]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. David Hamilton, dated 7 March 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many cases in Midlothian have been submitted to the Child Support Agency since its inception; and how many cases in Midlothian are before the Agency now.

I am unable to answer this question, as the Agency does not record information at this level.

I can however tell you that the number of cases for which Scotland and North Eastern Business Unit is currently responsible totals around 240,000. Of these cases around 110,000 have been registered on the new computer system; approximately 65,000 of these cases are being dealt with under the new legislation and 45,000 under the old legislation. In addition around 130,000 are currently old scheme cases on the old computer system.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of parents who contribute to the upkeep and maintenance of their children through the Child Support Agency do not have access to their children; and if he will make a statement. [218667]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many risk mitigation plans the Child Support Agency has prepared in each of the last four years. [218912]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 7 March 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many risk mitigation plans the Child Support Agency has prepared in each of the last four years.

The Child Support Agency's approach to risk management supports that recommended by the Department for Work and Pensions. This has entailed building the systematic consideration and management of risks into existing core business functions whilst managing risks at all levels within the business. To this end both the volume and content of the mitigation plans held within the Agency remain fluid. Plans are subject to regular review and updating as the business changes and risks are identified, managed or eventually closed. The Agency's high level risk process are referred to within both our externally published Business Plan and our Annual Report and Accounts. Agency high level risks are monitored/reviewed monthly through the Agency's Business Information Bulletin. We will arrange for the Agency's Business Information Bulletins to be made available in the Library.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the Coventry, South constituency, the effects in Coventry, South of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [219692]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Coventry, South will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 21 per cent. of adults and 6 per cent. of children in the West Midlands region are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Coventry, South who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Coventry, South

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	6,100
2002	6,600
2003	7,000
2004	7,100

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Coventry, South, the proportion in employment has risen to 68.4 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with 1,970 in Coventry, South alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,400 families in Coventry, South.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the State second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 4,690 pensioners in Coventry, South are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £44.55 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 16.1 thousand pensioners in Coventry, South have benefited from this increase.

Disabled People (Battersea)

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with disabilities in Battersea have returned to work in each of the last seven years. [218519]

Jane Kennedy: Information on the number of disabled people who have benefited from the new deal programmes in Battersea is shown in the following table.

Number of disabled people who have entered work through the following new deal programmes in Battersea; new deal for young people; new deal 25 plus; new deal for lone parents; new deal 50 plus

	Individuals into work
October 1997-September 1998	0
October 1998-September 1999	30
October 1999-September 2000	30
October 2000-September 2001	30
October 2001-September 2002	20
October 2002-September 2003	40
October 2003-September 2004	20
Total	170

Notes:
1. New deal for partners information is only available at national level.
2. New deal for young people started in January 1998; new deal 25 plus started in July 1998; new deal for lone parents started in October 1998; new deal 50 plus started in April 2000.
3. New deal 50 plus information relates to the number of new deal 50 plus employment credit starts to March 2003. Information on the number of new deal 50 plus recorded job entries from April 2003 to September 2004 is not available at constituency level.
4. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
New Deal Evaluation Database

Information on the new deal for disabled people is not available at constituency level so information has been provided for the Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth Jobcentre Plus district.

Number of disabled people who have entered work through the new deal for disabled people (NDDP) in the Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth Jobcentre Plus district

	Individuals into work
July 2001–September 2001	0
October 2001–September 2002	30
October 2002–September 2003	130
October 2003–September 2004	240
Total	400

Notes:
1. NDDP individuals into work figures relate to the number of individuals gaining NDDP job broker jobs and individuals gaining NDDP Jobcentre Plus jobs.
2. The NDDP programme is available to people in receipt of a disability or health related benefit and started in July 2001.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
New Deal Evaluation Database

In addition to new deal there are a number of programmes such as Access to Work, Work Preparation and WORKSTEP designed to help disabled people return to work. Details of the number of people helped to return to work through these programmes is not available at constituency or Jobcentre Plus district level.

Jobcentre Plus also offers interviews with a personal adviser to all disabled people making new or repeat claims to qualifying benefits to ensure they are aware of the help and opportunities available to them.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the costs incurred by schemes in making data returns in relation to the Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS), broken down between those *(a)* that are on the list of those potentially eligible for inclusion in the FAS and *(b)* that are not. [219651]

Malcolm Wicks: No such estimate has been made. In practice the cost of providing the information requested will vary depending on the quality and availability of individual scheme records. Recognising this, we have sought to keep our requirements to a minimum and are very grateful for the extensive co-operation we have received from independent trustees scheme administrators and the assistance in kind provided by the pensions industry.

Five-year Strategy

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will provide the figures on which the percentage national off-flow rates illustrated in Figure 13 on Page 46 of his Department's Five Year Strategy were based. [215531]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the following table.

Four month incapacity benefit off-flow rate

	National			*Phase 1 pathways areas*		
Month of claim	*Claims in month*	*Number leaving within four months*	*Percentage leaving within four months*	*Claims in month*	*Number leaving within four months*	*Percentage leaving within four months*
2002						
April	52,600	10,100	19	2,200	500	21
May	53,200	9,800	18	2,300	500	21
June	49,000	10,100	21	2,200	500	22
July	54,300	11,300	21	2,300	500	23
August	50,800	8,900	18	2,300	400	19
September	52,200	9,700	19	2,300	500	20
October	54,500	10,100	19	2,400	500	20
November	54,800	12,400	23	2,400	600	24
December	43,000	9,700	23	1,900	500	26
2003						
January	62,200	13,400	22	2,700	700	25
February	50,000	10,600	21	2,100	500	24
March	53,500	10,800	20	2,300	500	22
April	49,100	8,700	18	2,200	400	19
May	51,000	9,800	19	2,200	500	20
June	51,200	10,300	20	2,200	400	20
July	52,700	10,500	20	2,200	500	24
August	48,600	8,900	18	2,100	400	20
September	52,200	9,200	18	2,200	400	20
October	53,900	10,200	19	2,300	500	23
November	50,000	9,900	20	2,100	600	28
December	42,900	8,600	20	1,800	500	29
2004						
January	56,300	10,100	18	2,500	700	28
February	47,600	8,100	17	2,000	500	26
March	53,600	9,700	18	2,400	600	27
April	48,200	8,300	17	2,100	600	26
May	46,500	7,800	17	2,000	500	26
June	49,100	8,900	18	2,200	600	27
July[1]	48,900	9,200	19	2,100	600	27
August[1]	46,400	8,100	18	2,000	500	26

[1] Figures for July and August are provisional and are likely to be updated as more data becomes available.

Note:

The figures are produced from the Department's Working Age Statistical Database (WASD). WASD does not include a proportion of short-term incapacity benefit claims; therefore the off-flow rates presented will be lower than actual rates. However, trends over time and comparisons between areas will be consistent.

Intensive Activity Pilot

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the private sector contractors supplying services relating to the intensive activity period pilot scheme for those aged between 50 and 59 years, broken down by jobcentre office areas. [220468]

Jane Kennedy: The information is in the table.

Private sector contractors in pilot locations—new deal intensive activity 50–59 pilot

Jobcentre Plus district	*Training providers*
Calderdale and Kirklees	CMS Vocational Training Limited Direct Training Limited S and S Training Services
Coventry and Warwickshire	CWT Focus Pathways JHP Group Limited Solutions (also known as Workworld).
East Lancashire	Training 2000 Limited
Essex	Seetec Business Technology Centre Limited
Hampshire	Bennington Training Services
The Marches	Training and Contracting Services Vale Training and Development
Dorset and Somerset	Paragon Training
Suffolk	Pelcombe Training Limited Seetec Business Technology Centre Limited
Derbyshire	Seetec Business Technology Centre Limited Spire
Highlands, Islands and Clyde Coast	Microcom (Glasgow) Limited Nevis Training Centre
Ayrshire, Dumfries, Galloway and Inverclyde	Lowland Training Services Limited Microcom (Glasgow) Limited

Notes:
1. The pilot is also operating in Bridgend, Leicestershire and Gateshead. There are no private sector providers in these locations.
2. Some providers may not yet have provided services to pilot participants, but may be required to do so during the pilot.

Source:
DWP Provision and Adviser Division; DWP Partnerships Division

Job Centres (Dorset)

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will ensure that the job centres at *(a)* Blandford, *(b)* Bridport, *(c)* Christchurch, *(d)* Poole and *(e)* Wareham are open on a full-time basis to provide services for the public; and if he will make a statement. [212341]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Mr. Jeremy Groombridge to Mr. Christopher Chope, dated 7 March 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked David Anderson, Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, to reply to your question about the service provided by the Job Centres at Blandford, Bridport, Christchurch, Poole and Wareham. I am replying on behalf of David Anderson, as one of the Directors of the Jobcentre Plus Board. At present all these offices provide services for the public on a full-time basis.

Jobcentre Plus is continuously reviewing arrangements for service delivery in order to ensure that we provide value for money and take account of the new ways customers access our services. The need for face-to-face facilities for jobsearch and other aspects of our business has been superseded in many instances by new business processes and the use of information technology. For example, over the last 12 months we have seen an increase of over 40 per cent. in the number of hits on our jobsearch website. Encouraging our customers to use these new channels enables us to focus on those customers who need greatest help, through the intervention of personal advisers.

It would be inappropriate to speculate on any future review of delivery sites. However, I can assure you that should local managers determine that changes are required to local service delivery arrangements then local stakeholders would be fully consulted before any changes take place.

I hope that this is helpful.

Means-tested Benefits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of incapacity benefit and other means-tested benefits paid to incapacity benefit recipients was in the last year for which figures are available. [219397]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The information is in the following table.

Benefit expenditure on incapacity benefit recipients 2003–04

	£ million
Incapacity benefit	6,718
Severe disablement allowance	763
Income support	3,679
Housing benefit	2,188
Council tax benefit	444
Total	13,791

Notes:
1. All figures have been rounded to the nearest million pounds.
2. Figures for income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit include expenditure for people receiving incapacity benefit credits and a small amount of money paid to disabled people who do not receive incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance.
3. Figures do not include pension credit, housing benefit and council tax benefit paid to people between the ages of 60 and 64.
4. Figures exclude severe disablement allowance for people over state pension age.
5. Figures may not sum due to rounding

Source:
DWP expenditure tables.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of income support for claimants of the disability premium and other means-tested benefits which are drawn by these claimants was in the last year for which figures are available. [219398]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* It is not possible to accurately state the cost of income support, housing benefit or council tax benefit for claimants of the disability premium. The available information is in the table.

Income related benefit expenditure for people under 60 years of age and classed as long-term sick or disabled

	£ million
Income support	4,621
Housing benefit	3,009
Council tax benefit	660
Total	8,290

Notes:
1. All figures have been rounded to the nearest million pounds.
2. Figures quoted are for 2003–04 are estimated outturn.

Source:
DWP expenditure tables—pre-Budget report 2004.

Pathways to Work

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of claimants within the Pathways to Work pilots have completed five compulsory work focussed interviews. [214632]

Maria Eagle: Just under one fifth of customers expected to have participated in the repeat work focused interviews process are recorded as attending five repeat work focused interviews by the end November 2004. A proportion of customers are likely to have had one or more of their WFIs deferred or waived.

Pension Credit

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people receiving pension credit have earnings. [219702]

Malcolm Wicks: As at August 2004, the latest date for which this information is available, there were 21,300 households in Great Britain in receipt of pension credit in which the claimant or a partner was receiving earnings. These households comprised 35,000 individuals.

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
3. Individuals may include a small number of partners under the age of 60.
4. For couples, earnings are either the claimant's or the partners' earnings.

Source:
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 5 per cent. sample.

Pensioners

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assistance his Department provides to pensioners during the coldest winter months. [219665]

Malcolm Wicks: Winter fuel payments are available to people aged 60 or over who are ordinarily resident in the UK. These payments of £200 are paid to all eligible households. Households which include people aged 80 or over can receive an extra payment of £100. Over 11 million payments are made automatically each year.

In addition, cold weather payments provide extra help towards heating costs for the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society, including pensioners receiving pension credit, in periods of exceptionally cold weather.

The cold weather payment is made automatically to people awarded pension credit when the average temperature is recorded as, or forecast to be, 0 degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days at the weather station linked to the customer's postcode. Savings are not taken into account and cold weather payments are paid in addition to winter fuel payments.

In 2003–04 a total of 418,000 cold weather payments were made, to pensioners and other vulnerable groups, worth £3.5 million.

Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers' Compensation) Act

David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Midlothian were paid compensation under the Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers' Compensation) Act 1979 in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [220073]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not available in the format requested. The available information is that during the period April 2003 to March 2004, a total of 1,501 awards were made in Great Britain. Of these 255 were made to people resident in Scotland. During the period April 2004 to February 2005 the total awards were 1,422, of which 220 were made to Scottish residents.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210551]

Maria Eagle: From time to time special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Specifically, in so far as records are kept, the Department's special advisers met with:

A range of different media representatives on 29 June 2003, 23 July 2003, 24 July 2003, 3 November 2003, 11 December 2003 and 5 February 2004.

Policy specialists for other countries on 14 July 2003 and 3 September 2003.

Representatives of the Social Market Foundation on 19 August 2003 and 22 September 2003.

Representatives of Institute of Public Policy Research on 4 November 2003.

A union representative on 13 October 2003.

A Deputy Minister of the National Assembly for Wales on 5 February 2004.

Sure Start (Battersea)

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many mothers have received the Sure Start maternity grant in the Jobcentre Plus district which includes Battersea. [218525]

Mr. Pond: Battersea is included in the Jobcentre Plus district of Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth. This district was created for Social Fund purposes in January 2004.

Sure Start maternity grants made in Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth Jobcentre Plus district

	Number of awards
2003–04 January to March	1,162
2004–05 April to January	3,650

Notes:
1. Data are given for all awards, irrespective of whether the award was made to the mother or her partner.
2. Data for 2003–04 include awards made in January 2004 which covered the relevant area before the district was formally created for Social Fund purposes.

Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System

HOME DEPARTMENT

Special Constables

14. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of special constables. [219843]

Ms Blears: Special constables are a vital part of our modern police service. They work with regular police officers and community support officers to reduce crime, disorder and anti—social behaviour by providing high visibility patrols and public reassurance. Last week I took part in the national specials weekend to raise awareness of the vital and valuable work of specials.

Religious Incitement

15. **Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers he has to limit the availability of anti-Semitic and extreme anti-Israel incitement on the internet. [219844]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are a number of incitement offences in law which provide protection against anti-Semitic and extreme anti-Israel incitement. In particular, this includes the incitement to racial hatred offence in the Public Order Act 1986 which makes it an offence to use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour with intention or likelihood that hatred would be stirred up on the grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins.

The legal position is that what is illegal off-line is illegal on-line, so, provided that the elements of the offence are made out, a prosecution for incitement to racial hatred could be taken for words or behaviour published on the internet.

Custody Suites

16. **Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the overall availability and capacity of custody suites in police stations. [219846]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not keep central records of the availability and capacity of police custody suites. This is an operational matter for police chief constables.

Asylum and Immigration

17. **John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the integration of asylum seekers into local communities in Glasgow. [219847]

Mr. Browne: My hon. Friend will appreciate that the people who know best are local agencies and authorities in Glasgow. The Scottish Refugee Council works to bring asylum seekers, refugees and local people together to improve their communities and this work has been commended in an independent report by the Scottish Centre for Research on Social Justice entitled "Building Bridges: Local Responses to the Resettlement of Asylum Seekers in Glasgow". I would commend its contents to him. I would like to mention as well, the work undertaken by Glasgow city council since 2000 and I very much hope the partnership between MASS and the council will continue. Partnership working to provide an effective system of support for asylum seekers is essential, not only for asylum seekers but also to ensure continued community cohesion.

20. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many measures the UK has opted into under title IV of the EC treaty covering visas, asylum, immigration and movement of persons. [219850]

Mr. Browne: The Government's position remains unchanged since 1999 when the treaty of Amsterdam, including our title IV protocol came into effect. The UK retains the right to opt in to EU asylum and immigrations measures. Where measures are in our interest we will opt in.

To date, our records show that we have opted in to:

Eight measures related to Dublin and Eurodac arrangements which enable us to return asylum seekers to the European Union member state responsible for determining their claim;

11 negotiating mandates for European Community readmission agreements with third countries and four resulting readmission agreements that have been finalised to date. The aim of these agreements is to facilitate the return of third country nationals who do not or no longer have a basis to remain in the territory of member states;

Four minimum standards measures in the field of asylum, which the UK already adheres to;

11 measures on illegal immigration contributing to increased security of the European Union's borders;

Two measures relating to the format of visas.

22. **Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of measures he has taken to control *(a)* illegal immigration and *(b)* unfounded asylum claims. [219852]

Mr. Browne: The measures we have taken to secure our border, including deploying new detection technology, increasing the number of juxtaposed control locations and expanding the airline liaison network, have had a significant impact on both illegal immigration and asylum intake.

(a) An indication of our success in combating illegal entry is the fall by 65 per cent. of clandestine entry in Kent in 2003 compared with 2002. This fall has continued in 2004 with a 44 per cent. decrease in clandestines in Kent in 2004 compared to 2003.

In addition carriers at ALO locations during 2004 have denied over 30,000 passengers boarding.

(b) The measures taken have also resulted in a fall in asylum applications. Between October and December 2004 asylum applications were 22 per cent. lower than the same period in 2003 and 68 per cent. lower than the peak of October 2002.

Note:

Statistics on clandestine entry are based on locally collated figures and may be subject to change.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change there has been to the average time taken to process initial asylum applications in each year since 2000. [216798]

Mr. Browne: Information on the timeliness of initial decisions on new substantive cases is published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to introduce compulsory testing of immigrants for *(a)* HIV and *(b)* tuberculosis. [217437]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* As we made clear in our five year strategy for asylum and immigration 'Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain' (Cm 6472), our approach to the prevention of the communication of diseases through migration is based on expert advice on protecting the nation's health. We will accordingly target health screening for tuberculosis in high-risk areas at the entry clearance stage; those who are diagnosed with it would then need to seek treatment at home before being allowed to enter the UK.

HIV, unlike tuberculosis, is not airborne, so the public health issues it raises are different. However, the case for extending routine health checks to diseases other than tuberculosis is kept under review.

Antisocial Behaviour

18. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to visit the Vale of York to discuss problems relating to antisocial behaviour. [219848]

Ms Blears: There are no current plans for Home Office Ministers to visit the Vale of York to discuss antisocial behaviour.

However, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary visited Hambleton and Thirsk on February 11 2005.

Whilst he was there he visited the Clock Project in Thirsk, a youth drop-in centre with multi agency support linked to antisocial behaviour and to "prevent and deter" strand of the Prolific and Priority Offenders Strategy.

He also met with manager and chair of the Hambleton Community Safety Partnership.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what redress victims of antisocial behaviour have if they feel the police or local authority are not responding to their concerns. [219330]

Ms Blears: The police and local authorities are key partners in reducing crime and disorder in their local area. They will be signatories and supporters of strategies and interventions to tackle antisocial behaviour. These strategies should be widely advertised so that local people can understand the work that the police and local authorities are undertaking and what they can expect by way of action.

Section 12 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2004 introduced a duty on all social landlords to publish policies and procedures by December 2004 on how they intend to tackle antisocial behaviour. These policies and procedures should be made available so that tenants as well as the wider community know what they can expect from social landlords.

If a victim of antisocial behaviour is not satisfied with the response they have received from a local agency then they should seek further clarification via the established routes which have been set out locally for dealing with such issues, in some instances this might be by way of an established complaints procedure.

They might also wish to seek advice and support from their local elected representative.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on steps his Department is taking to tackle antisocial behaviour in Sussex. [218168]

Ms Blears: The Government's TOGETHER campaign helps local people and agencies to tackle and not tolerate antisocial behaviour.

TOGETHER applies across all England and Wales including the hon. Members constituency.

All Sussex's 13 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) have appointed an antisocial behaviour co-ordinator. All CDRPs were awarded £25,000 for antisocial behaviour in 2004–05 and have used this to recruit a co-ordinator.

Hastings has been chosen as a Together Action Area, which will pilot new approaches and become an example of best practice in tackling antisocial behaviour. Hastings will also look to develop new ways of involving members of the public in the drive to tackle antisocial behaviour.

84 ASBOs have been issued across Sussex since 1999.

Brighton and Hove and Worthing have all had winners of the Home Office 'Taking a Stand' Awards.

Hamas

19. **Huw Irranca-Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent consideration has been given to listing Hamas as a proscribed international group. [219849]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The military wing of Hamas (Hamas IDQ) was proscribed in March 2001. Decisions to proscribe and deproscribe are and will continue to be taken only after the most careful consideration and on the basis of the best possible security and other appropriate advice. That will remain the basis for all decisions in the future.

Prison Population

21. **David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were in prison on 1 March *(a)* 1975, *(b)* 1985, *(c)* 1995 and *(d)* 2005; and if he will make a statement. [219851]

Paul Goggins: The figures for years requested, as at 28 February , are:

	Number
1975	39,364
1985	[1]45,080
1995	[2]50,409
2005	75,354

[1] Plus 9 in police cells.
[2] Plus 162 in police cells.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on reducing the prison population. [219708]

Paul Goggins: The Government believe that prison should be reserved for serious, dangerous, and seriously persistent offenders. For other less serious offenders, tough community based sentences offer a much better alternative than short custodial sentences which can be ineffective in preventing re-offending.

But it is for the courts to determine who needs to go to prison. The Government have not set any target for reducing the size of the prison population. The latest prison population projections indicate prison numbers will increase over the next five years. To allow for this we are building capacity up to nearly 80,000 by January 2006.

Abuse (False Allegations)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions in the last five years the police have enforced a criminal sanction against an individual who has made a false allegation of abuse. [219316]

Paul Goggins: Defendants charged for making false allegations are likely to be proceeded against for "perverting the course of justice". It is not possible from the information held on the Home Office Court Proceedings database to identify from the number of defendants proceeded against for "perverting the course of justice", what number were for false allegations of abuse, as the circumstances of the offence are not collected centrally.

Crime (Essex)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many burglaries have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction; [208279]

(2) how many vehicle thefts have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction; [208593]

(3) how many assaults have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction; [208594]

(4) how many violence against the person offences have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction; [208596]

(5) how many violent crimes have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction; [208597]

(6) how many sexual offences have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction; [208598]

(7) how many robberies have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction; [208639]

(8) how many *(a)* fraud and *(b)* forgery offences have been reported to (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (A) prosecution and (B) conviction. [208642]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the tables. Tables 1 and 2 give the number of offences recorded by the police in the Essex police force area and the Southend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area. Recorded crime data is published on a financial year basis and data at CDRP level is only available for six key offences for 1999–2000 and 2000–01 but for all offences from 2001–02.

Tables 3 and 4 give the number of defendants proceeded against and found guilty in the Essex police force area and South East Essex petty sessional area. Court proceedings data is published on a calendar year basis. Data for 2004 will not be available until the autumn.

Because recorded crime deals with offences and court proceedings deals with defendants, the two data sets are not directly comparable.

Table 1: Offences recorded by the police by various offence types, 1997–98 to 2001–02

Number of offences

	Burglary	*Theft of a vehicle*	*Common assault*	*Violence against the person*	*Violent crime*[1]	*Sexual offences*	*Robbery*	*Fraud*	*Forgery*
Essex police force area									
1997–98[2]	15,839	797	n/a	4,806	6,016	783	427	2,321	137
1998–99[3]	14,997	7,414	1,478	8,043	9,443	877	523	4,207	159
1999–2000	14,967	7,174	3,220	9,879	11,480	975	626	5,339	131
2000–01	14,889	6,826	3,344	10,680	12,232	852	700	6,455	160
2001–02	14,472	7,505	4,332	11,896	13,703	887	920	6,518	193
Southend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area									
1997–98	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998–99	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	n/a	1,013	n/a	1,463	1,786	157	166	n/a	n/a
2000–01	n/a	863	n/a	1,414	1,697	135	148	n/a	n/a
2001–02	1,439	810	479	1,444	1,800	139	217	649	16

n/a = Not available.
[1] Includes offences of violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.
[2] The number of crimes recorded using the coverage and rules in use until 31 March 1998.
[3] The number of crimes recorded using the expanded coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.
Note:
The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Offences recorded by the police by various offence types, 2002–03 and 2003–04

Number of offences

	Burglary	*Theft of a vehicle*	*Common assault*	*Violence against the person*	*Violent crime*[1]	*Sexual offences*	*Robbery*	*Fraud*	*Forgery*
Essex police force area									
2002–03	16,909	7,664	3,559	22,090	24,583	1,165	1,328	7,471	263
2003–04	16,467	7,283	4,050	26,010	28,782	1,296	1,476	7,163	307
Southend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area									
2002–03	1,994	668	321	3,043	3,551	195	313	596	38
2003–04	1,643	746	244	3,253	3,849	188	408	802	49

[1] Includes offences of violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.
Note:
The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Table 3: Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for various offences, 1997 to 2003[1]

	Burglary		*Theft of a vehicle*		*Common assault*		*Violence against the person*		*Violent crime*[2]	
	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*[3]	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[3]	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[3]	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[3]	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[3]
Essex police force area										
1997	995	598	560	311	956	550	1,443	647	1,774	819
1998	920	581	562	357	1,270	748	1,468	637	1,851	824
1999	828	533	585	319	1,368	793	1,454	622	1,814	792
2000	837	436	599	348	1,475	732	1,361	569	1,665	728
2001	717	403	517	327	1,472	769	1,547	613	1,940	759
2002	680	405	575	381	1,473	845	1,298	618	1,705	792
2003	648	410	547	362	1,565	898	1,471	702	1,828	863
South East Essex petty sessional area[4]										
1997	246	163	118	57	263	149	394	158	468	192
1998	248	159	138	65	366	198	421	171	497	200
1999	211	138	150	77	328	203	353	162	422	194
2000	147	107	129	80	348	159	290	127	341	151
2001	157	102	98	60	357	190	351	120	412	144
2002	130	70	95	62	309	186	292	145	386	172
2003	137	89	91	61	342	199	323	147	408	178

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes: Violence against the person, Sexual offences and Robbery.
[3] For South East Essex PSA the guilty figures include those found guilty at the Crown court where South East Essex PSA was the committing court.
[4] Covers Southend and includes some parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.

Table 4: Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for various offences, 1997 to 2003[1]

	Sexual offences		*Robbery*		*Fraud*		*Forgery*	
	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*[2]	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[2]	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[2]	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[2]
Essex police force area								
1997	194	112	137	60	528	355	314	226
1998	220	101	163	86	558	361	300	217
1999	228	81	132	89	508	347	231	173
2000	151	81	153	78	544	324	234	176
2001	195	66	198	80	505	321	304	223
2002	201	79	206	95	483	316	249	176
2003	186	77	171	84	442	321	191	149
South East Essex petty sessional area[3]								
1997	41	19	33	15	120	78	81	58
1998	38	10	38	19	115	64	68	52
1999	41	15	28	17	114	83	53	40

Table 4: Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for various offences, 1997 to 2003[1]

	Sexual offences		Robbery		Fraud		Forgery	
	Proceeded against	Found guilty[2]	Proceeded against	Found guilty[2]	Proceeded against	Found guilty[2]	Proceeded against	Found guilty[2]
2000	23	12	28	12	120	79	57	35
2001	30	11	31	13	100	60	65	50
2002	45	12	49	15	91	54	39	26
2003	33	15	52	16	78	56	33	25

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] For South East Essex PSA the guilty figures include those found guilty at the Crown court where South East Essex PSA was the committing court.
[3] Covers Southend and includes some parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.

Car Thefts

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many car thefts have taken place in each of the last three years within the Greater London area. [218203]

Ms Blears: The available information is for the London region. The number of recorded offences of theft of a vehicle are as follows:

	Number
2001–02	62,492
2002–03	58,739
2003–04	55,384

Community Support Officers

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many times in each year since their inception *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers have used the power to maintain and enforce a cordoned area established under the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; [209474]

(2) how many times in each year since their inception *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers have used their power to request a name and address for fixed penalty offences and offences that cause injury, alarm and distress to another person or damage or loss of another's property; [209477]

(3) how many times in each year since their inception *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers have used their power to request the name and address of a person acting in an antisocial manner; [209478]

(4) how many times in each year since their inception *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers have used their power to save life or limb, or to prevent serious damage to property; [209479]

(5) how many times in each year since their inception *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers have used their power to seize vehicles used to cause alarm and distress; [209480]

(6) how many times in each year since their inception *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers have used their powers to (i) require the removal of abandoned vehicles, (ii) stop vehicles for the purpose of a road check, (iii) stop and search vehicles and remove items carried by drivers or passengers under the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 and items carried by pedestrians, (iv) regulate traffic for the purpose of escorting abnormal loads and (v) stop a vehicle for emissions testing; [209481]

(7) how many times in each year since their inception *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers have used their power to request a person to stop drinking in a designated public area and to surrender open containers of alcohol; [209482]

(8) how many times in each year since their inception *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers have used their powers to (i) confiscate alcohol from a young person and (ii) confiscate cigarettes and tobacco products from a young person; [209483]

(9) how many fixed penalty notices for dog fouling, littering and riding on footpaths have been issued by *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers in each year since their inception. [209475]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not available. It is for the chief constable of Essex police to determine the duties of community support officers in Essex and to designate under the relevant legislation which powers they may exercise.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers were employed in the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years. [218205]

Ms Blears: The information for the number of community support officers in the Wandsworth borough Operational Command Unit has been provided by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (Sir Ian Blair QPM) and is set out in the table.

Year (as at 31 March)	Number of community support officers
2003	7
2004	34
2005 (1 March)	[1]32

[1] Wandsworth has been allocated a total of 44 Community Support Officers by 31 March 2005.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers are working in Wandsworth; and how many there will be in April 2005. [218517]

Ms Blears: I am told by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (Sir Ian Blair QPM) that the Wandsworth borough Operational Command Unit had 32 community support officers (CSOs) on 1 March and that it is the intention that the borough should have 44 CSOs by 31 March 2005.

The allocation of CSOs to each of the London borough Operational Command Units is a matter for the Commissioner to decide.

Crime Statistics (Leicester, South)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* crimes, *(b)* burglaries, *(c)* thefts and *(d)* vehicle-related crimes were reported to the police in Leicester, South in each year since 1997. [217986]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the tables. Leicester, South comes within the Leicester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area and data at CDRP level has only been collected from 1999–2000.

Table 1 gives figures for burglary and vehicle-related thefts for the Leicester CDRP from 1999–2000 to 2001–02. Figures for all crime and other thefts were not collected during these periods.

Table 2 gives all the figures requested for 2002–03 and 2003–04. Because of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002, figures from this date are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Table 1: Offences recorded by the police in the Leicester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area 1999–2000 to 2001–02

Number of offences

	Burglary	*Vehicle related thefts*
1999–2000	4,287	8,489
2000–01	3,391	7,349
2001–02	3,317	7,774

Note:
The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Offences recorded by the police in the Leicester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area 2002–03 and 2003–04

Number of offences

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Total crime[1]	48,357	47,376
Burglary	3,379	3,077
Theft[2]	4,532	4,271
Vehicle related thefts	8,056	6,558

[1] Relates to all offences recorded in the Leicester CORP.
[2] Excluding vehicle-related thefts.

Note:
The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the Criminal Cases Review Commission in identifying issues for possible reform of criminal law, procedure and practice. [218656]

Paul Goggins: Based on its casework experience the Commission submitted its view on partial defences to murder to the Law Commission during its consultation exercise; and has drawn to the attention of the Home Office a technical aspect of sentencing law following revocation of parole licences which has given rise to several references. There are a number of proposals for the possible reform of criminal law, procedure and practice which the Criminal Case Review Commission (CCRC) has drawn to our attention where progress has been made, but where an appropriate legislative vehicle is awaited to implement the changes.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the results of the liaison between the Criminal Cases Review Commission and the Historical Abuse Appeals Panel. [218657]

Paul Goggins: This is an internal matter for the Commission. I understand there have been several meetings between representatives of the Commission and the Historical Abuse Appeals Panel. Relevant issues have been discussed and a protocol for co-operation between the two organisations has been drafted.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what impact the Cannings case has had on the type of evidence the Criminal Cases Review Commission uses to justify a referral of a case to the Court of Appeal. [218712]

Paul Goggins: This judgment has had no impact, as such, on the type of evidence used to justify a referral, but the decision is of course applied by the Commission whenever it is appropriate to do so.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Criminal Cases Review Commission's section 17 powers will be extended to Scotland. [218715]

Paul Goggins: We are aware of the Criminal Cases Review Commission's concerns on this issue. At their request we are considering this matter along with a number of other legislative issues raised by the Commission.

Departmental Policies

Geraint Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the Croydon Central constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on the Croydon Central constituency. [219298]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government has put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Croydon central constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and September 2004, the number of police officers in the Metropolitan Police Force increased by 3,434 from 26,677 to 30,111. The Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 1,889 CSOs on Metropolitan Police Force streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, the Metropolitan Police Force Area has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 23 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of one per cent.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MRS) will receive £1,927.8 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 5.81 per cent. (£105.8 million) over 2004–05. The MPS also gains around £4.2 million from the Amending Report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 6.04 per cent. General grants funding to the MPS has increased by 28 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, the MPS will also receive around £207 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the chief constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering Government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Five CCTV projects in the Croydon CDRP area received a total of £964,986 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £2.16 million has been allocated to Croydon CDRP under these initiatives. A further £2.5 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in London for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in Croydon set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Croydon a total of 27 antisocial behaviour orders have been issued as of 1 March 2005. Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp

Tackling Drug Misuse is a priority of this Government and its policy is set out in the 10 year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the Library.) Under this, the Government has invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Croydon has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drug Interventions Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Croydon Drug Action Team amounted to £2.11 million, rising to £3.44 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Croydon central constituency can be obtained from the Croydon Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams

The Government is working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the futurebuilders fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk

This year, 2005, is the year of the Volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08 available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Haltemprice and Howden constituency, the effects on Haltemprice and Howden of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [216022]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the Haltemprice and Howden constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Humberside police force increased by 186 from 2,045 to 2,231. Following the Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002, Humberside is in the process of recruiting 22 CSOs to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour on Humberside streets. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Humberside has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 27 per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 18 per cent.

Humberside Police Force will receive £118.9 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 3.75 per cent. (£4.3 million) over 2004–05. Humberside benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the Force would have received £0.7 million less. Humberside also gains around £0.2 million from the Amending Report for 2003–04, bringing the overall increase to 3.95 per cent. General grants funding to Humberside has increased by 27 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Humberside will also receive around £8 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Five CCTV projects in the East Riding CDRP area (which includes the Haltemprice and Howden constituency) received a total of £467,568 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £1.05 million has been allocated to East Riding CDRP under these initiatives. A further £1.8 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004/05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the Yorkshire and the Humber for CDRP capacity building across the region.

It is estimated that out of a million active offenders, 100,000 have three or more convictions and are responsible for half of all crime. There is a Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme in East Riding of Yorkshire set up to target those offenders who cause a disproportionate amount of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in the community.

The Government's Crime Reduction Website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from antisocial behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In East Riding of Yorkshire a total of 19 antisocial behaviour orders are currently issued (at February 2005). Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp .

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reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. East Riding of Yorkshire has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for East Riding of Yorkshire Drug Action Team amounted to £1.3 million, rising to £1.8 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the Haltemprice and Howden constituency can be obtained from the East Riding of Yorkshire Drugs Action Team, for contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the 'futurebuilders' fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

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Gaelic Language

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is on the use of the Gaelic language; and what plans his Department has to prepare and implement a Gaelic language scheme. [217095]

Fiona Mactaggart: Action to support the Gaelic language is primarily the responsibility of Scottish Ministers.

The Home Office attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of the Gaelic language in line with the UK's obligations under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Bill currently before the Scottish Parliament does not extend statutory obligations on UK public bodies in Scotland in relation to the preparation or implementation of Gaelic language plans. However, UK departments and public bodies which operate in Scotland may—like comparable Scottish public bodies—have a role to play in facilitating the use of the language.

The Home Office has been working closely with colleagues in the Scotland Office and the Scottish Executive on the role our department can play, voluntarily, in securing the status of Gaelic.

Illegal Immigrants (Albanians)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Albanian nationals have been deported from the United Kingdom in each of the last three years. [219760]

Mr. Browne: The latest available information on the number of Albanian nationals removed from the UK as a result of deportation action in each of the last three years is shown in the table.

Albanian nationals deported from the UK, 2002 to 2004 [1,2]

	Total
2002	n/a
2003	2
2004[2]	8

n/a = Information not available.

[1] These figures are based on management information and are not National Statistics.

[2] Data for 2004 are provisional.

Infectious Diseases (UK Entrants)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* asylum seekers, *(b)* tourists and *(c)* immigrants entering the UK were tested for (i) tuberculosis, (ii) HIV and (iii) hepatitis in each year since 1997; and what proportion tested positive in each case. [217742]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Referral statistics are not collected routinely for all ports of entry. However we have obtained the statistics shown in the table for tuberculosis checks at Heathrow and Gatwick from the bodies which carry out the checks there. These statistics cover all passengers who are routinely referred.

	Heathrow		*Gatwick*	
	Referrals for tuberculosis check	*Tuberculosis cases identified*[1]	*Referrals for tuberculosis check*	*Tuberculosis cases identified*[1]
1997–98	65,188	100	n/a	—
1998–99	72,079	119	n/a	—
1999–2000	88,079	119	267	1
2000–01	108,170	89	773	15
2001–02	148,619	94–138	3,548	36
2002–03	164,635	98–173	1,882	22
2003–04	175,039	92–205	1,705	8

[1] Figures given may not be strictly comparable because of changes in definitions used by the health control unit at the airport. Where ranges are given, they reflect the fact that the unit does not always receive confirmation from a hospital that what the unit has identified as a case of TB on the basis of a chest x-ray is a case.

Inquests (Teesside)

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how many days in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004 the (i) coroner, (ii) deputy coroner and (iii) assistant deputy coroner for Teesside sat on inquests. [212064]

Paul Goggins: This information is not available.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the salaries of the *(a)* coroner, *(b)* deputy coroner and *(c)* assistant deputy coroner of Teesside were on 1 December 2004. [212091]

Paul Goggins: The information is not held centrally. Coroners' salaries are determined by the relevant local authority which in this case is Middlesbrough borough council.

Internet Pornography

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to bring forward further proposals to control access to violent pornography on the internet. [202240]

Paul Goggins: We understand the public concern about the availability of extreme and obscene material on the internet. We are currently considering how the law relating to pornographic material featuring violence and sexual abuse could be strengthened.

Mistaken Identity

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of mistaken identity in relation to cases brought to prosecution he has been informed of in each of the last five years. [220340]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible from the Home Office Court Proceedings database to identify, from the number of defendants who were acquitted or had their case dismissed at court, those which involved mistaken identity, as the reasons behind the acquittal or dismissal are not collected.

Mobile Phones

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drivers have been stopped by police for driving while using a mobile phone in *(a)* London and *(b)* England since the ban came into force. [218529]

Ms Blears: Information collected centrally on the new offence of driving while using a hand held mobile phone relates to police action by written warning, fixed penalty notice and court proceedings. It does not cover all stops for the offence, some of which may result in advice or an oral warning. Data for 2003 will be available in late March 2005.

Use of a hands free mobile phone is not part of the new offence.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what legal authority regional offender managers under the National Offender Management Service structure are *(a)* taking responsibility for parts of the National Probation Service's budget in 2005–06 and *(b)* allowed to employ staff. [218793]

Paul Goggins: The Regional Offender Managers are civil servants and as such can exercise the Secretary of State's functions, which include making financial provision for local probation boards to perform their role. As civil servants they do not employ staff but can manage other civil servants.

Police Numbers

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time equivalent police officers there are per 1,000 residents of *(a)* England, *(b)* Avon and Somerset police area and *(c)* south Gloucestershire; and how many there were in (i) 1979 and (ii) 1997. [218009]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The latest information on police strength wards published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 13/04 "Police Service Strength England and Wales, 31 March 2004".

The requested information is given in the following table.

	Police officer strength	*Strength per 100,000 population*
31 March 2004[1]		
England	130,988	264
Avon and Somerset	3,417	229
South Gloucestershire[2]	267	108
31 March 1997		
England	118,459	242
Avon and Somerset	2,989	204
South Gloucestershire[2]	—	—
31 March 1979		
England	103,574	224
Avon and Somerset	2,825	212
South Gloucestershire[2]	—	—

[1] Not comparable with previous years data. Includes staff on career breaks and maternity/paternity leave.
[2] Figures for south Gloucestershire not collected before 31 March 2002.

Police Training

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the average cost of employing, training and developing a probationary police constable in the last year for which figures are available. [216739]

Ms Blears: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary have estimated that the average salary, training and development costs of a probationary police constable up to independent patrol (which is normally 31 weeks after joining a force) in 2003–04 were £27,048. This figure includes salary costs of £13,993 per probationary police constable for that period and training and development costs of £13,055.

Information about the associated costs for recruitment, supervision, accommodation, information technology etc is not collated centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Prison Statistics

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the annual prison statistics for 2003 will be published; and what factors have determined the timescale for publication. [219517]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office statistical bulletin 'Offender management caseload statistics 2003' was published on 9 December 2004. This bulletin replaces the annual publications 'Prison statistics England and Wales' and 'Probation statistics England and Wales'. A copy of the publication is available in the Library, and is supplemented by further tables on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/omcs.html

Prison System

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of public attitudes to prison and its alternatives. [212336]

Paul Goggins: The Home Department conducts its own assessments of public attitudes to prison and its alternatives through its own research such as the British Crime Survey, and through the consideration of other research and representations.

Prison/Employer Links

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans his Department has to encourage links between prisons and local employers. [212319]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Service is developing a joint prison probation strategy for establishing and maintaining links with employers. These links are focused on sectors that have significant labour shortages nationally and regionally, such as construction, catering, industrial cleaning, utilities, sports and fitness, driving and distribution. Opportunities are also being explored in horticulture and information communication technology. These sectors were identified following consultation with the Confederation of British Industry, Jobcentre Plus and Sector Skills Council.

The Prison Service is taking the lead on a cross Government work programme for engaging with employers which has been agreed by the Employment, Training and Education Sub-Board of the Reducing Re-offending Programme Board. This work programme includes officials from the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the Probation Service, Jobcentre Plus, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Learning and Skills Council. National and local employers will be invited to be involved as the work programme develops. Its aim is to build on existing work to encourage employers to contribute to the training of offenders and to commit to the recruitment of those who achieve an agreed level of skills.

At a local level, employer links are being developed and maintained through the Heads of Learning and Skills and Resettlement Managers in establishments. They work closely with Jobcentre Plus, Learning and Skills Councils and voluntary organisations to involve employers in work and training programmes for prisoners and to encourage them to recruit prisoners on their release. From April 2005 the Learning and Skills Councils will assume responsibility for the skills training of all offenders, and will be seeking to meet local labour market needs. This will increase opportunities for linking with employers at a local level.

The Prison Service is currently developing an employer database, holding information on employers who are willing and able to offer work to ex-offenders. This will enable prison to access information about employment opportunities in their local area, and also nationally to assist prisoners who are held at establishments outside their home areas.

Prisoners (Art)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department is taking to ensure that different parties involved in the arts work closely together to increase the range, quantity and quality of activities for prisoners. [212320]

Paul Goggins: Activities being undertaken by arts organisations in prisons and the community are well documented for all key stakeholders in the Directory of Arts Activities in Prisons, which has been produced annually by the Unit for Arts and Offenders with financial support from the Department for Education and Skills. The Unit also produces a regular e-mail newsletter for arts organisations working with offenders, hosts a Forum for Arts and Offenders and provides training to artists wanting to work with prisoners. The Unit for Arts and Offenders will be members of the newly formed National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Voluntary and Community Sector Advisory Group.

Arts for offenders are supported through the curriculum in prisons and through financial support provided centrally to several national arts organisations to actively promote arts activities in prisons. Most prisons now have a Head of Learning and Skills, funded by the Department for Education and Skills, and they will determine the part that arts activities and arts organisations can play within the establishment. At a major prison Arts conference last year to celebrate and promote arts activities for offenders, a guide was launched for Heads of Learning and Skills and Managers in the Voluntary Sectors on provision of voluntary sector activities in prisons. This includes a consistent and joint approach to joint working on setting up, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of provision.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison officers and staff have *(a)* been tested for tuberculosis and *(b)* tested positive for tuberculosis (i) in each year since 1997 and (ii) between 1 January and 1 December. [203712]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* This information is not held centrally and can be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment his Department has made of the effects of the recruitment moratorium by Her Majesty's Prison Service; [218147]

(2) when the decision was made by Her Majesty's Prison Service to introduce a recruitment moratorium; [218148]

(3) how long the recruitment moratorium by Her Majesty's Prison Service will continue. [218149]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service introduced a managed recruitment ban on 6 December 2004. The need for the ban to continue has been recently reviewed and the Prison Service has now decided that from 1 April 2005, recruitment can recommence in order to fill vacancies. An evaluation of the effects of the ban is currently being assessed but it has successfully contributed toward the reduction of the projected overspend by the Prison Service for 2004–05 to a level where the ban will only need to remain in place for the remainder of this financial year.

Since January 2005, establishments have been required to report monthly on the impact of the ban to assess operational pressures. The imposed ban was not an absolute freeze on recruitment and was not intended to prevent the filling of vacancies that, if left unfilled, could compromise the safety and security of establishments.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish the 2003 Prisoner Resettlement Survey. [218196]

Paul Goggins: The 2003 Prisoner Resettlement Survey 2003 was published on 24 February 2005.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons cookery classes in Bullwood Hall prison have been discontinued. [218220]

Paul Goggins: Cookery classes for prisoners have not been stopped at Bullwood Hall prison. All education classes at Bullwood Hall took place in a building known as the activity centre. Asbestos has been found in areas of this building and work is currently under way to ensure its safe removal by specialist contractors. While this work is carried out, the cookery class and other classes continue to take place in other areas of the prison.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women have been transferred from Holloway prison to Cookham Wood prison in the last six months; and what the reasons were for the transfers. [218221]

Paul Goggins: Between 30 July 2004 and 18 February 2005, 79 prisoners were transferred from Holloway prison to Cookham Wood prison and young offender institution.

Of these, 77 were routine allocations from a local prison serving the courts to a training prison and two were for disciplinary reasons.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve conditions at Cookham Wood Prison. [218222]

Paul Goggins: Over the last 12 months Cookham Wood has successfully implemented a performance improvement plan and has implemented most of the recommendations made by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons in her report of an inspection of the prison which was published on 6 February 2004. This has contributed to a significant improvement in conditions across the prison.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of mandatory drug testing programmes in prisons was in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [218861]

Paul Goggins: The central costs of the mandatory drug testing programme in the last five years are given in the following table.

	£ million
1999–2000	1.8
2000–01	1.8
2001–02	1.6
2002–03	1.4
2003–04	1.4

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many prisons the population was in excess of the certified normal accommodation on the latest date for which figures are available. [219839]

Paul Goggins: As at 28 February 2005, 78 prisons were operating with a population above their in-use certified normal accommodation (CNA) level. This is the uncrowded capacity of the establishment. All prisons were operating within their useable operational capacity, which is the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold taking into account control, security and the proper operation of the planned regime.

The Government have increased the number of prison places by around 17,000 since 1997 to the current useable operational capacity of 76,600. We plan to increase this by a further 3,800 to around 80,400 in 2007.

Probation Service

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what mechanisms the future arrangements for the governance of the probation service will protect the employment rights and status of staff. [205314]

Paul Goggins: Any changes in the future governance of the probation service will take full account of the need to comply with employment protection provisions, both contractual and legislative. Any proposals will also be the subject of full consultation with the recognised trade unions.

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* the Probation Pay and Rewards Review and *(b)* the joint agreement on workload prioritisation will be implemented prior to further organisational changes for the Probation Service in England and Wales. [205316]

Paul Goggins: I remain committed to the implementation, in 2005, of a negotiated, affordable, modernised pay and reward structure for he National Probation Service (NPS).

The workload measurement tool (WMT) is currently being piloted with the possibility of a third metropolitan area joining the pilot. Decisions about the implementation of the workload measurement tool across the NPS will not be taken without determining that the tool is "fit for purpose" in relation to the requirements of orders imposed under the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The project will also be the subject of a full financial appraisal and a detailed business case will need to be established. This current phase of work is scheduled for completion by April 2005.

The Probation Boards' Association and the NPS' trade unions are all represented on the WMT's Project Board and are aware of the time scales associated with the project.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* his Department's expenditure and *(b)* the expenditure of each agency for which his Department is responsible on research and development relating to UK university departments and research centres was in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [206995]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to provide the information requested in respect of the core Home Office and its agencies. While it is possible to provide total expenditure on third party suppliers an analysis by supplier or category of supplier cannot be provided without additional investigation and at disproportionate cost.

The Home Office currently sponsors the following agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau

Probation Service

Prison Service

United Kingdom Passport Service

Only the core Home Office and Passport Service have recorded expenditure on R and D within the period covered by the question and these figures have been provided in response to separate questions.

Sentencing

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the punishments available for those found to have perverted the course of justice. [207343]

Paul Goggins: Perverting the course of justice is a common law offence, so there is no set maximum or minimum penalty available to the court. Common law offences are ones which are not embodied in statute; they consist of rules of law based upon common custom and usage, and on judicial judgments.

In 2003, 1,391 persons were found guilty of perverting the course of justice. 608 (43.7 per cent.) received a custodial sentence and the average sentence length was 8.8 months. Further information is given in the table.

Persons proceeded against and those found guilty of offences of perverting the course of justice, by outcome—England and Wales

Number of persons

	2002	*2003*
Sex	T	T
Persons proceeded against	2,646	2,396
Persons found guilty	1,549	1,391
Sentence breakdown		
Absolute/conditional discharge	43	53
Fine	39	43
Average fine amount (£)	438	789
Community sentence	683	636
Fully suspended sentence	44	46
Immediate custody	737	608
Average[1] custodial sentence length (months)	7.0	8.8
Otherwise dealt with	3	5

[1] Excluding life sentences (one imposed on a male in 2003) Figures relate to persons where the offence was their principal offence.

Source:
RDS-NOMS

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will re-examine the arrangements for *(a)* detention and *(b)* treatment of offenders with mental health problems. [213356]

Paul Goggins: The Government are doing a great deal to ensure that offenders with mental health problems are not sent to prison inappropriately. The operation of court diversion schemes and the development of wider sentencing options, coupled with the further development of other mental health services, are closing gaps in community care and reducing the number of such offenders who reach the courts.

Mental health services within prisons are improving significantly as a result of new investment that has been put into the development of NHS mental health in-reach services. The NHS Plan (2000) commitments for 2004 have been successfully met. No prisoner with a serious mental illness now leaves prison without a care plan, and 300 additional staff have been employed. NHS mental health in-reach investment will reach £20 million a year by 2005–06 so that in-reach type services are available to every prison in England and Wales, currently 94 in-reach teams are in operation.

There is a firm commitment to ensure that people who are too ill to remain in prison are transferred to hospital. Tighter regular monitoring has been introduced to identify prisoners who have been waiting unacceptably long periods for transfer to hospital. A protocol has been issued setting out what must be done when a prisoner has been waiting for a hospital place for more than three months following acceptance by the NHS. Both have brought about an improvement. 721 prisoners were transferred to hospital in 2003, an increase of 12 per cent. on the 2002 figure of 644. The Prison Service, the joint Prison Health team, the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIHME), and the commissioners and providers of NHS hospital services are working together to establish a national waiting time limit for transfers between custodial settings and hospitals.

The Mental Health Bill includes provisions to enable more flexible use to be made of mental health services for offenders. Community disposals are permitted for offenders who can safely be treated without detention and secure beds are released for those who need them. Public protection has also been improved by the development of assessment and treatment services for dangerous offenders with severe personality disorders.

Sexual Violence (Legal Advice)

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many specialist sexual violence legal advice lines are funded by his Department in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the North East; [215687]

(2) if he will increase the number of specialist sexual violence legal advice lines funded by his Department in England and Wales. [215688]

Paul Goggins: At present the Home Office does not fund any specialist sexual violence legal advice lines.

However, an additional £4 million funding over two years from the new Victims Fund is being used to support the development of services for victims of sexual offending. Ministers have recently approved funding in 2004–05 for 45 organisations in the voluntary and community and statutory sectors providing services to victims of sexual violence. Some of the successful applicants provide specialist telephone helpline services. All successful applicants have been notified and a list of grants awarded from the Victims Fund will be published in due course.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to improve the level of public confidence in the criminal justice system. [219111]

Paul Goggins: Public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) is assessed using questions in the British crime survey. Latest data shows that the proportion of people who believe the CJS is effective in bringing people who commit crimes to justice has increased to 42 per cent. (year to September 2004) from a baseline of 39 per cent. (2002–03).

Terrorism (Arrests)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the oral answer of 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 301, how many of those arrested post-11 September 2001 in connection with terrorist activity were *(a)* released without charge, *(b)* charged, and with what crimes, *(c)* convicted and given custodial sentences, *(d)* convicted and given non-custodial sentences and *(e)* candidates for deportation. [219361]

Ms Blears: Statistics provided to the Home Office by the Police on arrests and charges from 11 September 2001 until 31 December 2004 under the Terrorism Act 2000 are on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk/terrorism/. (These are compiled from recent police records and are therefore subject to change as cases go through the system.)

Key facts and statistics:

Police records show that from 11 September 2001 until 31 December 2004, 701 people were arrested under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Charges:

119 of these were charged under the Act. Of these, 45 were also charged with offences under other legislation.

135 were charged under other legislation. This includes charges for terrorist offences that are already covered in general criminal law such as murder, grievous bodily harm and use of firearms or explosives.

Convictions:

17 Individuals have been convicted of offences under the Terrorism Act.

Other information:

The following table gives the outcome for those not covered above:

Outcome	*Number*
Transferred to immigration authorities	59
On bail to return	22
Cautioned	7
Dealt with under mental health legislation	7
Awaiting extradition	1
Returned to prison service custody	1
Released without charge	351

More detailed information is not held by the Home Office.

Home Office Research Development and Statistics publish a Command Paper and supplementary volumes of criminal statistics annually. A breakdown of prosecutions and convictions under the Terrorism Act 2000 for 2001, 2002 and 2003 are in the accompanying tables. Figures for 2004 will not be available until later in the year.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts, found guilty and sentenced at all courts for offences under the Terrorism Act 2000, England and Wales 2001[1]

Offence description	*Statute*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Sentenced*
Relating to membership of proscribed organisations	Terrorism Act 2000, Sec. 11	3	—	—
Wearing any item of dress in support of a proscribed organisation	Terrorism Act 2000, Sec. 13a	—	—	—
Wears, carries or displays any article in support of a proscribed organisation	Terrorism Act 2000, Sec. 13b	—	—	—
Contributions towards acts of terrorism	Terrorism Act 2000, Sec. 15–18 and 22	1	—	—
Failure to disclose knowledge or suspicion of acts of terrorism	Terrorism Act 2000, Sec. 19	—	—	—
Failure to leave a cordoned area immediately when ordered to do so by a constable in uniform	Terrorism Act 2000, Sec.36(1)*(a)*	—	—	—
Failure to leave premises, which abut or are wholly or partially within a cordoned area, immediately if ordered to dos o by a constable in uniform	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec.36(1)*(b)*	—	—	—
Failure of driver or person in charge of a vehicle which is in a cordoned area to immediately move the vehicle if ordered to do so by a constable in uniform.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec.36*(c)(d)(e)*	—	—	—
Contravention or a prohibition or restriction order made by a constable in uniform to a cordoned area.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec.36*(f)*	—	—	—
Making any disclosure likely to prejudice an investigation about acts of terrorism or failing to disclose information about acts of terrorism.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec. 36	—	—	—
Failure to stop (Power to stop and search vehicles and pedestrians)	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec. 43, 44 and 47(1)*(a)(b)*(2)	1	—	—
Wilful obstruction (Power to stop and search vehicles and pedestrians)	Terrorism Act 2000, Sec. 43, 44 and 47(1)*(c)* and (2)	—	—	—
Failure to move vehicle when ordered to do so by a constable in uniform, (vehicle had been permitted to remain at rest in contravention of any prohibition or restriction)	Terrorism Act 2000, Sec. 48 and 51(2)	—	—	—

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts, found guilty and sentenced at all courts for offences under the Terrorism Act 2000, England and Wales 2001[1]

Offence description	*Statute*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Sentenced*
Leaves a vehicle, or permits a vehicle to remain at rest, on a road in contravention of a prohibition or restriction.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec. 48 and 51(1)	—	—	—
Provides instruction; invites another to receive instruction in weapon training.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec. 54	1	—	—
Directing terrorist training.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec. 56	—	—	—
Collect, record or possession of information or articles likely to be of use to Terrorists.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sec. 57 and 58	—	—	—
Failure to furnish information when required by examining officer.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sch.7(5)*(a)* and (18)	—	—	—
Failure to produce either a valid passport or identifying document when required by examining officer	Terrorism Act 2000 Sch7(5)*(b)* and (18)	—	—	—
Failing to declare or produce any relevant documents when required by examining officer.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sch.7(5)*(c)(d)* and (18)	—	—	—
Failing to submit to search by examining officer or person acting on his/her behalf.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sch.7(7)(8) and (18)	—	—	—
Failing to complete and produce an embarkation card when required to by examining officer.	Terrorism Act 2000 Sch.7(16) and (18)	—	—	—
Wilfully obstructing a constable in the execution of his duty in a cordoned area	Terrorism Act 2000 Sch.5 Sec.36(1)(2)	—	—	—
Wilfully obstructing or seeking to frustrate the object of a search in a cordoned area	Terrorism Act 2000 Sch.5(1–3)	—	—	—
Total		6	—	—

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform, Home Office IOS: 079–05

Ticket Sales

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the number of fraudulent sales in 2004 of tickets for music events *(a)* by street based ticket touts and *(b)* on the internet; [220319]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of legal provisions in dealing with *(a)* the fraudulent sale of music event tickets online and *(b)* misrepresentations of the number of tickets for a music event available for sale online; and if he will make a statement. [220320]

Paul Goggins: We have not made an assessment of the number of fraudulent sales of tickets for music events.

The fraudulent sale of goods is currently covered by the offence of 'obtaining property by deception' in section 15 of the Theft Act 1968. In 2004, the Government issued a consultation paper on fraud law reform. Under the Government's proposals, this behaviour would constitute a fraud by false representation. The Government plans to take forward these proposals when parliamentary time permits.

Traffic Enforcement Officers

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* traffic enforcement officers, *(b)* traffic wardens and *(c)* council parking attendants were operating in each police authority area in each year since 2002–03. [218213]

Ms Blears: Information on traffic enforcement officers and council parking attendants is not collected centrally. The statistics for traffic wardens are given in the table.

Traffic wardens by police force area: 2002–03 and 2003–04

Number of wardens

Force	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Avon and Somerset	43	34
Bedfordshire	2	2
Cambridgeshire	35	17
Cheshire	19	15
Cleveland	7	8
Cumbria	0	0
Derbyshire	48	43
Devon and Cornwall	103	102
Dorset	0	0
Durham	15	4
Dyfed-Powys	13	10
Essex	38	21
Gloucestershire	31	21
Greater Manchester	88	88
Gwent	27	25
Hampshire	25	23
Hertfordshire	38	9
Humberside	48	46
Kent	0	0
Lancashire	50	17
Leicestershire	61	51
Lincolnshire	21	18
London, City of	0	0
Merseyside	52	43
Metropolitan police	687	505
Norfolk	33	31
Northamptonshire	7	5
Northumbria	59	56
North Wales	7	5
North Yorkshire	0	10
Nottinghamshire	29	33
South Wales	99	92
South Yorkshire	68	37
Staffordshire	10	1
Suffolk	25	25
Surrey	17	8
Sussex	61	67
Thames Valley	42	36
Warwickshire	9	8

Traffic wardens by police force area: 2002–03 and 2003–04

Number of wardens

Force	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
West Mercia	15	13
West Midlands	74	72
West Yorkshire	98	85
Wiltshire	7	5
Total	2,108	1,688

Violent Crime

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he plans to introduce to reduce the level of violent crime. [218791]

Paul Goggins: British Crime Survey figures—the most reliable long-term indicator of underlying trends in violence—indicate that the level of violent crime has fallen by 36 per cent. since 1995, when there was a peak of over 4 million violent incidents, and by 26 per cent. since 1997.

The Government have taken action to ensure better policing and better prevention and protection against crime. At the end of August 2004, there were nearly 140,000 police officers in service, an all-time record. The Street Crime Initiative, launched in 2002 in 10 police force areas to tackle robbery, secured a 17 per cent. reduction in robberies in those areas in the first year. The levels of robbery have continued to fall, with the number of recorded robberies in the year to September 2004 down by 13 per cent. compared to the previous 12 month period.

Nevertheless, the Government continue to take the issue of violent crime and the impact it has on people's lives very seriously. That is why we have introduced a number of measures to tackle violent crime, and will continue to do so.

Almost half of all violent crime is alcohol-related and the Home Office, jointly with the Department of Health, are tackling this through the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy which was announced on 15 March 2004. There have since been two Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaigns led by the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers, the first in 92 police areas in the summer of 2004 and the second in 180 police areas during the Christmas and new year period.

The two campaigns focused on tackling violent and disorderly behaviour by drunken troublemakers and the illegal sale and consumption of alcohol by under-18s. During the most recent campaign, the police and their partners visited over 31,000 licensed premises, carried out "sting" operations in nearly 1,000 of these, issued over 4,000 fixed penalty notices for alcohol-related offences, made over 6,000 arrests and confiscated alcohol from over 2,800 adults and juveniles. Further campaigns of this kind will be held.

We are also running the Tackling Violent Crime Programme in six police force areas. This programme aims to help local areas reduce violent crime and improve local partnership working.

On 21 January we published a number of proposals in a consultation document, "Drinking Responsibly". These include the introduction of:

"Alcohol Disorder Zones", with costs recovered from the pubs and bars which cause the most disorder;

an immediate 24-hour banning order on the sale of alcohol for premises found to be persistently selling alcohol to underage drinkers; and

"Drinking Banning Orders" for persons issued with three fixed penalty notices or three alcohol or disorder-related convictions, excluding them from pubs and bars within a specified period for a fixed period of time.

We are also taking action against other types of violent crime. The fight against domestic violence will be reinforced in July 2005 when the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 takes effect. Courts will have greater powers to protect victims of domestic violence against further harassment by being able to issue restraining orders, even when a defendant has not been convicted.

Finally, we recognise the damaging impact of hate crime on community cohesion and public perceptions of safety. We have introduced proposals to make incitement to religious hatred a criminal offence under the Serious and Organised Crime and Police Bill.

Young Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures *(a)* are in place and *(b)* he plans to introduce to ensure early intervention and preventive measures designed to reduce the number of young people receiving custodial sentences. [219358]

Paul Goggins: We have introduced a range of measures across England and Wales to improve early intervention and the response to offending.

The youth justice agencies have been completely reorganised to improve delivery, through establishment of the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and multi-agency youth offending teams in all local areas.

For under 10s we have introduced the child safety order, parenting contracts and parenting orders. The parenting measures also extend to over 10s.

For over 10s who offend we have introduced structured reprimands and final warnings; and for those who go to court the referral order with restorative justice panels, reparation order and action plan order. The Youth Justice Board has developed the intensive supervision and surveillance programme, which provides a strict and closely monitored regime for prolific and serious young offenders who might otherwise receive a custodial sentence.

We have also published our proposals to focus sentencing more clearly on the prevention of offending, by strengthening the range of community sentence interventions and introducing a specific intensive supervision and surveillance order.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he plans to take to reduce the number of young people released from custody who re-offend within two years. [219359]

Paul Goggins: Most young people who are sentenced to custody receive a detention and training order (DTO). The DTO is a two-part sentence, the first half spent in custody and the second in the community. The intention is to work with the young people during their time in custody to tackle their offending behaviour and to prepare them for life after release. The second (community) part of the order seeks to build on what has been begun, particularly by providing educational, training or employment opportunities. Youth offending teams (YOTs) are involved in both parts of the order and are responsible for putting in place the interventions during the community part.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is working to enhance community interventions and to strengthen continuity between the two parts of the order. Young people who receive custodial sentences tend to be those with a high risk of reoffending, but the integrated approach embodied in the DTO seeks to give them the best chance of turning away from offending and making a positive contribution to the community.

Youth Offending Teams

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he plans to take to improve the understanding of youth offending teams of their role. [219318]

Paul Goggins: The Youth Justice Board (YJB) oversees the operation of the youth justice system, including ensuring that Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) understand their role and how best to carry it out. It has established a performance management framework, designed to ensure local services work together to prevent children and young people from offending in the first place and to reduce the risk of further re-offending by existing offenders. It has introduced effective practice principles based on research evidence of what works in reducing offending and this is being rolled out across England and Wales. This is being supported and underpinned by the development of a National Qualification Justice professionals. The YJB is committed to ensuring that 80 per cent. of the youth justice workforce has benefited from professional training by March 2006.

The YJB has also been working worked closely with the antisocial behaviour unit in the Home Office to ensure that YOTS along with their local authority partners and the police put in place targeted prevention programmes aimed at diverting children and young people from antisocial and sub criminal activity. The YJB has developed guidance for YOTS for dealing with antisocial behaviour issues, which is due to be published shortly. Also the forthcoming draft Youth Justice Bill proposes to clarify the YOTS' role in supporting Antisocial behaviour initiatives.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 8 March 2005

TRANSPORT

Community Railways (Lancashire)

5. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the development of community railways in Lancashire. [220406]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority published a Community Rail Development Strategy in November last year. The Strategy aims to involve local communities in the development of their lines, to increase patronage and to reduce the costs of the lines so that they will be sustainable for the longer term. Under the Strategy, seven lines in Lancashire have been selected for Community Rail designation.

Trunk Roads (Sussex)

17. **Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department has spent on trunk road improvements in Sussex since 1997. [220418]

Mr. Jamieson: Since 1997 we have spent £28.9 million on major trunk road improvements, in Sussex. Information on expenditure on smaller trunk road improvements is not available.

Bus Services

19. **Mrs. Anne Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that bus users are properly consulted about changes to the provision of bus services in their area. [220420]

Mr. McNulty: Regulations require the operator of a local bus service to provide the traffic commissioner and the local authority with at least 56 days notice of any change. We encourage all parties to work together to ensure the interests of passengers and the community are taken into account.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial support he has made available for improved bus services in *(a)* Nottinghamshire and *(b)* England in the last four years. [220407]

Mr. McNulty: In the period 2000–01 to 2003–04, the Department made available to English local authorities a total of £305 million in bus grants of which £5.43 million was allocated to Nottinghamshire.

Bus services throughout England will also have benefited from the Department's bus service operators grant and support for local transport capital expenditure.

Tonnage Tax

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had in respect of the tonnage tax. [220410]

Mr. Jamieson: I have had several discussions recently with many of our social partners on this important topic. I am aware of the lobby of Parliament today that has been organised by the RMT union, and I have had the opportunity to meet their representatives in four different forums in the last three months to discuss tonnage tax. This includes my meeting on 22 February with the RMT parliamentary group which my hon. Friend attended.

Road Humps

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he next expects to re-issue guidance on the use of road humps. [220415]

Mr. Jamieson: Current guidance remains good advice, and local authorities can design schemes that fit local circumstances. The Department aims later this year to publish a local transport note on the design and effectiveness of traffic calming measures including road humps, drawing together existing research and guidance.

Regional Air Services

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on public service obligations for regional air services. [220419]

Mr. McNulty: The Air Transport White Paper set out the Government's readiness to impose Public Service Obligations (PSOs) in certain limited circumstances in order to guarantee a minimum level of air services from UK regional airports to London.

Last year DfT consulted with stakeholders to clarify the circumstances in which this policy might be implemented. The consultation closed last November and officials are now analysing all views expressed both in the responses and meetings. Copies of the consultation responses and a short report summarising them have been posted on the DfT website.

A64

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the evaluation study on the economic and environmental impact of dualling the A64 in North Yorkshire. [219516]

Mr. Jamieson: I am expecting to receive the full report of the study from the Highways Agency shortly. Once I have carefully considered the conclusions and recommendations I will make a decision on the best way forward.

Berwick upon Tweed Railway Station

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason and upon whose authority the entrance doors to Berwick upon Tweed railway station were closed to the public on Sunday 27 February at a time when the station was supposed to be open to the public and trains were stopping there. [219901]

Mr. McNulty: The station was locked due to an error on the part of GNER staff, and resulted in a 30 minute delay for passengers wanting to travel on the 0940 departure. GNER arranged for an additional stop to be made by the next train passing through the station.

I understand that this was an isolated incident, and that GNER have publicly apologised for the inconvenience caused to passengers.

Channel Tunnel (Freight Traffic)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what restrictions there are on the volume of freight traffic using the channel tunnel; what the reasons are for each restriction; and what restrictions are in place at the request of the French Government. [220465]

Mr. McNulty: There are no restrictions in place on the volume of freight traffic using the channel tunnel.

Dangerous Cargoes

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the dangerous or harmful cargoes known to have been lost overboard in UK waters since 1 January 1990 which are not thought to have been recovered; [220601]

(2) if he will list the packages containing dangerous or harmful goods found in UK waters since 1 January 1997, broken down by *(a)* date, *(b)* source, *(c)* nature of the incident giving rise to the deposit of the package in the waters and *(d)* location; [220602]

(3) what reporting requirements there are in respect of the loss overboard *(a)* within UK waters and *(b)* from UK registered vessels of dangerous or harmful goods. [220603]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* Any vessel involved in a pollution event within UK controlled waters as defined by the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution) (Limits) Regulations 1996 must immediately contact Her Majesty's coastguard and report the identity and position of the ship; the port of departure and next port of call; the number of people onboard; the date, time and details of the incident; and a contact point for further information about the cargo.

UK ships involved in an incident outside UK controlled waters but within Europe must report to the appropriate state responsible for the geographical area.

Data on reported discharges of dangerous or harmful cargoes (including oil) as defined by the internationally agreed Marine Pollution (MARPOL) Convention is collated by the Advisory Committee on Protection of the Sea (ACOPS) on behalf of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). ACOPS collects data in addition to that reported to the coastguard. The data available is extensive and diverse, and I am placing copies of the annual ACOPS reports from 1990 into the House Library.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many incidents there have been since 1 May 1997 of *(a)* anthrax and *(b)* other goods of military origin being washed up on UK shores, broken down by (i) date of reporting, (ii) nature and volume of the material and (iii) origin and retrieval points of the material. [220604]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* This information is not available in the form requested other than at disproportionate cost. However, I can confirm that there have been no reported incidents involving anthrax since 1 May 1997. In the same period, there have been 349 reports to Her Majesty's coastguard in relation to goods categorised as suspected ordnance (which might or might not be of military origin) found washed ashore, floating at sea, or discovered by fishermen.

First Great Western Link

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what representations he has received from the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce concerning First Great Western Link's new timetable for the Thames Valley area; [220365]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact First Great Western Link's new timetable for the Thames Valley area has had on local businesses; [220366]

(3) what plans he has to *(a)* reduce overcrowding and *(b)* improve punctuality on the Henley-Twyford-Paddington line. [220367]

Mr. McNulty: No representations have been received from the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce. Timetable changes on services to and from London Paddington were consulted on by the Strategic Rail Authority in early 2004. The majority of stakeholders recognised the benefits of the overall package of measures, although there was no specific assessment of the impact of the changes on local businesses. On 31 January First Great Western Link (FGWL) enhanced the 0727 Twyford-London Paddington service by increasing it from a five-carriage train to a 10-carriage Adelante train to reduce crowding. FGWL have also recently seen a slight improvement in overall punctuality. Both the Strategic Rail Authority and FGWL are continuing to monitor the performance of the timetable.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will meet First Great Western Link, the Strategic Rail Authority and interested hon. Members to discuss timetabling of services in the Thames Valley area. [220368]

Mr. McNulty: I have already agreed to meet the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Colleague from Maidenhead on 10 March 2005. Further meetings with relevant parties will be arranged as necessary.

Local Transport Plans

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what formula will be used to calculate the financial allocations in the Local Transport Plans 2006–11; and if he will make a statement. [219551]

Charlotte Atkins: A formula is used to allocate most of the capital highways maintenance funding between local authorities. This formula considers the size and condition of the road networks and the size of the bridge stock, for which local highway authorities are responsible.

The Department is also developing a formula to represent local transport pressures, such as road casualties and local public transport patronage, for possible use in influencing financial allocations for integrated transport block schemes. Subject to the satisfactory completion of development work, the Department proposes to consult with local authorities on this formula later this year.

M1

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons the M1 Motorway near junction 18 was closed on 21 February; upon whose authority; whether a heavy goods vehicle was involved; and if he will make a statement. [219899]

Mr. Jamieson: The southbound carriageway was closed by Northamptonshire police following an incident involving a car and a heavy goods vehicle. The HGV shed its load of heavy concrete blocks and the closure was needed to deal with the build up of traffic and enable the road to be cleared by large, specialised recovery crews, in order to remove the hazard to road users. Traffic was diverted off the motorway at Junction 18.

M42

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the M42 to be free of *(a)* roadworks and *(b)* lane closures. [219566]

Mr. Jamieson: Work is currently being carried out in connection with two pilot projects on the M42, both of which are designed to improve journey reliability. Between Junctions 3A and 7 the Active Traffic Management scheme, involving the installation of signs, signals and detector loops in the road surface designed to improve information to drivers and improve traffic flow, is on programme to be complete by the end of April 2005. There will be a need for limited lane closures during the summer whilst message signs and CCTV systems are commissioned.

On the northbound carriageway between Junctions 10 and 11, signs are being installed in connection with a project to prevent HGVs from overtaking on an uphill section of the motorway and causing delays. This work is being carried out at off-peak times and does not involve lane closures and is also due for completion by April.

Manchester Metrolink

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much has been spent in total so far on preparatory work for the Manchester Metrolink extension; [220645]

(2) how much has been spent on the acquisition of *(a)* land and *(b)* buildings in connection with the Manchester Metrolink extension; [220648]

(3) how much has been spent on demolition costs so far in connection with the Manchester Metrolink extension. [220650]

Mr. Darling: The Department has provided some £170 million. Around £80 million was for Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) to buy the concession for the operation of Metrolink. This has continuing value to generate revenue for GMPTE and give them control over the network. The rest has been for advanced works (i.e. utility diversions); around £32 million has been provided for the buying of property (including demolition) and land, some of which may still be required for the package that GMPTE now develop.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the projected cost of the Manchester Metrolink extension scheme was *(a)* when it was first announced and *(b)* currently. [220649]

Mr. Darling: I refer to my written statement to the House of 16 December 2004.

Motorway Accidents (HGVs)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in what percentage of accidents occurring on motorways resulting in a motorway closure a heavy goods vehicle was involved in each of the last five years; and if he will make it his policy to collect and publish such figures annually. [219900]

Mr. Jamieson: Based on the major incidents reported to the Highways Agency over the last 12 months that resulted in a full carriageway closure of the motorway, approximately 50 per cent. of those incidents have involved, but were not necessarily caused by, heavy goods vehicles.

The Highways Agency is taking over responsibility for certain aspects of incident management on motorways from the police over the next twelve months. As part of this process data relating to incidents will be systematically collected by the Highways Agency. No decision has yet been made about which aspects of that data would be routinely published.

Newhaven Port

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* vehicles and *(b)* passengers passed through the port of Newhaven in the most recent period for which figures are available. [219653]

Mr. Jamieson: The numbers of vehicles and passengers passing through the port of Newhaven in 2003, the latest year for which information is available, were as follows:

	Thousand
Road goods vehicles	34
Unaccompanied trailers	3
Passenger cars	90
Passengers	397

Road Building

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average cost is of building one mile of new *(a)* motorway, *(b)* dual carriageway and *(c)* conventional two lane road. [220641]

Mr. Darling: The average cost of building one mile of new *(a)* motorway is £24 million per mile, *(b)* dual lane carriageway is £13 million per mile, *(c)* conventional two lane road is £8 million per mile.

In considering the cost of a new road there are many variables, including the difference between urban or rural areas, a new route or an improvement of an existing network. These can result in significant differences in the cost for a similar standard. Factors such as quality of

land, site geology, drainage, environmental mitigation, traffic management or restricted access can also have a large impact on cost.

The averages costs quoted above are taken from roads constructed by the Highways Agency and include elements for structures, land, compensation, design and site supervision, but not future inflation.

Road Traffic Volume

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of percentage change for road traffic volumes by *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2015 and *(c)* 2020. [218210]

Mr. Jamieson: Projections of road traffic were published in July 2004 in the White Paper 'The Future of Transport'. Estimates of the percentage change on 2000 levels for 2010, 2015 and 2025 are shown in the table as follows.

	England, Percentage change on 2000
2010	26
2015	31
2025	40

A good deal of uncertainty is attached to all forecasts and the numbers should be treated as indicative.

Safety Cameras

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Highways Agency concerning safety cameras on the *(a)* A205 and *(b)* A316 in Richmond Park constituency. [212316]

Mr. Jamieson: None. The A205 and the section of the A316 inside London form part of the Greater London Authority Road Network—now known as the Transport for London Road Network—and are the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London. This includes the siting of safety cameras. Further information concerning the safety cameras on these roads may be obtained from:

Keith Ollier
Director of Street Management
Transport for London
Windsor House
42–50 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0TL

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much revenue has been raised in fines imposed as a result of speed cameras in Greater London in each year since 2001. [220185]

Mr. Jamieson: This information is available for 2001 and 2002 in the following table and has been provided by the Home Office. I am advised by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that his Department's available information relates to the amount of fines ordered to be paid following speed offences detected by camera, not all of which may have been be paid. This information is available for the calendar years 2001 to 2002, for the Metropolitan and City of London police forces combined. Home Office information for 2003 will be available shortly.

Fines ordered to be paid as a result of speeding offences detected by cameras[1] within Greater London[2]: 2001–2002

	2001	*2002*
Fines from fixed penalties		
Number of tickets[3]	52,100	54,100
Estimated fines (£)	3,128,600	3,243,200
Fines following court proceedings		
Number of fines	4,500	5,100
Total amount of fine (£)	513,700	516,500
Average fine[4]	114	102

[1] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[2] The Metropolitan and City of London police combined.
[3] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.
[4] Paid i.e. no further action.

Speed Limits

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department is assessing the merits of introducing variable speed limits on roads other than motorways. [216616]

Mr. Jamieson: Variable speed limits have been successful in easing congestion and improving traffic flow on sections of the motorway network such as on the M25.

Local Highway Authorities have the powers to introduce variable speed limits under section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The most common use of a variable speed limit other than on motorways is to reduce traffic speeds outside schools particularly at school opening and closing times.

However there are significant signing and enforcement costs associated with the implementation of variable speed limits on roads other than motorways. Past experience has also shown that, unlike on motorways, they achieve only a slight reduction in vehicle speeds in these circumstances.

Traffic Accidents (Essex)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many traffic accidents in which charges were brought in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend-on-Sea in each year since 1997 resulted in (i) conviction and (ii) acquittal. [220310]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is not available.

Trust Ports

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much each trust port classified as a public corporation borrowed for 2003–04; and what the estimated level of borrowing by each such port is for 2004–05. [218688]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The latest information available in published accounts for financial years ending either on 31 December 2003 or 31 March 2004 in respect of existing outstanding borrowings is as follows.

	£000
Bridlington	333
Dover	4,963
Falmouth	100
Harwich	36,000
London	7,058
Milford Haven	6,311
Poole	932
Shoreham	357
Total	56,054

Published figures for 2004–05 are not available but from information gathered from the ports we are aware of planned borrowing amounting to £10.7 million.

Vehicle Registrations

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency maintains records of the number of vehicle registrations by *(a)* street, *(b)* polling district, *(c)* postcode and *(d)* ward. [220074]

Mr. Jamieson: This information is not routinely available. Vehicles are registered to the name and address of the keeper, and each record can be accessed via the vehicle registration number only. Through special scans of the record it would be possible for DVLA to identify vehicles registered to specific streets and postcodes. However, these are only normally carried out to assist police inquiries. There is no link between vehicles and the polling district or ward in which the address is situated.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Servants (Northern Ireland)

23. **Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether home civil servants who obtain posts in the Northern Ireland civil service and Northern Ireland civil servants who obtain posts in the home civil service retain their salary, pension and leave entitlements on transfer. [220424]

Mr. Miliband: Pay and leave entitlements in cases of transfer are negotiated on an individual basis within the relevant Department's framework. The terms may vary depending on the type of transfer involved which may be a secondment, loan or permanent transfer.

There are no significant differences between the pension schemes for the Northern Ireland and home civil service and individuals can transfer their pension rights between the two schemes. As both schemes are members of the Public Sector Transfer Club previous service will be fully recognised for pension purposes if the individual transfers their benefits on club terms.

Public Engagements

25. **Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list his public engagements since 1 February in relation to the co-ordination of Government policy. [220426]

Mr. Milburn: Since 1 February I have undertaken various visits, speeches, media appearances and held meetings with a variety of organisations and individuals.

Lone Parents

26. **Phil Sawford:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the co-ordination of Government policy in relation to lone parents. [220427]

Mr. Milburn: The whole Government are working to provide new opportunities for loan parents, whether to improve child care or help to find a job. I can report to the House that since 1998, the new deal for lone parents has helped 300,000 lone parents into work.

Ministerial Posts

27. **Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent communications he has had from the National Audit Office in respect of requests for information about the overall cost of his post. [220428]

Mr. Milburn: The National Audit Office has contacted the Cabinet Office in respect of correspondence it has received about the cost of my office. Information about the level of individual ministerial salaries is in the Library of the House. The overall cost of my office will be published in the 2004–05 Cabinet Office Annual Report and Resource Accounts.

WALES

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218583]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office has policies for providing support for its employees with ill health including cancer, as follows:

Managing attendance policy for managers to provide support in long term sickness cases and keeping in touch policy;

Special leave to cover doctors and hospital appointments;

Making adjustments to working hours, duties and practice;

Rehabilitation leave;

Sick Pay Entitlement of six months full pay and six months half pay;

Involvement of Occupational Health providers for advice and support;

Support for applications to BMI for ill health retirement and access to payments under the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (where appropriate);

Welfare services;

Network for Carers;

Health and Safety policy.

The Wales Office is provided with pay, ration and personnel services by the Department for Constitutional Affairs and support for these policies is given by that department.

English Hospitals (Treatment of Welsh Patients)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Secretary for Health on the treatment in English hospitals of patients resident in Wales. [220205]

Mr. Hain: My Ministerial colleague, the hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Touhig) and I have had a number of discussions recently with the Assembly Health Minister when we covered a range of issues.

Discussions are also on-going between the Welsh Assembly and the Department of Health on cross border issues.

A joint protocol was launched last month, which was developed to provide guidance and clarify responsibilities to commissioners and health professionals. It will ensure that patients understand the implications of accessing healthcare across the border.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Consultants

John McDonnell: To ask the Solicitor-General what the total expenditure of the Crown Prosecution Service on external consultants was in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004 broken down by directorate; and what the cost of employing external consultants is expected to be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08 broken down by directorate. [218198]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) employs the services of external consultants to bring in special skills and expertise or to cover gaps in staff resources and/or where an independent assessment is needed.

The following table provides a breakdown of expenditure by each headquarters directorate for financial years 2001–02 to 2003–04 and the expected costs of employing external consultants in financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06.

It is not possible to provide forecasts for the following years as detailed expenditure plans for those years have yet to be agreed. Future expenditure on external consultants is expected to continue to decrease. The aggregate expenditure of CPS areas has been included to ensure completeness.

£000

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]	*2005–06*[1]
CPS Areas	218	111	1,028	404	400
Business Development Directorate	126	152	926	2,024	1,250
Business Information Systems Directorate	4,887	2,328	1,033	846	600
Casework Directorate	184	—	—	47	—
Finance Directorate	230	626	809	1,213	800
Human Resources Directorate	1,271	1,207	2,889	1,712	925
Policy Directorate	210	522	454	578	—
Total	7,126	4,946	7,139	6,824	3,975

[1] Forecast

Criminal Justice System (Military)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Solicitor-General if the Attorney-General will re-assess his role in the operation and application of the criminal justice system as it relates to the military. [218423]

The Solicitor-General: In the Attorney-General's Statement (14 June 2004, *Official Report, House of Lords*, columns WS22–24) he set out the role of the military prosecuting authorities, which act independently of the military chain of command. They are subject to the general superintendence of the Attorney-General.

The court martial system was established under the Army Act 1955 and is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Defence. The Attorney's role relates to prosecutions brought by the military service prosecuting authorities. The Attorney-General will not be re-assessing his role in this regard.

Crown Prosecution Service (Essex Pilot)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General, if she will make a statement on the *(a)* operation and *(b)* outcome of the pilot scheme attaching Crown Prosecution Service officers to police officers; in which police authorities the pilots are being conducted; and in which districts in Essex the pilot is being conducted. [209524]

The Solicitor-General: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 666W.

The outcome of the pilot scheme was that significant benefits to the whole criminal justice system were identified, principally that with full roll out of the statutory scheme up to 30,000 more offences could be brought to justice per year.

Statutory charging is now operating in:

West Yorkshire and Kent from 17 May 2004;

South Yorkshire from 24 May 2004;

Cleveland from 4 June 2004;

Lancashire from 15 June 2004;

Northumbria from 28 June 2004;

Avon and Somerset, and Nottinghamshire from 5 July 2004;

Humberside from 31 August 2004;

Greater Manchester from 6 September 2004;

Thames Valley from 14 September 2004;

Merseyside from 4 October 2004;

London from 1 November 2004; and West Midlands from 9 November 2004.

Pilot schemes in CPS Essex have now been superseded by shadow charging schemes, as they have in the remaining 29 criminal justice areas. This is operating at Colchester, Chelmsford, Southend, Basildon, Grays and Harlow police stations. When Essex moves to

statutory charging during 2005, there will be three additional charging suites with crown prosecutors based at Rayleigh, Braintree and Clacton-on-Sea.

Environmental Crime

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Solicitor-General what guidance she has provided to the Crown Prosecution Service on legislative provisions introduced since 1997 which availed a reversal of the burden of proof in environmental crimes; and if she will make a statement. [216737]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service does not generally prosecute in cases of environmental crime.

Like all prosecuting authorities, the Crown Prosecution Service carefully monitors developments in criminal cases involving challenges to reverse burdens. Where appropriate, it issues guidance, or revisions to guidance, on reverse burden cases to its prosecutors.

The CPS issued guidance circulars to its prosecutors following the decision of the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords in "Lambert" and, more recently, the decision of the Court of Appeal in "Attorney General's Reference (No. 1 of 2004)." It also used its internal newsletter to notify prosecutors of the decisions of the courts in "Lynch v DPP; Attorney General's Reference (No. 4 of 2002); Sheldrake v DPP." None of these cases have concerned legislative provisions introduced since 1997 which availed a reversal of the burden of proof in environmental crimes.

Iraq (Legal Advice)

Llew Smith: To ask the Solicitor-General what the reasons were for the choice of Professor Greenwood of the London School of Economics to be invited to contribute to the drafting of the legal advice prepared by the Attorney-General on the legal basis for taking military action to invade Iraq in March 2003. [219796]

The Solicitor-General: Professor Christopher Greenwood QC is an expert in the field of international law in the United Kingdom. He has advised the Government on issues of international law on many occasions, including, for example, in relation to proceedings commenced against the UK in the International Court of Justice by the FRY (Serbia and Montenegro) in 1999, which sought to challenge the legality of the military action in Kosovo.

Professor Greenwood did not contribute to the drafting of the Attorney-General's advice on the legality of the use of force against Iraq. As I set out in my reply to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) on 29 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1147W, no non-Governmental experts or lawyers were asked to advise the Attorney-General on whether the conflict in Iraq was lawful. Professor Greenwood was instructed to assist in relation to legal issues arising from the Iraq conflict, including the preparation of the Attorney-General's statement to Parliament on 17 March 2003.

Mobile Phone Offences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many prosecutions there have been in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* Southend for the offence of driving while using a hand-held mobile phone since the introduction of the law. [214024]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service Compass Case Management System (CMS) can provide, with effect from February 2004, a record of specific offences which were the subject of a court hearing, and of the number of such offences. These records indicate that, during the period of February 2004 to December 2004, CPS Essex handled prosecutions in respect of three offences under s110 (1) Road Vehicles Construction and Use Regulations 1986, of which one was dealt with by Southend Criminal Justice Unit. Of these three, one pleaded guilty, one was convicted by the magistrates court and one was acquitted by the magistrates court. In the same period, the Crown Prosecution Service handled prosecutions in respect of 197 offences nationally.

Please note this offence can be dealt with by a fixed penalty notice issued by the Police. These proceedings are not included in the above figures.

Overseas Corruption Investigation

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General what discussions the SFO has had with the Home Office with regard to whether the new Serious Organised Crime Agency SOCA will play a role in investigating overseas corruption. [219294]

The Solicitor-General: The Serious Fraud Office has not held any discussions with the Home Office in respect of the potential role of the Serious Organised Crime Agency in investigating allegations of overseas corruption.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General whether the SFO has decided to open a domestic investigation into the allegations of overseas bribery on the Nigerian LNG project at Bonny Island. [219295]

The Solicitor-General: The SFO has not commenced a domestic investigation into allegations of overseas bribery in relation to the Nigerian LNG project at Bonny Island.

Mutual legal assistance continues to be provided by the SFO to the authorities of the USA and France. The situation will continue to be monitored with a view to determining whether a domestic investigation into this matter is appropriate.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General if she will list the police forces from which the SFO is getting assistance with overseas bribery investigations. [219300]

The Solicitor-General: Of the three cases of overseas corruption currently under investigation, the Ministry of Defence Police are providing assistance on two cases. To date no police force has formally appointed to the third case.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General how many full investigations into allegations of overseas bribery the SFO are undertaking. [219301]

The Solicitor-General: The SFO is currently conducting three investigations where allegations of overseas corruption may constitute an element of the case.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General how many vetting investigations into allegations of overseas bribery the Serious Fraud Office is currently overtaking. [219302]

The Solicitor-General: Thirteen referrals where allegations of overseas corruption may constitute an element of the referral are currently subject to the SFO vetting process.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General what recent assessment she has made of whether the Serious Fraud Office has sufficient resources to investigate allegations of overseas bribery. [219303]

The Solicitor-General: Of the three cases of overseas corruption currently under investigation, one has to date no police force formally appointed to it. The Ministry of Defence police are providing assistance on two cases.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General how many investigations into overseas bribery the Serious Fraud Office estimates that it is able to undertake in any one financial year. [219304]

The Solicitor-General: The SFO is unable to provide an estimate because it is unclear how many referrals of this type of offence will be annually passed to the SFO.

The SFO does not allocate staff resource by category of offence.

Rape/Sexual Assault

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General how the No Witness No Justice programme interacts with the work of sexual assault referral centres. [215576]

The Solicitor-General: Sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) provide a co-ordinated service to victims in the immediate aftermath of rape or other sexual assault. victims receive medical attention and counselling, and can have a forensic examination and report the rape/sexual assault to the police if they so choose. There are 13 SARCs across England and Wales.

As part of the no witness, no justice programme, witness care units (WCUs) were established. They provide a single point of contact for victims and witnesses to turn to for information and support from the point of charge until the conclusion of the case. By the end of March this year, there will be 81 such units nationally, and at least one covering each CPS Area. By the end of this year, there will be 165 such units covering all of England and Wales.

That SARCs and WCUs complement each other in helping place the victim at the heart of the criminal justice system.

Special Advocates

Keith Vaz: To ask the Solicitor-General how many Special Advocates have resigned; and how many are in office. [220090]

The Solicitor-General: Two special advocates have resigned. There are thirteen in office.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Solicitor-General when she received the letter of resignation of Ian Macdonald QC as a Special Advocate; and when she replied to the letter. [220089]

The Solicitor-General: Ian Macdonald's letter of 17 December tendering his resignation as special advocate with effect from 20 December was received by the Attorney-General on 21 December 2004. The Attorney-General replied on 21 December 2004.

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths (Tyne and Wear)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many deaths in each local authority area in Tyne and Wear alcohol use was recorded as a contributory factor since 2000; and how many of those deaths were in those aged under 30 years. [220399]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Jim Cousins, dated 8 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for how many deaths in each local authority area in Tyne and Wear, alcohol use was recorded as a contributory factor since 2000; and how many of those deaths were in those aged under 30 years. (220399)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. The attached table shows the numbers of deaths among residents of local authorities in the former metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 2000 to 2003. During this four year period, six of these deaths in the former metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear were of people aged under 30.

The ONS definition of alcohol-related deaths only includes those causes regarded as being most directly due to alcohol consumption. Apart from deaths due to accidental poisoning with alcohol, this definition excludes external causes of death, such as road traffic deaths and other accidents, and alcohol-related suicides and homicides. Estimates of the annual total number of deaths in which alcohol has played a role can therefore vary widely depending on the criteria used. The definition used by ONS allows for consistent comparisons over time for those deaths where a clear association with alcohol consumption can generally be assumed.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] by local authority in the former metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear area,[2] 2000–03[2,3]

Number

Local authority	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Gateshead	27	31	23	38
Newcastle upon Tyne	44	32	48	44
North Tyneside	30	28	22	33
South Tyneside	17	19	28	31
Sunderland	53	38	44	45

[1] For the year 2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed below:
291—Alcoholic psychoses.
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome.

305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol.
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy.
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis.
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol.
For the years 2001–03 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol.
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy.
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified.
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver.
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol.
The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:
Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. Health Statistics Quarterly 17, pp 5–14.
[2] Usual residents of these areas.
[3] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Council Tax Receipts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the change to council tax receipts in 2005–06 arising from the business rates revaluation in England. [219944]

Mr. Timms: The new non-domestic rating lists have been published and will take effect on rate bills from 1 April 2005. Revaluation has no impact on aggregate yield from business rates in real terms and is only one aspect of the local authority settlement and therefore will have no impact on council tax receipts in 2005–06.

Croydon, Central

Geraint Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Croydon Central, the effects of the Department's policies and actions on Croydon Central constituency since 1997. [220386]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Croydon Central constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 52 per cent., while long-term unemployment has fallen by 92 per cent. and long-term youth unemployment has fallen by 82 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at local authority ward level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Earnings

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the percentage change in earnings was in each region of the UK for 2003–04, in descending order. [219854]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 8 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the percentage change in earnings was in each region of the UK for 2003–04, in descending order. (219854)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) and are provided for employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period, by their place of work. This is the standard definition used for ASHE tables. The ASHE does not collect data on the self-employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach a table showing the percentage change for each region in the United Kingdom for full-time employees.

The ASHE, earned out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It has a one per cent sample of all employees.

The ASHE publication criteria ensure that all estimates are undisclosive. A number of estimates have been removed from the published tables for these reasons.

Weekly pay—gross (£)—for full-time employee jobs[1]: United Kingdom, 2004

Region	*Annual percentage change*
Mean earnings	
North East	6.6
Wales	5.4
Northern Ireland	5.2
North West	5.1
West Midlands	5.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	4.6
East	4.5
London	3.6
East Midlands	3.4
South West	3.4
South East	2.9
Scotland	2.9
Median earnings	
North East	7.1
Northern Ireland	6.6
Wales	6.2
West Midlands	5.1
North West	5.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	4.8
London	4.6
East	4.1
South East	3.8
Scotland	3.5
South West	3.3
East Midlands	2.8

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.
Source:
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Immigration

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate the Government has made of the change in levels of immigration by travellers from the Republic of Ireland into the UK over the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [219877]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Caroline Spelman, dated 8 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your question regarding the levels of immigration by travellers from the Republic of Ireland into the UK over the last five years. (219877)

The phrase 'travellers from the Republic of Ireland' has been taken to refer to all those migrating from the Republic to the United Kingdom, not specifically to Irish Travellers who constitute a subgroup of the populations of both the Republic of Ireland and the UK.

The attached table shows the estimates of total migration between the two countries from 1999 to 2003, the latter of which is the most recent year for which estimates are available. The inflow estimates refer to migrants moving from the Republic of Ireland to the UK; the outflow estimates refer to those moving in the opposite direction; and the balance shows the net effect of these flows on the population of the UK. A migrant is defined as someone who changes his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least a year, so that the country of destination effectively becomes the country of usual residence.

We are unable to provide estimates for Irish Travellers as a population subgroup as we have no means of identifying them in the data sources used to make international migration estimates.

International migration between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

United Kingdom—Thousand

Time series 1999 to 2003	*Inflow*	*Outflow*	*Balance*
1999	8.3	19.0	-10.7
2000	5.8	16.0	-10.2
2001	5.2	14.3	-9.1
2002	5.1	13.1	-8.1
2003	5.0	13.1	-8.1

Source:
Estimates of migration between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland are made using data primarily from the Irish Quarterly National Household Survey. They are agreed between the Irish Central Statistics Office and ONS.

Income Tax (Pensioners)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of pensioner households paying income tax in the UK (i) in total and (ii) broken down by region and country of the UK in (A) 1997 and (B) 2004–05. [220274]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of *(a)* the number and *(b)* percentage of pensioner households paying income tax in (A) 1997 and (B) 2004–05 in the UK (i) in total and (ii) broken down by region and country is as follows.

	(A) 1997–98		*(B) 2004–05*	
	(a) Number (thousands)	*(b) Percentage*	*(a) Number (thousands)*	*(b) Percentage*
United Kingdom	2,880	47	3,360	55
England	2,420	48	2,810	55
North	175	44	215	54
Yorks and The Humber	230	41	280	50
East Midlands	180	41	215	51
West Midlands	230	43	255	49
East Anglia	110	44	140	55
Greater London	275	54	395	60
South East	635	55	660	61
South West	320	54	330	58
Wales	175	46	185	55
Scotland	250	46	300	55
Northern Ireland	35	30	60	47

Notes:
1. These figures have been estimated using HMT's tax and benefit model.
2. They relate to single and couple households where at least the head of the household is at state pension age or above. The do not include multi-tax unit households.
3. Figures for 2004–05 are based on the Family Resources Survey 2002–03; those for 1997–98 on the Expenditure and Food Surveys for 1995–96, 1996–97 and 1997–98.
4. Regional figures are Standard Statistical Regions.
5. All figures are rounded to nearest 5,000 households.

Micro-combined Heat and Power

Mr. Horam: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what data he has from field trials concerning his intention to introduce a reduced rate of VAT for micro-combined heat and power units; what representations his Department has received from industry; and if he will make a statement. [220245]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have stated their support in principle for a reduced VAT rate for micro-CHP, with any decision taking account of the ongoing field trials. As such, the Government continue to monitor the initial progress of the field trials, which are overseen by Defra and sponsored by the Carbon Trust in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust. The Treasury continues to discuss this issue with interested parties, and has received representations on this issue from industry and stakeholder groups.

Red Diesel

Ms Walley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department is taking to extend the derogation for recreational boat users to buy red diesel under the European Energy Products Directive. [220543]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Carmichael) of 14 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 344W.

Regional Offices

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) which *(a)* non-departmental public bodies and *(b)* executive agencies within the remit of his Department have regional offices based on the Government Offices for the Regions' regional structure; and when the regional offices were established in each case; [219903]

(2) what regional *(a)* bodies, *(b)* institutions, *(c)* taskforces, *(d)* panels, *(e)* offices and *(f)* organisations the Government have established since May 1997 which are the responsibility of his Department. [219906]

Mr. Timms: Non-departmental public bodies and agencies within the Chancellor's Department that have regional offices based on the Government Offices for the Regions' regional structure are listed in the following table.

With regard to the other parts of the hon. Lady's questions, none of the Chancellor's Departments or agencies is responsible for any such regional entities.

Agency/NDPB/Office	Government office in regions location	Established
Office of Government Commerce		
Alexandra House, Leeds	Yorkshire and Humberside	2000
Rosebery Court, Norwich	East	2000
Liver Building, Liverpool	North West	2001
National Savings and Investments		
Milburngate House, Durham	North East	1970
Mythorp Road, Blackpool	North West	1974
Office for National Statistics		
Trafalgar Road, Southport	North West	1988
Titchfield, Hampshire	South East	1962
Ashford Airport, Kent	South East	1996
Channel Tunnel Terminal, Kent	South East	2000
Eastern Docks Dover, Kent	South East	2002
Hamilton House, Harwich	East	2004
Manchester Airport, Manchester M90	North West	2004
Newcastle Airport, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3BZ	North East	2004
Stansted Airport, Essex, CM24 1QW	East	2002
Gatwick Airport, West Sussex, RH6 0NP	South East	1999
Birmingham International Airport	West Midlands	2004

Teenage Pregnancies

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many teenage pregnancies there were in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 2002. [220181]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Sarah Teather, dated 8 March 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many teenage pregnancies there were in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 2002. (220181)

The most recent year for which conception statistics are available is 2003. Figures for 2002 and 2003 are given in the attached table.

Under 18 conceptions numbers and rates in London, 2002–03

	2002[2]		2003[2]	
Area of usual residence	Number of conceptions	Conception rate[1]	Number of conceptions	Conception rate
London	6,512	52.0	6,500	51.1
Inner London	3,010	66.9	2,909	63.9
Camden	135	49.3	136	48.7
Hackney and City of London	303	75.3	276	69.3
Hammersmith and Fulham	137	62.0	117	51.7
Haringey	313	79.3	291	71.0
Islington	173	62.6	171	61.1
Kensington and Chelsea	81	42.8	57	27.6
Lambeth	406	99.6	429	104.9
Lewisham	328	75.2	333	74.0
Newham	333	57.9	305	55.2
Southwark	335	81.2	351	86.8
Tower Hamlets	187	46.5	173	42.9
Wandsworth	184	64.4	168	58.8
Westminster	95	43.2	102	41.5
Outer London	3,502	43.6	3,591	44.0
Barking and Dagenham	236	73.3	220	71.9
Barnet	192	33.6	177	30.7
Bexley	172	40.1	180	41.2
Brent	253	51.4	280	56.2
Bromley	179	35.1	203	38.6
Croydon	367	58.1	342	52.6
Baling	185	34.8	204	38.0
Enfield	292	55.6	304	57.5
Greenwich	248	61.9	279	69.1
Harrow	115	28.0	112	26.9
Havering	150	36.7	150	35.9
Hillingdon	210	46.8	225	48.4
Hounslow	158	40.0	181	45.8
Kingston upon Thames	68	27.5	80	30.8
Merton	118	40.5	119	39.7
Redbridge	155	33.5	150	32.2
Richmond upon Thames	63	26.6	58	22.4
Sutton	110	34.9	106	32.1
Waltham Forest	231	58.0	221	55.4

[1] Rate per 1000 women aged 15–17
[2] Provisional

Note:
To protect confidentiality of individuals figures for City of London have been combined with Hackney.

Unemployment (Wales)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many unemployed people there were in each parliamentary constituency in Wales in *(a)* December 1984, *(b)* December 1994 and *(c)* December 2004, listed in descending order according to the greatest drop between December 1984 and December 2004. [219893]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Chris Ruane, dated 8 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in Wales. (219893)

Table 1 overleaf gives the estimates of the number of unemployed people, resident in each Parliamentary Constituency in Wales, for the twelve-month periods ending February 1997 and 2004. Comparable information is not available for earlier years.

Estimates are taken from the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Labour Force Survey (LFS). As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. Table 2 overleaf gives the number of JSA claimants resident in each Parliamentary Constituency in Wales ranked in descending order of the changes in the number between December 1996 to December 2004. Comparable information is not available for earlier years.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in each parliamentary constituency in Wales, 1997 and 2004

	12 months ending February each year		
	1997	*2004*	*Change*
Wales	106,000	67,000	-39,000
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire	5,000	2,000	-3,000
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	4,000	1,000	-3,000
Newport West	4,000	2,000	-2,000
Preseli Pembrokeshire	4,000	2,000	-2,000
Wrexham	3,000	1,000	-2,000
Pontypridd	4,000	2,000	-2,000
Clwyd South	3,000	1,000	-2,000
Ynys Mon	3,000	1,000	-2,000
Rhondda	4,000	2,000	-2,000
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Llanelli	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Caerphilly	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Aberavon	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Newport East	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Bridgend	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Conwy	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Caernarfon	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Monmouth	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Torfaen	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Vale of Clwyd	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Blaenau Gwent	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Clwyd West	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Alyn and Deeside	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Brecon and Radnorshire	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Ogmore	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Cardiff West	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Vale of Glamorgan	3,000	2,000	-1,000
Cardiff North	2,000	1,000	-1,000
Cynon Valley	2,000	2,000	0
Cardiff South and Penarth	3,000	3,000	0
Delyn	1,000	1,000	0
Swansea East	2,000	2,000	0
Montgomeryshire	1,000	1,000	0
Islwyn	2,000	2,000	0
Gower	1,000	1,000	0
Neath	2,000	2,000	0
Swansea West	2,000	3,000	1,000
Cardiff Central	2,000	3,000	1,000
Ceredigion	1,000	2,000	1,000

Note:

These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS—Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA Claimants resident in each parliamentary constituency in Wales, 1996 and 2004

	December 1996	*December 2004*	*Change*
Wales Total	93,084	38,539	-54,545
Cardiff West	3,467	1,267	-2,200
Cardiff South and Penarth	3,590	1,503	-2,087
Caernarfon	2,862	907	-1,955
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire	2,958	1,013	-1,945
Cardiff Central	3,098	1,177	-1,921
Conwy	2,830	972	-1,858
Preseli Pembrokeshire	2,954	1,128	-1,826
Llanelli	2,639	882	-1,757
Swansea West	2,951	1,203	-1,748
Newport West	2,907	1,193	-1,714
Ynys-Mon	3,073	1,365	-1,708
Swansea East	2,697	1,040	-1,657
Vale of Glamorgan	2,983	1,353	-1,630
Caerphilly	3,086	1,479	-1,607
Vale of Clwyd	2,519	995	-1,524
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	2,840	1,321	-1,519
Torfaen	2,444	933	-1,511
Newport East	2,455	970	-1,485
Rhondda	2,548	1,139	-1,409
Cynon Valley	2,291	905	-1,386
Pontypridd	2,197	913	-1,284
Clwyd West	1,997	735	-1,262
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr	1,855	646	-1,209
Gower	1,933	730	-1,203
Ceredigion	1,838	689	-1,149
Neath	2,192	1,055	-1,137
Wrexham	1,850	714	-1,136
Aberavon	2,060	927	-1,133
Blaenau Gwent	2,555	1,434	-1,121
Clwyd South	1,761	660	-1,101
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy	1,640	573	-1,067
Delyn	1,667	669	-998
Monmouth	1,651	654	-997
Bridgend	1,946	971	-975
Alyn and Deeside	1,751	812	-939
Ogmore	1,782	880	-902
Cardiff North	1,394	600	-794
Brecon and Radnorshire	1,406	701	-705
Islwyn	1,594	957	-637
Montgomeryshire	823	474	-349

Source:

Jobcentre Plus administrative system

VAT Registrations (Tyne and Wear)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many VAT registrations there were in each local authority in Tyne and Wear in *(a)* 1999, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* each year for which figures are available. [220397]

Dawn Primarolo: Customs and Excise do not collect data on the number of VAT registered businesses by local authority. However, information on the number of enterprises registered for VAT at the start of the year is available via the Small Business Service website at www.sbs.gov.uk. This can be used to give an indication of the size of the business population within Tyne and Wear. Table 1 shows the number of VAT registered enterprises in this area at the start of each year between 1999 and 2004.

Table 1

Local authority	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Gateshead	3,080	3,110	3,210	3,285	3,360	3,460
Newcastle upon Tyne	5,455	5,395	5,385	5,275	5,250	5,270
North Tyneside	2,695	2,770	2,830	2,860	2,925	2,985
South Tyneside	1,790	1,830	1,825	1,845	1,865	1,895
Sunderland	3,830	3,860	3,875	3,855	3,895	3,950
Total	16,850	16,965	17,120	17,120	17,295	17,560

NORTHERN IRELAND

Alzheimer's Disease

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health on the withdrawal from the NHS in Northern Ireland of certain Alzheimer's drugs following the recent recommendation by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. [220462]

Angela Smith: I have had no discussions regarding the withdrawal of any drugs used in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Drugs in the generic categories Donepezil, Galantamine, Memantine and Rivastigmine remain available on Health Service prescription in Northern Ireland.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he intends to extend to Northern Ireland the recent National Institute for Clinical Excellence recommendations in relation to the withdrawal from the NHS of certain Alzheimer's drugs. [220463]

Angela Smith: Guidelines produced by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) are only applicable to England and Wales and do not currently extend to Northern Ireland. Following completion of the NICE consultation on recommendations on the use of these drugs and the issue of their Final Appraisal Determination, the Department will then consider what local implications, if any, these final recommendations might have.

Clinical guidance on drugs and dementia, which is currently being produced by the locally based Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team (CREST), will also be taken into account by the Department when considering local implications for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

Ards Borough (Planning)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will set out the number of *(a)* planning applications which have come before Ards borough council *(b)* which have come before Ards borough council with recommendation for refusal, *(c)* the number of site meetings which have been requested by Ards borough councillors and *(d)* the number of applications which have been overturned and given approval, each year for the past six years. [208979]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

	(a) Applications presented to Ards borough council[1]	*(b) Applications recommended for refusal*	*(c) Number of site meetings requested*[2]	*(d) Change of opinion to approval*
2000	859	304	[3]—	27
2001	961	392	[3]—	48
2002	1,023	327	[3]—	78
2003	1,092	295	246	118
2004	1,222	200	178	35

[1] For the years 2000–02 the figures have been collected electronically and as a result include deferred applications presented to council. For 2003 and 2004 a manual exercise was carried out and these figures relate to the number of planning applications taken to council with an initial opinion to refuse. Deferred applications are not included.

[2] Information on the number of site meetings requested is not routinely collected and extracting the information for the period from 1999 to 2002 would be at a disproportionate cost.

[3] Not available.

It is only possible to provide answers to parts a, b and d of the question for the last five years, as the information for previous years is not held electronically by the planning service. Information for 1999 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

There is no correlation between the data within a specific year. The data refers to the year in which (columns B and C) applications were presented to council and column D the year that the final approval decision was taken by the planning service. It cannot be assumed that the number of applications overturned in one year is directly related to the number of applications presented to council with a recommendation to refuse. Neither can it be assumed that the number of site meeting requested relates to the number of applications overturned and given approval. Due to the complexity of the planning process it can be a considerable time between the receipt of an application and a final decision being taken.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many site meetings have been requested by each member of Ards borough council, in relation to planning applications which have come before council with a recommendation for refusal in each year for the last six years. [208983]

Angela Smith: The Planning Service does not record or hold any information on which members have requested meetings or how many they may have requested.

Cannabis

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* arrests and *(b)* cautions there have been in each police district command unit area in Northern Ireland for the (i) possession and (ii) sale of cannabis since its reclassification. [218224]

Mr. Pearson: The number of persons either arrested or cautioned by the Police Service of Northern Ireland for Class C drugs offences from 29 January 2004 to 31 January 2005 are detailed in the following tables.

Number of persons arrested for Class C offences by DCU

	29 January 2004 to 31 January		
	Offence		
DCU	Trafficking a class C drug	Possession of a class C drug	Total
Antrim	5	30	35
Ards	2	20	22
Armagh	5	42	47
Banbridge	1	11	12
East Belfast	8	56	64
North Belfast	17	50	67
South Belfast	18	80	98
West Belfast	4	20	24
Ballymena	9	43	52
Ballymoney	0	3	3
Carrickfergus	4	13	17
Coleraine	8	40	48
Cookstown	4	7	11
Craigavon	8	29	37
Castlereagh	5	13	18
Dungannon and South Tyrone	4	23	27
Down	1	30	31
Fermanagh	9	24	33
Foyle	17	50	67
Larne	1	1	2
Limavady	5	32	37
Lisburn	39	28	67
Magherafelt	16	21	37
Moyle	0	1	1
Newtownabbey	2	13	15
North Down	15	27	42
Newry and Mourne	7	21	28
Omagh	3	41	44
Strabane	7	13	20
Total	234	782	1,016

Note:
Statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.
Source:
Central Statistics Unit, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Lisnasharragh.

Number of persons cautioned for Class C offences by DCU

	29 January 2004 to 31 January 2004		
	Offence		
DCU	Trafficking a class C drug	Possession of a class C drug	Total
Antrim	0	13	13
Ards	0	10	10
Armagh	0	14	14
Banbridge	0	5	5
East Belfast	2	33	35
North Belfast	2	23	25
South Belfast	2	16	18
West Belfast	0	6	6
Ballymena	2	18	20
Ballymoney	0	9	9
Carrickfergus	2	27	29

Number of persons cautioned for Class C offences by DCU

	29 January 2004 to 31 January 2004		
	Offence		
DCU	Trafficking a class C drug	Possession of a class C drug	Total
Coleraine	2	31	33
Cookstown	0	17	17
Craigavon	1	39	40
Castlereagh	0	6	6
Dungannon and South Tyrone	0	12	12
Down	0	26	26
Fermanagh	0	3	3
Foyle	0	34	34
Larne	0	7	7
Limavady	0	27	27
Lisburn	0	17	17
Magherafelt	1	13	14
Moyle	0	2	2
Newtownabbey	1	17	18
North Down	0	32	32
Newry and Mourne	1	11	12
Omagh	0	13	13
Strabane	0	4	4
Total	16	485	501

Note:
Statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.
Source:
Central Statistics Unit, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Lisnasharragh

Civil Servants (Political Activity)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what definition of political activity is given in guidance to Northern Ireland civil servants; [220617]

(2) what *(a)* guidelines and *(b)* restrictions are laid down for each grade of the Northern Ireland Civil Service in relation to (i) membership of a political party, (ii) holding office within a political party and (iii) other political activity. [220088]

Mr. Pearson: Definitions of political activity are contained in paragraphs 965–66 of the Political Activities Section of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay and Conditions of Service Code.

The guidelines and restrictions on political activity by Northern Ireland civil servants are contained in paragraphs 964 to 992 of the conduct section of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pay and Conditions of Service Code. The restrictions are in place to ensure confidence in the impartial discharge of civil servants' duties, irrespective of the political persuasion of the Government of the day, while allowing staff the greatest possible freedom to participate in public affairs. The rules are concerned with political activities liable to give public expression to political views, rather than privately held beliefs and opinions.

Copies of the relevant paragraphs have been placed in the Library.

Contaminated Land (Carrickfergus)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what decontamination work is being carried out by public bodies in Carrickfergus on *(a)* privately-owned land and *(b)* publicly-owned land. [220624]

Angela Smith: No decontamination work is currently being undertaken on either privately or publicly owned land. A precautionary approach is being taken by investigating the land of the former Courtaulds site. An inter-agency group has been established to assist with these investigations and provide public advice.

Cross-border Bodies

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the budget for each cross-border body is for 2005; and what the percentage change is from the previous year. [212329]

Mr. Pearson: The following table details of the budgets for the North South Implementation Bodies for 2005 and the percentage increases over the 2004 budgets. The figures quoted in the table for the Language Body are based on draft business plans provided by the agencies of the Language Body as the 2005 budget figures have not yet been agreed.

North/south implementation body	*2005 Budget £ million*	*Percentage increase on 2004*
Language body	[1]14.737	[1]0.92
Inter Trade Ireland	9.27	3.00
Special EU Programmes Body	2.195	8.66
Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission	3.67	14.69
Waterways Ireland	34.16	7.76
Food Safety	6.16	1.32

[1] The 2005 budget figures for the Language Body have not yet been agreed.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213615]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office has one in-house canteen and makes a contribution to another facility paid for jointly with other Northern Ireland Departments. The Department does not have any bars.

The costs of running the in-house facility for each year since 1998–99, including staffing and supply costs are detailed as follows. Our records for the years 1997–98 to 1999–2000 are not complete and therefore these costs have not been included.

£

	Total running cost	*Staff costs*	*Supply costs*
2000–01	29,992	13,151	13,748
2001–02	34,468	15,125	15,125
2002–03	38,529	14,071	19,028
2003–04	25,091	15,318	7,084

The contribution made to the costs of the private staff canteen facility was £57,810.00 in the year 2003–04. It would not be possible to extract the payments made in respect of this item from other payments relating to catering and hospitality for the years 1997–98 to 2002–03 except at disproportionate cost.

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Doctors

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many consultant orthopaedic surgeons there were per head of population in the Province on the latest date for which figures are available. [220618]

Angela Smith: There are 0.23 consultant orthopaedic surgeons per 10,000 population employed by the Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services as at 31 December 2004.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many general practitioner registrars per head of population completed training in the Province in each of the last five years. [220620]

Angela Smith: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Total number of General Practitioner Registrars who completed training in Northern Ireland, 2000–04

	Headcount per 10,000 population
2004	0.27
2003	0.24
2002	0.21
2001	0.21
2000	0.22

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase *(a)* the number of orthopaedic surgeons in the Province and *(b)* the number of operating sessions they devote to the NHS. [220621]

Angela Smith: The Department carries out an annual review of the consultant workforce in each of the hospital-based specialties, including orthopaedic surgery, and the numbers in training are adjusted to meet the assessed need, subject to available resources. There are currently 41 consultant orthopaedic surgeons in Northern Ireland. Investments in training orthopaedic surgeons in recent years have been with a view to increasing the number of consultants to at least 50 by 2010.

Those orthopaedic surgeons currently employed in the Province devote 137 operating sessions to the Health and Personal Social Services.

DOE Planning Service

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications were received by DOE Planning Service in Downpatrick for domestic properties on *(a)* Ballygelagh Road, Ardkeen, *(b)* Upper Ballygelagh Road, Ardkeen, *(c)* Tullycross Road, Ardkeen, *(d)* Lisbane Road, Ardkeen; and how many applications came before Ards borough council with recommendations for refusal that were subsequently overturned and granted approval in each year for the past 10 years. [208981]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

	Applications received by Downpatrick divisional planning office	*Applications presented for refusal*	*Applications overturned and given approval*
Ballygelagh Road			
2000	22	4	0
2001	11	5	1
2002	15	5	3
2003	14	12	2
2004	34	12	1
Lisbane Road			
2000	6	0	0
2001	4	2	0
2002	3	0	1
2003	4	2	0
2004	10	2	1
Tullycross Road			
2000	3	1	0
2001	3	1	0
2002	1	1	1
2003	1	0	0
2004	8	2	0
Upper Ballygelagh Road			
2000	3	2	0
2001	3	2	0
2002	1	3	0
2003	1	4	0
2004	8	5	3

It is only possible to provide information for the last five years, as the information for previous years is not held electronically by the Planning Service, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

There is no correlation between the data within a specific year. The data refers to the year in which (column B) applications were received; (column C) applications were presented to council and (column D) the year that the final approval decision was taken by the planning service. It cannot be assumed that the number of applications overturned in one year is directly related to the number of applications presented to council with a recommendation to refuse. Due to the complexity of the planning process it can be a considerable time between the receipt of an application and a final decision being taken.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications have been received by DOE Planning Service for domestic properties in the Ards Peninsula, *(a)* in the five years prior to the publication of the draft Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 and *(b)* since its publication; how many applications in each case were brought before Ards borough council with a recommendation for refusal; and how many of these applications were subsequently overturned and given approval. [208982]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

Pre Draft Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (1998–2002)

Number	*Description*	*Number*
1	Applications Received from 1 January 1998 until publication of the draft Plan	955
2	Of those in (1) above the number brought before Ards borough council with a Recommendation of Refusal by DOE Planning Service	159
3	Of those in (2) above the number which subsequently had an Approval Decision by the Department	[1] Not available

Post Draft Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 (2003-04)

Number	*Description*	*Number*
1	Applications Received post Plan up to December 2004	721
2	Of those in (1) the number brought before Ards borough council with a Recommendation of Refusal by the DOE Planning Service	124
3	Of those in (2) above the number which subsequently had an Approval Decision by the Department	[1] Not available

[1] It is only possible to provide information for parts A and B of the question as the information required in relation to the number of applications which subsequently had an approval decision is not held electronically by the Planning Service, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Note:

For the purpose of providing these figures the publishing date for the publication of the Ards and Down Area Plan has been taken as 1 December 2002.

Domestic Violence

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many non-molestation orders have been issued in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [220631]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

Non-molestation orders were introduced in April 1999 under Article 20 of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. The figures show the number of non-molestation orders made each year since then.

	Number
1999	2,717
2000	3,439
2001	3,825
2002	4,191
2003	3,546
2004	[1]3,286

[1] The 2004 figures are provisional and are subject to statistical validation.

Prior to April 1999 personal protection and exclusion orders, granted under the Domestic Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order 1980, served a similar function. The figures show the number of these orders made between 1997 and 1999.

	Number
1997	4,132
1998	4,139
1999	1,665

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many non-residential orders have been issued in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [220632]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

Occupation orders granted under Articles 11 to 19 of the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 were introduced in April 1999 and the figures show the number of orders made each year since then.

	Number
1999	1,147
2000	1,275
2001	1,538
2002	2,049
2003	1,496
2004	[1]1,196

[1] The 2004 figures are provisional and are subject to statistical validations.

Prior to April 1999 personal protection and exclusion orders, granted under the Domestic Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order 1980, served a similar function. The figures show the number of these orders made between 1997 and 1999.

	Number
1997	4,132
1998	4,139
1999	1,665

Energy Costs

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much each health trust in the Province spent on energy costs during the last year. [220694]

Angela Smith: Provisional figures for the Health and Social Services Trust expenditure on energy costs in the 2003–004 financial year are as follows.

Expenditure on energy costs by HSS Trust 2003–04[1]

Trust	*£000*[2]
Altnagelvin HSS Trust	745
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	504
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	2,098
Causeway HSS Trust	726
Craigavon Area Hospital HSS Trust	1,033
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	226
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	1,165
Foyle HSS Trust	613
Green Park HSS Trust	655
Homefirst HSS Trust	984
Mater Infirmorum HSS Trust	428
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	583
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	850
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	2,267
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	881
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	1,117
Ulster Community and Hospital HSS Trust	1,168
United HSS Trust	1,055
Total Expenditure	17,098

[1] Provisional
[2] Year ended March 2004
Note:
Premises energy costs include oil, gas, electricity and other fuels.

Hyponatraemia-related Deaths

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the independent inquiry into hyponatraemia-related deaths will be able to compel witnesses to co-operate. [220695]

Angela Smith: The inquiry into hyponatraemia-related deaths has been established under article 54 and schedule 8 of the Health and Personal Social Services (NI) Order 1972. Under this legislation John O'Hara QC, as chairman of the inquiry, has wide-ranging powers to require any person to attend and give evidence or to furnish information on any matter in question at the enquiry. Failure to comply is an offence punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

Illegal Cigarettes

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the value of illegal cigarettes traded in the Province in each of the last three years. [219669]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

HM Customs and Excise does not estimate the value of illegal cigarettes at a Northern Ireland level.

The latest estimates of volume of illegal cigarettes for the UK as a whole is available in HM Customs and Excise's publication "Measuring and Tackling Indirect Tax Losses—2004," published alongside the Pre-Budget Report in December 2004, a copy of which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Illegal Drugs

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent estimate is of *(a)* the size of the trade in illegal drugs in the Province and *(b)* the amount of money received from that activity by (i) the Provisional IRA, (ii) the INLA, (iii) the Official IRA, (iv) the UDA, (v) the UVF and (vi) other criminal gangs in the last three years. [220563]

Mr. Pearson: It is impossible to quantify the scale and total value of the trade in illegal drugs in Northern Ireland with any precision.

This year's Organised Crime Task Force Threat Assessment, launched in May 2004, clearly indicated that the INLA, UDA, UVF and LVF are all involved in the trafficking and supply of illegal drugs. It is not clear however what proportion of the illegal profits is passed on to those organisations or retained by individuals themselves.

The Independent Monitoring Commission's report of 4 November 2004 also provided an assessment of the criminal activities of paramilitary groups, including those involved in drugs dealing.

Illegal Fuel

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the value of illegal red diesel being smuggled into the Province in the last three years. [219667]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

HM Customs and Excise's latest estimates of the revenue loss due to fuel fraud and cross-border shopping in Northern Ireland are available in HM Customs and Excise's Annual Report and Accounts published in December 2004.

At present, it is not possible to break down these estimates into the value of revenue lost through cross-border shopping or different types of fraud.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of how many filling stations in the Province are selling illegal fuel. [219668]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

HM Customs and Excise's most recent assessment in 2002 was that of the fuel retail sites in Northern Ireland approximately one third sold predominantly illegal fuel, one third sold illegal fuel periodically and one third did not sell illegal fuel.

However, as a result of increased activity to target retail sites over the last two years' Customs are currently reviewing this assessment.

Murder Investigations

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Chief Constable of Police in Northern Ireland on the possible involvement of the Provisional IRA in the murders of *(a)* Mr McCartney in Belfast and *(b)* Mr McGinley in Londonderry. [220452]

Mr. Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland meets the chief constable and his security advisers on a regular basis to discuss a range of security matters.

Northern Area Plan

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the Northern Area Plan to be published. [220442]

Angela Smith: The Planning Service is completing work on the draft Northern Area Plan with the aim of publishing the Plan as soon as possible and no later than the end of May 2005.

Parades

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the outcome was of the inquiry undertaken by the Police Ombudsman in relation to the alleged breaches of determinations of the parades commission concerning parades in East Belfast on 1 July 2004. [218976]

Mr. Pearson: The Police Ombudsman has advised me that she has not undertaken an inquiry in relation to the alleged breaches of determinations of the parades commission concerning parades in East Belfast on 1 July 2004.

Pensions

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how proposed Government pension scheme changes will impact on pension scheme members in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [219816]

Mr. Pearson: It is assumed that this question is referring to the proposed changes to the pension schemes for civil servants, staff employed in the NHS and for teachers.

The Government announced in June 2003 that it intended to proceed with a proposal to make the normal age of retirement for public service pensions schemes 65 rather than 60 and that it intended to proceed with this through reviews of those schemes.

As a result, consultation on proposed changes for the main civil service pension scheme in Great Britain and the NHS and teachers schemes for England and Wales is currently underway. As the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme for Northern Ireland, the Health and Personal Social Services Superannuation Scheme, and the Teachers Superannuation Scheme in Northern Ireland operate on a principle of parity with these schemes, the normal approach would be to introduce similar changes for Northern Ireland staff.

It is proposed that the new arrangements would take effect from April 2006, but that these would not be extended to existing staff before 2013. In addition, pension benefits earned before 2013 would be protected in full.

Police Secondments

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will extend the personnel exchange and secondment arrangements announced on 21 February between the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the police force of the Irish Republic to *(a)* other parts of the United Kingdom and *(b)* other member states of the EU. [218658]

Mr. Pearson: I have no plans to extend those arrangements flowing from the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Policing Co-operation as arrangements already exist to facilitate the movement of police officers to other parts of the UK or other member states of the EU.

Under Section 27 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland can engage in temporary service with other police forces in Great Britain. Similarly, Section 8 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 confers a power on the Policing Board, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, for PSNI officers to provide advice and assistance to international organisations/institutions or any other person or body engaged outside the United Kingdom in carrying out policing related activities.

In addition, the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland also has the authority under Section 98(3) of the Police Act 1996 to assist other Chief Constables in the UK should there be special demands placed on their resources.

Provisional IRA

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent assessment is of the scale of illegal distillation of spirits by the Provisional IRA in the Province. [219674]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

HM Customs and Excise has made no such assessment. The Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force's threat assessment and strategy document Confronting the Threat, which was published in May 2004, contains information on paramilitary involvement in organised crime. Copies of this document have been placed in the House of Commons Library.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Justice Minister of the Irish Republic following his statement in February that Gerry Adams MPMLA and Martin McGuinness MPMLA were members of the Army Council of the Provisional IRA. [220235]

Mr. Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland met with Mr. McDowell on 21 February at Hillsborough Castle for the signing of the Protocols between the PSNI and Garda Siochana, during which a number of matters were discussed. The Secretary of State also met with Mr. Ahern and Mr. McDowell at the recent British Irish Intergovernmental Conference where a variety of matters of mutual interest were discussed and these are included in the joint communiqué.

Psychiatric Illness Claims

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in settling post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychiatric illness claims against the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Police Service of Northern Ireland; what target he has drawn up for the maximum time to be taken in dealing with individual claims; and how many new claims have been submitted in each month since March 2001. [218970]

Mr. Pearson: The group action being taken by serving and retired members of the RUC and PSNI in respect of post-traumatic stress disorder claims is listed for hearing in November 2005. The chief constable has not set target times for dealing with individual claims but they will be dealt with expeditiously and in accordance with the time limits set by the courts.

The chief constable currently holds details of 3,363 claims which have been made since June 2001. However, the PSNI is unable to provide figures relating to the number of claims submitted on a monthly basis.

Road Accidents

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many accidents on Ballyquin Road, Limavady, County Londonderry, have been reported to DRD Roads Service within the past 10 years. [220441]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell dated 8 March 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a parliamentary Question asking how many accidents on Ballyquin Road, Limavady, County Londonderry, have been reported to DRD Roads Service within the past 10 years (220441). I have been asked to reply as the issue raised falls with my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

With regard to accident statistics I should explain that the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) gathers road traffic injury collision information. Roads Service has access to this information for its own investigation purposes. We currently hold PSNI records for the B68 Ballyquin Road for the period January 1996 to February 2005. During that period there were 50 such injury collisions, including the recent double fatality at a bend on the road near Dungiven. .

Like the vast majority of the rural road network, Ballyquin Road was not designed to modern standards, though a number of improvement schemes have been carried out on the road over recent years, including the erection or bend warning signs at the double fatality accident location. However, the collision history along this road remains a cause for concern. We have, therefore, been analysing the nature and type of collisions along the road, with a view to delivering a package of measures designed specifically to reduce the number of collisions.

As a result of this work, a route action Collision Remedial Scheme (signs, white lines etc.) for the Ballyquin Road has been included in our programme of works for the next financial year. Detailed analysis of the route is underway and we are intending to complete the necessary design work for this scheme within the next few months. The bend referred to above will be given priority within the scheme, so that any suitable measures can be implemented at this location, as soon as possible. Any more major improvement proposals along the road (realigning of bends, improving sight distances, road widening etc.) would, of course, have to compete for funding with other worthwhile schemes within our Northern Division area.

You may also be interested to learn that we also intend to carry out some resurfacing work on the Ballyquin Road during the incoming financial year.

I hope this information is helpful.

Robert Laverty

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the investigation into the murder of Robert Laverty on 15 July 1972 in North Belfast. [218959]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The PSNI inform me that arrests have been conducted in respect of this matter. To date no persons have been made amenable for the murder of constable Laverty.

Sexual Abuse

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what Government resources are available to help the victims of sexual abuse in Northern Ireland. [220628]

Angela Smith: Health and Social Services Boards provide a range of medical and mental health services to victims of sexual abuse via the Health Trusts. These services include counselling, medical services provided in accident and emergency units and specialist genito-urinary unit services. Government Departments and other public sector bodies also provide funding to voluntary sector organisations, such as the Nexus

Institute, the Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse Centre (NI), and Victim Support NI, which offer counselling and support services to victims/survivors.

The investigation of serious sexual offences and child abuse matters is the responsibility of the Care Units of the Police Service for Northern Ireland. The units are staffed by specially trained police officers and provide support to victims throughout investigations and subsequent court proceedings.

The policy of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland is that the Department will consider the proper interests of victims (and witnesses) at every stage in the criminal process. The Department takes practical steps to give effect to its policy on the treatment of victims, including ensuring that staff treat victims with sensitivity and understanding, ensuring that proper use is made of appropriate legal measures to assist victims to give evidence to courts and that victims are kept informed of significant developments in the case in which they have an interest.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to announce the strategy to address sexual abuse in Northern Ireland. [220629]

Angela Smith: The development of a regional strategy to address sexual violence in Northern Ireland is being taken forward jointly by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Office, in conjunction with other Departments and agencies whose responsibilities also encompass matters relating to sexual violence. It is proposed to publish a consultation document on the strategy in the summer of this year and to publish the final strategy in April 2006.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what services are provided by the statutory sector to the victims of sexual abuse in each health and social services board area in Northern Ireland. [220630]

Angela Smith: The four Health and Social Services Boards in Northern Ireland provide a range of medical and mental health services through the Health Trusts in those areas. These services include counselling, medical services provided in accident and emergency units and specialist services in the genito-urinary unit. In addition, further counselling and support services are provided by the Boards through funding to Voluntary Sector Organisations like the Nexus Institute.

Smuggling (Livestock)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the scale of smuggling in livestock in the Province. [219670]

Mr. Pearson: I have no evidence of significant smuggling of livestock within the island of Ireland. Sheep and pigs can be traded freely, subject to European Union rules, which are actively enforced by the relevant authorities in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The export of cattle from Northern Ireland is prohibited under European Union rules though incentives to smuggle do exist. To prevent such smuggling there is close liaison between the enforcement authorities who share information and target action where necessary. Such action includes joint operations and following one such operation last year several prosecutions are pending. Other action taken includes the establishment of a central enforcement team within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Veterinary Service, the targeting of cattle identification inspections and tightening the rules on movement of animals to ensure that the system of traceability is maintained.

Welfare Foods

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have to extend the welfare food scheme to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [220531]

Angela Smith: A welfare foods scheme, parallel to that which exists in Great Britain, has been in operation in Northern Ireland since 1940. The scheme has been reviewed and consultation is ongoing, throughout the UK, on draft regulations for the introductory phase of the Healthy Start voucher scheme in a defined area in England. The intention is to introduce the new scheme in Northern Ireland at the same time as the rest of the United Kingdom.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

European Constitution

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what criteria the commission will apply when designating organisations for the EU constitution referendum. [218734]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission provided guidance on the designation process for the north east referendum held in November 2004. The commission has informed me that it is currently reviewing that guidance, and plans to publish specific guidance on the designation process for any referendum to be held following enactment of the European Union Bill by autumn 2005.

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission how the commission intends to regulate organisations that would be permitted participants in the referendum on the EU constitution that are *(a)* partially or *(b)* wholly funded by institutions of the European Union. [218735]

Mr. Viggers: By virtue of the provisions of section 117 of the Political Parties Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA), all participants who intend to spend over £10,000 campaigning in a referendum are required to register as 'permitted participants' with the Electoral Commission. Section 105 of the Act prohibits organisations that do not carry out their main business activities in the United Kingdom from being permitted participants.

PPERA also prohibits an organisation which is not eligible to be a permitted participant from making donations to a permitted participant, unless the total value of its donations to that participant is less than £200.

As regards the institutions of the European Union, I am informed by the Electoral Commission that it has already indicated that it does not regard the European Commission as falling into any of the categories of organisation that can be a permitted participant.

The Electoral Commission will review the statutory returns submitted by permitted participants in order to ensure that they have complied with the requirements of the legislation.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Flu

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to develop a vaccine to counter avian flu; and if she will make a statement. [219286]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

The National Institute for Biological Standards and Control has secured an isolate of the current avian influenza virus strain and has produced a candidate vaccine virus using "reverse genetics" technology for use should this be required.

We are working closely with other countries, the World Health Organisation, the European Commission and manufacturers to ensure that a vaccine can be developed as quickly as possible after a pandemic flu strain emerges.

Cross-compliance

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether farmers will face penalties for failing to meet cross-compliance requirements; whether allowances will be made to farmers due to late information being supplied to them; and if she will make a statement. [218466]

Alun Michael: Cross-compliance requirements for the single payments scheme (SPS) apply from 1 January 2005. Three booklets outlining cross-compliance requirements, which reflect either existing law or represent good farming practice, were sent out to farmers in late 2004.

If SPS applicants do not comply with cross-compliance requirements, they may have their direct payments, including SPS, reduced in part or in total.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what inspection regime she has put in place for cross-compliance; and if she will make a statement. [218467]

Alun Michael: In considering possible options for the enforcement of cross-compliance, Defra's key concern has been to develop a flexible, cost-effective and proportionate enforcement apparatus which supports the Department's policy objectives as set out in the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food, based on the sustainable development of the industry, including taking account of the competitive position of agriculture in England compared with other UK and European farmers.

After careful consideration and close consultation with the relevant enforcement bodies and stakeholders, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, has charged the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) with overall responsibility to ensure cross compliance enforcement meets the Commission's minimum requirements in 2005, provides appropriate coordination of inspections and acts a single point of contact for all cross-compliance related farmer inquiries. The RPA will discharge this responsibility working in partnership with the various specialist enforcement bodies, such as the Environment Agency, who will be formally delegated to carry out inspections within their respective areas as required.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Management Committees of the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets for Sugar met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217846]

Alun Michael: On average the EU's Sugar Management Committee meets around 18 times during each presidency period. These meetings take place in Brussels on Thursday afternoons and are attended by officials from Defra and additionally, as necessary, by officials from other UK Agriculture Departments or the Rural Payments Agency.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairshow many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU Committee on agricultural structures and rural development met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217873]

Alun Michael: The following meetings of the European Commission's committee on agricultural structures and rural development took place during the periods of *(a)* the Italian, *(b)* the Irish and *(c)* the Dutch presidencies.

(a) Italian presidency

23 July 2003
24 September 2003
22 October 2003
17 December 2003

(b) Irish presidency

28 January 2004
18 February 2004
24 March 2004
22 April 2004
11 May 2004
23 June 2004

(c) Dutch presidency

20 July 2004
22 September 2004
20 October 2004
19 November 2004
15 December 2004

Meetings of the Committee are held in Brussels, and are chaired by the Commission, not by a representative of the member state currently holding the presidency of the Council. The UK Government experts present at these committees are officials working on rural development issues under the current programme and policy on future programmes from 2007–13—usually the head of the EU policy branch in the Rural Development Division in Defra (Colin Macleod). Experts from the devolved administrations also attend when issues relating to their particular Rural Development Programmes are on the agenda.

Farm Waste Grants

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for replacement of the Farm Waste Grants Scheme. [219309]

Alun Michael: Defra are considering whether to replace the Farm Waste Grants Scheme which ends on 31 March 2006. The scheme was introduced in 1996 for a seven year period when the first Nitrate Vulnerable Zones were designated under the EC Nitrates Directive.

New NVZ designations were made in October 2002 increasing the NVZ area in England from approximately 8 per cent. to 55 per cent. of the country. At the same time these designations were made, the 1996 scheme was extended to the new NVZs to assist farmers in meeting the manure handling and storage requirements under the NVZ Action programme. An announcement extending the scheme for a further two years was made on 30 September 2003.

As part of the Rural Strategy, Defra is currently introducing simplified and streamlined funding arrangements that replace the plethora of existing grant schemes. The new funding framework will be centred around three major flexible funds based on Defra's strategic priorities of natural resource protection, sustainable farming and food and sustainable rural communities.

Sickness Absence

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what initiatives her Department is taking to reduce the numbers of sick days taken by staff in the Department. [216633]

Alun Michael: The Department is fully committed to the management of sickness absence and introduced a new Sickness Absence Management policy on 1 December 2004, which includes many of the best practices contained in the Report of the Joint Review by the Ministerial task Force for Health, Safety and Productivity and the Cabinet Office report on 'Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector' (November 2004). Defra's policy has the support of the Departmental Trade Unions and includes:

Welcome back discussions between line managers and staff returning from sickness absence, on each occasion of absence.

Prompts for action sent to managers when staff have accumulated 15 and 30 days sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period.

Dedicated professional advice from Human Resources to managers dealing with sickness absence cases.

Occupational Health referral options for managers who are concerned about the attendance of their staff.

The Department is also introducing a new electronic Human Resources Management system, which will produce real time management information on sickness absence.

Defra is supporting the recommendations made in the 'Managing sickness absence in the public sector' report, by taking part in a trial of more sensitive arrangements for the use of special/compassionate leave.

DEFENCE

12 Mechanised Brigade

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the radios of 12 Mechanised Brigade. [219526]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* 12 Mechanised Brigade will deploy to Iraq in April with a mix of Bowman and Clansman radios. Our assessment is that this will provide robust communications for the brigade. Bowman will provide a significant increase in capability compared with the earlier Clansman system.

Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of the complete RAF Board of Inquiry into the crash of RAF Harrier aircraft GR7 ZG475 on 1 June 1995; [218160]

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the complete RAF Board of Inquiry into the crash of RAF Tornado F3 ZH558 on 8 July 1994; [218161]

(3) if he will place in the Library a copy of the complete RAF Board of Inquiry into the crash of a RAF Chinook HC1 helicopter ZA721 on 27 February 1987. [218780]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the right hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Camp Bucca

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the performance of the Prisoner of War Registration Unit and the Prisoner Monitoring Team at Camp Bucca in ensuring that the UK met its obligations under the Geneva Convention. [219751]

Mr. Ingram: The Independent Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is the recognised international authority to scrutinise procedures and organisations within detention facilities in Iraq. The ICRC visited Camp Bucca during the period that it contained some internees for which the United Kingdom was responsible and we understand that they were content that UK obligations under the Geneva convention were met.

Defence Contracts (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many defence contracts have been given to companies in Chorley constituency since 1997; and what the value was in each year. [219037]

Mr. Ingram: Estimates of the number and value of contracts placed directly by MOD (excluding its Trading Fund Agencies) with companies in the Chorley constituency are as follows:

Financial year	*Number of contracts*	*Total contract value (£ million)*
1997–98	9	4.4
1998–99	14	110.4
1999–2000	17	137.6
2000–01	14	40.0
2001–02	16	5.9
2002–03	12	39.5
2003–04	7	3.8

Defence Service Agencies (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 the Ministry of Defence police spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each case; and if he will make a statement. [215434]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is shown as follows:

£ million

	Personnel budget	*Spend in Scotland*	*Percentage of budget*
1997–98	134.396	31.887	24
1998–99	130.135	27.382	21
1999–2000	139.132	32.777	24
2000–01	135.995	32.826	24
2001–02	134.682	36.790	27
2002–03	135.914	33.273	25
2003–04	143.406	34.427	24

The number of MOD Police Agency personnel employed in Scotland in each financial year since 1997–98 is shown as follows:

	MOD Police Agency personnel employed in Scotland
April 1997	960
April 1998	890
April 1999	890
April 2000	890
April 2001	870
April 2002	840
April 2003	820
April 2004	1,120
January 2005	1,310

Defence Spending (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 1999–2000, *(d)* 1998–99 and *(e)* 1997–98 the Defence Bills Agency spent in Scotland (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [217240]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Bills Agency is based in Liverpool. It had no staff based in Scotland in 1997–98,1998–99,1999–2000, 2000–01 or 2001–02.

Both Civilian and Service personnel data by Agency are collated annually at 1 April and presented in Table 2.6 of UK Defence Statistics, a copy of which is held in the Library of the House. Further information on personnel figures is available on the DASA website at www.dasa.mod.uk

Departmental Documents

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to publish an updated version of his Department's efficiency technical note. [217844]

Mr. Ingram: An updated Efficiency Technical Note is due to be published in the autumn.

East Timor

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military advice his Department is offering to the new Government of East Timor. [220852]

Mr. Ingram: Although the Ministry of Defence has previously provided military assistance to the Government of East Timor, we are not currently offering any formal military advice to them.

Gulf War-related Illnesses

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many veterans who have had claims of Gulf War-related illnesses refused have appealed against the decision; and what the success rate has been. [220492]

Mr. Caplin: *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* 132 veterans appealed against decisions that Gulf War-related illness conditions were not related to their service in the armed forces. Of these, 36 cases were allowed by the Pensions Appeal Tribunal (PAT).

221 veterans appealed against the level of assessment of disablement. 74 had their assessment increased after being heard at the PAT, 80 had their assessment upheld, six had their assessment reduced, 39 were cleared pre-appeal and 22 were withdrawn by the appellant.

Iraq

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much block leave is allocated to units *(a)* prior to an operational tour of Iraq and *(b)* on return from Iraq. [219064]

Mr. Caplin: There is no established regulation on the provision of 'block leave' prior to deployment on an operational tour. Many units do work a 'block leave' system in which the unit will stand-down as a whole. These periods may take place at the discretion of the commanding officer before an operational tour,

providing they do not conflict with the interests of the service and that there is sufficient time prior to deployment for leave to be taken.

Post operational tour leave and post operational detachment leave were introduced in recognition of the stresses and strains that operational deployments bring to both an individual and their family and friends. The general entitlement for all personnel returning from a tour in Iraq of six months is a minimum of 20 working days leave. However, the breakdown of this entitlement between additional post-operational leave and an individual's annual leave entitlement differs between the three services.

Military Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the complete RAF Board of Inquiry into the crash of a Tornado aircraft in Glen Ogle on 1 September 1994. [217295]

Mr. Caplin: I will place in the Library a copy of parts one to five of the Board of Inquiry (BoI) into the crash of a Tornado aircraft in Glen Ogle on 1 September 1994, together with a copy of the list of annexes to the BoI. The BoI papers have been declassified and redacted in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. A small amount of information at paragraph 19.n and 59.j of part two of the BoI papers, and some of the title of annex R in the list of annexes, has been withheld for security reasons, and information in paragraphs 22a, 34 and 46 of part two of the BoI papers have been withheld under the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8 (Right to Respect for Private and Family Life), enabled by the Human Rights Act 1998.

Mutual Defence Agreeement

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the annual costs associated with the operation of the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement in each of the last 10 years. [220106]

Mr. Hoon: The annual costs associated with operating the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement (MDA) would include not only the operating costs of the Atomic Control Office (London) and the Atomic Coordinating Office (Washington), but also the costs of any Ministry of Defence and AWE personnel spending significant parts of their time on work associated with the Agreement, the costs of visits to the US under the MDA and the costs of transfers of material. Such information over the past 10 years is not readily available in the form requested and could only be collated at disproportionate cost.

Naval Operational Strength

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* frigates and *(b)* destroyers are operational. [220160]

Mr. Ingram: As at 3 March 2005, there are 23 frigates and destroyers currently available for tasking by CINCFLEET.

Near Air Misses (Worcestershire)

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make an assessment on the safety of the Royal Air Force training flight path over the Air Ambulance Heliport at Strensham in Worcestershire. [219547]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 3 March 2005]*: There is no flight training path over or near the site of the Heliport at Strensham. The Strensham location lies within the UK low flying system and Class G airspace, within which the internationally recognised principle of "see and avoid" operates. Additionally, the site of the heliport is marked on low flying charts as a warning to pilots that helicopters are operating from there.

RAF

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of Royal Air Force recruitment campaigns has been in each of the last five years. [212363]

Mr. Caplin: The overall marketing budgets, which cover recruitment advertising campaigns and general material promoting the Royal Air Force, for the previous four financial years are detailed in the following table.

Financial year	*Cost incurred (£ million)*
2000–01	5.390
2001–02	6.518
2002–03	8.125
2003–04	8.316

The most recent forecast for financial year 2004–05 is £9.100 million.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect the planned changes to the Royal Air Force will have on jobs in *(a)* London, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* the UK. [212365]

Mr. Caplin: My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces announced on 9 December 2004 the outcome of the initial work on the drawdown of uniformed RAF manpower to around 41,000. Since then much work has been completed and the implementation has begun. Work on the impact of these changes on Ministry of Defence civilian jobs is also ongoing. However, it is not yet possible to say how individual jobs or their locations will be affected, but RAF and MOD civilian personnel will be kept informed of the changes as they develop.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effect of planned changes to the funding of the Royal Air Force on UK national security. [212381]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Air Force is not funded as an entity in its own right; instead we invest in defence as a whole. I am satisfied that the changes announced to the House by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, columns 343–66 and set out in detail in Delivering Security in a Changing World—Future Capabilities (Cm 6269) will enhance the UK defences and security.

Reapprovals

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list major project report projects that have been subject to re-approval since financial year 1997–98; and what the date of re-approval was in each case. [219039]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my reply in the Library of the House.

Shoeburyness Ranges

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research he has evaluated on the work carried out using radioactive materials at the Shoeburyness ranges as part of the original nuclear weapons programme; and what reports he has received on releases of radioactive material at the Shoeburyness ranges as part of the original nuclear weapons programme. [218571]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has just commenced a Land Quality Assessment (LQA) of the entire Shoeburyness site. It is expected that appropriate assessments of any historic radioactive contamination associated with the use of radioactive materials in support of the nuclear weapons programme will be conducted and reported upon as necessary as the LQA progresses. This work will build upon a Land Quality Statement, compiled in 1997, relating to areas of the Shoeburyness site formerly used for research in support of the nuclear weapons programme. The broad history of the part of Shoeburyness (AWE Foulness) formally used for these purposes is available in the report (ISSN 1478–7008) of a desk-top investigation published by English Heritage in 2004.

Textile Procurement

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with officials from the Department of Trade and Industry about the procurement of textiles. [219755]

Mr. Ingram: Ministry of Defence officials are in regular contact with officials in the Department for Trade and Industry on procurement issues, including textiles, and the Department is also represented on an inter-departmental committee chaired by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry at which a range of public procurement issues are discussed.

Tsunami

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Answer of 21 February, *Official Report* columns 113–14W, if he will make it his policy not to recover any costs, marginal or otherwise, from the Department for International Development in relation to the relief effort following the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. [217947]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence and Department for International Development agreed at the outset that the extra costs of the military assistance requested by DfID, for which the MOD does not have a budget, would be reimbursed by DfID. This approach is in line with normal practice and consistent with Treasury guidance on interdepartmental services. The MOD's activity—the full costs of which are estimated to be some £14 million—was central to the delivery of relief and it is realistic to see its additional costs as within the scope of the relief effort. There is no intention to review the policy.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Answer of 21 February, reference 214418, what chargeable costs have arisen to date that are recoverable from the Department for International Development in relation to the relief effort following the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. [217948]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence's extra costs reported to the end of January 2005 in relation to the relief effort following the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami amount to £1.7 million. All of this is related to costs for which MOD is not funded and which we would not otherwise have incurred. It is, therefore, recoverable from DfID as agreed at the outset and consistent with Treasury guidance on interdepartmental services. The full cost of MOD's activity in relation to this relief effort are estimated to be some £14 million.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Advertising Regulations (Lettings)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in which areas special exemptions from the Control of Advertising Regulations have been requested to allow controls on letting boards for rented property; in which areas exemptions were granted; and for what reasons. [220398]

Keith Hill: Since May 2002 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received requests for directions restricting deemed consent for the display of estate agents' boards from Westminster city council, Brighton and Hove city council, Charnwood borough council and Leeds city council. All directions were granted under regulation 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992, except for the direction for Leeds city council. We are currently considering the council's latest application. The directions that have been granted were to protect the visual amenity of residential areas of special quality from persistently high numbers of estate agents' boards and because there was no other way to effectively control the display of estate agents' boards.

Business Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1078W, on business rates, what the estimated average business rates bill for 2005–06 is. [217854]

Mr. Raynsford: As made clear in my answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1078W, to the hon. Member, this information is not yet available.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* amount and *(b)* proportion of local government

revenue was accounted for by (i) revenue support grant, (ii) other grants and funds, (iii) national non-domestic rates and (iv) council tax in (A) England and (B) each council tax levying authority in England in 2004–05. [220273]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested has been made available in the Library of the House.

All figures are shown in £000s and the amounts are as reported by the local authority.

The data are taken from outturn figures for 1997–98 to 2002–03 and budget estimates for 2003–04 and 2004–05.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changing local authority responsibilities.

Figures for Hounslow and Hillingdon are not separately identifiable from other costs and are not included in this table.

Rateable Values

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated total rateable value is of hereditaments in each Government office region in England outside London that have a rateable value of *(a)* under £5,000, *(b)* between £5,000 and £10,000, *(c)* between £10,000 and £14,999 and *(d)* over £14,999. [219507]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

(a) The estimated total rateable value of the hereditaments in each Government office region in England outside London that have a rateable value under £5,000 is:

Region	*Under £5,000*
East Midlands	150,909,496
Eastern	172,772,783
North East	87,257,023
North West	274,490,364
South East	237,006,043
South West	213,339,097
West Midlands	190,722,327
Yorkshire and the Humber	203,247,248
Total (£)	1,529,744,381

(b) The estimated total rateable value of the hereditaments in each Government office region in England outside London that have a rateable value of between £5,000 and £10,000 is:

Region	*£5,000–£10,000*
East Midlands	203,602,969
Eastern	278,707,060
North East	103,134,068

London Parks

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much each London borough council spent on maintaining London parks in each year since 1997. [219613]

Phil Hope: The amount each London borough council spent on parks and open spaces in each year since 1997 is tabled as follows:

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Greater London Authority	—	—	—	0	0	0	1,649	1,814
City of London	1,392	1,304	1,245	1,170	1,218	1,332	1,384	1,475
Camden	1,462	1,587	1,446	1,565	1,808	2,025	2,476	2,520
Greenwich	4,793	4,779	4,184	3,601	3,703	3,776	4,026	4,272
Hackney	5,860	4,860	3,971	3,616	2,231	2,820	3,480	3,763
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,206	3,764	3,458	3,179	4,387	4,277	4,304	2,559
Islington	3,131	3,397	3,616	3,492	3,363	3,327	2,155	3,882
Kensington and Chelsea	1,940	1,923	1,990	2,245	2,318	2,523	2,689	2,784
Lambeth	4,948	4,728	5,164	4,952	4,955	5,235	5,870	5,554
Lewisham	2,281	2,368	2,230	2,349	2,979	4,173	3,170	3,747
Southwark	6,448	5,936	6,049	5,202	5,232	6,250	5,971	6,248
Tower Hamlets	3,496	3,709	3,909	4,488	4,557	4,554	4,831	4,946
Wandsworth	3,789	3,861	3,909	4,267	4,396	4,940	4,517	4,473
Westminster	2,498	2,639	2,341	1,993	2,187	2,075	2,070	2,004
Barking and Dagenham	2,575	2,708	2,789	2,850	3,119	3,289	3,476	3,590
Barnet	2,942	3,041	3,095	3,237	3,028	4,244	4,034	4,269
Bexley	2,859	2,743	2,644	2,677	2,798	2,992	2,956	3,397
Brent	1,970	1,926	1,813	1,957	2,277	2,350	2,545	2,925
Bromley	6,103	6,397	6,229	5,785	5,656	4,887	4,839	5,898
Croydon	4,656	3,761	4,131	4,600	5,574	4,400	4,614	4,220
Ealing	4,416	3,963	4,779	4,592	4,840	7,067	6,960	8,156
Enfield	3,300	3,971	4,019	4,245	4,355	4,439	4,611	4,618
Haringey	2,036	1,882	1,953	2,040	2,463	2,494	2,732	2,739
Harrow	1,624	1,259	1,318	1,706	1,703	4,796	2,678	2,586
Havering	1,615	2,220	2,201	2,008	1,933	1,927	2,082	1,897
Kingston upon Thames	1,378	1,440	1,398	1,537	1,806	1,779	1,315	1,363
Merton	2,383	2,423	2,419	2,530	2,756	2,750	2,470	2,738
Newham	3,521	3,289	3,325	3,641	3,816	4,156	4,016	4,320
Redbridge	2,169	2,333	2,267	2,343	3,222	3,020	3,133	3,404
Richmond upon Thames	2,089	2,115	2,251	2,456	2,100	2,343	2,418	2,229
Sutton	2,135	2,119	1,932	1,870	2,797	2,424	2,020	2,371
Waltham Forest	2,364	2,335	2,164	2,771	2,144	1,801	2,265	2,667

Region	£5,000–£10,000
North West	336,834,925
South East	395,618,876
South West	264,303,423
West Midlands	270,025,555
Yorkshire and the Humber	246,707,566
Total (£)	2,098,934,442

(c) The estimated total rateable value of the hereditaments in each Government office region in England outside London that have a rateable value of between £10,001 and £14,999 is:

Region	£10,001–£14,999
East Midlands	144,152,558
Eastern	191,735,975
North East	68,060,946
North West	230,627,132
South East	292,638,414
South West	176,766,483
West Midlands	186,690,117
Yorkshire and the Humber	168,992,315
Total (£)	1,459,663,940

(d) The estimated total rateable value of the hereditaments in each Government office region in England outside London that have a rateable value of £15,000 or more is:

Region	£15,000 or more
East Midlands	2,184,656,602
Eastern	3,169,127,175
North East	1,176,740,618
North West	3,835,436,700
South East	5,293,329,799
South West	2,347,624,118
West Midlands	3,098,553,548
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,732,054,578
Total (£)	23,837,523,138

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated total rateable value is of all hereditaments in London that have a rateable value of (a) under £5,000, (b) between £5,000 and £10,000, (c) between £10,000 and £21,499 and (d) over £21,499. [219508]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

(a) The estimated total rateable value of all hereditaments in London that have a rateable value of under £5,000 is £228,277,654.

(b) The estimated total rateable value of all hereditaments in London that have a rateable value of between £5,000 and £10,000 is £492,538,884.

(c) The estimated total rateable value of all hereditaments in London that have a rateable value of between £10,001 and £21,499 is £756,251,984.

(d) The estimated total rateable value of all hereditaments in London that have a rateable value of £21,499 or more is £9,073,749,318.

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many hereditaments in each London borough have a rateable value of (a) under £5,000, (b) between £5,000 and £10,000, (c) between £10,000 and £21,499 and (d) over £21,499. [219509]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

(a) The number of hereditaments in each London borough which have a rateable value of under £5,000 are:

Region	Under £5,000
Barking and Dagenham	1,626
Barnet	2,278
Bexley	1,820
Brent	2,456
Bromley	2,197
Camden	4,587
City of London	5,751
Croydon	3,283
Ealing	2,277
Enfield	2,188
Greenwich	1,973
Hackney	4,291
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,708
Haringey	2,623
Harrow	1,395
Havering	1,705
Hillingdon	1,670
Hounslow	1,253
Islington	3,178
Kensington and Chelsea	1,394
Kingston upon Thames	1,407
Lambeth	3,529
Lewisham	2,888
Merton	1,723
Newham	2,572
Redbridge	2,400
Richmond upon Thames	1,264
Southwark	3,813
Sutton	1,520
Tower Hamlets	5,589
Waltham Forest	2,821
Wandsworth	3,525
Westminster City	6,225
Totals	88,929

(b) The number of hereditaments in each London borough which have a rateable value of between £5,000 and £10,000 are:

Region	£5,000-£10,000
Barking and Dagenham	1,100
Barnet	2,456
Bexley	1,464
Brent	2,398
Bromley	1,974
Camden	3,223
City of London	1,665
Croydon	2,426
Ealing	2,446
Enfield	2,022
Greenwich	1,415
Hackney	2,506
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,936
Haringey	2,078
Harrow	1,552
Havering	1,608
Hillingdon	2,070
Hounslow	1,551
Islington	2,852
Kensington and Chelsea	1,160
Kingston upon Thames	1,149
Lambeth	2,258
Lewisham	1,808
Merton	1,326
Newham	1,936
Redbridge	1,724
Richmond upon Thames	1,571
Southwark	2,728

Region	£5,000-£10,000
Sutton	1,226
Tower Hamlets	3,156
Waltham Forest	2,004
Wandsworth	2,627
Westminster City	4,716
Total	68,131

(c) The number of hereditaments in each London borough which have a rateable value of between £10,001 and £21,499 are:

Region	£10,001-£21,499
Barking and Dagenham	695
Barnet	1,770
Bexley	814
Brent	1,395
Bromley	1,302
Camden	3,301
City of London	1,763
Croydon	1,295
Ealing	1,707
Enfield	1,256
Greenwich	865
Hackney	1,573
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,912
Haringey	1,248
Harrow	1,025
Havering	1,057
Hillingdon	1,418
Hounslow	1,161
Islington	2,276
Kensington and Chelsea	2,012
Kingston upon Thames	815
Lambeth	1,362
Lewisham	972
Merton	928
Newham	1,084
Redbridge	1,004
Richmond upon Thames	1,321
Southwark	1,797
Sutton	626
Tower Hamlets	2,134
Waltham Forest	1,060
Wandsworth	1,775
Westminster City	6,822
Totals	51,545

(d) The number of hereditaments in each London borough which have a rateable value of £21,499 or more are:

Region	£21,499 or more
Barking and Dagenham	764
Barnet	1,442
Bexley	1,005
Brent	1,569
Bromley	1,434
Camden	4,636
City of London	6,115
Croydon	1,716
Ealing	2,259
Enfield	1,322
Greenwich	1,057
Hackney	1,194
Hammersmith and Fulham	2,063
Haringey	1,143
Harrow	927
Havering	1,141
Hillingdon	2,228
Hounslow	2,144
Islington	2,398
Kensington and Chelsea	3,307
Kingston upon Thames	1,220
Lambeth	1,269
Lewisham	792
Merton	1,248
Newham	1,185
Redbridge	920
Richmond upon Thames	1,277
Southwark	1,896
Button	799
Tower Hamlets	2,259
Waltham Forest	789
Wandsworth	1,480
Westminster City	14,582
Totals	69,580

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many hereditaments in each Government Office Region in England outside London have a rateable value of (a) under £5,000, (b) between £5,000 and £10,000, (c) between £10,000 and £14,999 and (d) over £14,999. [219510]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

(a) The number of hereditaments in each Government Office Region in England outside London, that have a rateable value of under £5,000 are:

Region	Under £5,000
East Midlands	62,044
Eastern	74,207
North East	38,498
North West	115,191
South East	94,244
South West	92,279
West Midlands	81,866
Yorkshire and The Humber	85,116
Total	643,445

(b) The number of hereditaments in each Government Office Region in England outside London, that have a rateable value of between £5,000 and £10,000 are:

Region	£5,000-£10,000
East Midlands	28,549
Eastern	39,015
North East	14,403
North West	47,371
South East	55,142
South West	37,154
West Midlands	37,695
Yorkshire and The Humber	34,669
Total	293,998

(c) The number of hereditaments in each Government Office Region in England outside London, that have a rateable value of between £10,001 and £14,999 are:

Region	£10,001-£14,999
East Midlands	11,756
Eastern	15,647
North East	5,540
North West	18,790
South East	23,850
South West	14,419

Region	£10,001–£14,999
West Midlands	15,208
Yorkshire and The Humber	13,789
Total	118,999

(d) The number of hereditaments in each Government Office Region in England outside London, that have a rateable value of over £14,999 are:

Region	£15,000 or more
East Midlands	29,737
Eastern	41,919
North East	15,113
North West	51,901
South East	66,408
South West	34,622
West Midlands	42,766
Yorkshire and The Humber	36,402
Total	318,868

Southend Census Data

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received regarding the reliability of the 2001 Census data for Southend in setting the local government financial settlement for Southend. [220555]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received two letters during the consultation period for the 2005–06 local government finance settlement, one from Southend-on Sea borough council and one from the hon. Member for Rochford and Southend, East. The later of these, queried the reliability of the 2001 Census data used in calculating population estimates for Southend.

Use Classes Order (Newcastle)

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library the response of Newcastle upon Tyne city council to his recent consultation on changes to the use classes order. [220275]

Keith Hill: Consultation paper responses are not routinely deposited in the Libraries of the House. In this case, due to the high number of responses to the use classes order consultation (there were over 2,500 responses) the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not plan to publish them.

However, in view of my hon. Friend's question, the response of Newcastle city council's has been made available in the Library of the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of acceptable behaviour contracts. [219322]

Ms Blears: Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) were first pioneered by the London borough of Islington with the Metropolitan police. Their successful model has been promoted by the Home Office and adopted across the rest of the country. They are voluntary agreements between a person who has been involved in antisocial behaviour and one or more local agencies. They are not statutory orders and we currently have no plans to place ABCs on a statutory basis.

The use of ABCs and other early interventions are crucial as they show communities, and potential perpetrators of antisocial behaviour, that action will be taken against those who behave in an antisocial manner.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of how voluntary organisations co-ordinate their work with local authorities to combat antisocial behaviour amongst young people. [219320]

Ms Blears: No assessment has been made however, we are aware that voluntary organisations are working closely with local authorities in many areas, for example, youth justice agencies like NACRO and Crime Concern are delivering local work with young people involved in antisocial behaviour and offending to support them to change their behaviour.

In addition, children's charities, such as Barnardos, provide support for young people to divert them from crime and antisocial behaviour.

NCH Action for Children works with a number of local authorities delivering support and intervention packages to tackle the problems of families who are on the cusp of eviction because of their behaviour.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect of antisocial behaviour orders on the prison population of young offenders. [219323]

Ms Blears: From data reported to the Home Office we know that up to September 2004, 45 per cent. (1,728) of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) were issued to juveniles. ASBOs were introduced in April 1999.

From breach data reported to the Home Office from June 2000 to December 2003, we know that 42 per cent. of ASBOs are breached. The breach rate for juveniles is 40 per cent.

Those breaching ASBOs are likely in many cases to be prolific offenders—evidenced by the fact that for those receiving custody, the majority were also sentenced at the same time for other offences.

The figures show that only 30 young people in total between 2000 and 2003 were sentenced to custody for breach of ASBO alone—in all other cases, they were convicted for other offences at the same time.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding inappropriate conditions on antisocial behaviour orders. [219328]

Ms Blears: An antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) is a civil order that protects the community from acts that cause or are likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household. Orders often contain prohibitions that prohibit a person from carrying out certain acts and excluding them from certain places.

The most common behaviour tackled by ASBOs is general loutish and unruly conduct such as verbal abuse, harassment, assault, graffiti and excessive noise. The wide range of antisocial behaviour that a can be tackled by ASBOs and the ability to tailor the terms of the order to each specific case illustrates their flexibility.

It is for the courts to decide what prohibitions go into an order. Prohibitions should aim to cover the range of antisocial behaviour acts committed by the defendant and be specific to the behaviour.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he plans to take to reduce the number of antisocial behaviour orders which are breached. [219332]

Ms Blears: From breach data reported to the Home Office from June 2000 to December 2003, we know that 42 per cent. of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are breached.

Breach rate is not an indication of failure. What it shows is that ASBOs have teeth and if people don't abide by them there are serious consequences.

Those breaching ASBOs are likely in many cases to be prolific offenders—evidenced by the fact that for those receiving custody, the majority were also sentenced at the same time for other offences.

The figures show that only 30 young people in total between 2000 and 2003 were sentenced to custody for breach of ASBO alone—in all other cases, they were convicted for other offences at the same time.

Individual support orders (ISOs) were introduced in May 2003 and can be attached to an ASBOs for juveniles (10 to 17) to direct the juvenile to activities that can address the underlying causes of the antisocial behaviour.

Parenting orders introduced in February 2004 can be attached to ASBOs issued to those aged 10 to 15.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children under 18 years old with learning difficulties have been given antisocial behaviour orders. [218219]

Ms Blears: Information is not collected centrally about the characteristics of persons issued with an antisocial behaviour order.

Anti-terrorism Measures

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government plans to require buildings in metropolitan areas to use laminated glass to reduce the risk of mass civilian injury, in the case of domestic terrorist attack. [215351]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government have no plans to require buildings in metropolitan areas to use laminated glass although where organisations perceive their threat assessment to require it, advice and guidance is readily available to inform and support its use.

Community Support Officers

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the interim report on community support officers will be published. [219015]

Ms Blears: The interim report of the national evaluation of community support officers was published on 23 December 2004. It is available at http://www.policereform.gov.uk/publications/publications/index.html

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood will receive a substantive reply to the letter to UKvisas of 26 August 2004 regarding an application made by Mr. Abdul Wali, and sponsored by a constituent Mrs. Fatema Begum. [218958]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

UKvisas replied to my right hon. Friend on 28 February 2005.

Crime and Disorder Act

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the work of social services departments is affected by their duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act to reduce crime and disorder; and if he will make a statement. [219317]

Ms Blears: Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities have a statutory duty to have due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of their functions on, and the need to do all they reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in the local area.

With their responsibility for social care and welfare, social services departments in local authorities have a crucial role to play in tackling crime and antisocial behaviour. Social services meet their section 17 responsibilities in various ways, including caring for vulnerable children and adults who may be victims or perpetrators of crime and antisocial behaviour; identifying young people at risk of offending; providing support and guardianship to young people in the care system; and providing case conference input in antisocial behaviour cases.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the proposed staffing reductions in the Criminal Cases Review Commission on the investigation of and reporting on alleged miscarriages of justice. [213970]

Paul Goggins: The commission are undertaking a review of their casework management processes to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Any assessment of the likely effect of any staffing reductions would need to be seen in context.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213820]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office policy will only permit the reimbursement of congestion charges when they have been incurred on official business, or where an individual has been awarded excess fares allowances as a result of a permanent compulsory transfer.

Reimbursement will only be made of the initial £5 charge upon production of a valid receipt. Penalty charges incurred as a result of late payments are not met by the Department.

The costs for congestion charges are not recorded separately on the accounting system and could only be determined by interrogating the paper claim records at disproportionate cost.

Dogs

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* visual deterrent dogs, *(b)* guard dogs, *(c)* police dogs, *(d)* tracker dogs, *(e)* anti-terrorist dogs, *(f)* riot control dogs, *(g)* explosives detection dogs, *(h)* explosives and firearms detection dogs, *(i)* drug detection dogs, *(j)* cadaver detection dogs, *(k)* arson detection dogs, *(l)* anti-hijack dogs and *(m)* illegal immigrant detection dogs have been employed on Her Majesty's Service in each year since 1997. [217741]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I understand from the Association of Chief Police Officers that there were 2,003 active police dogs as at December 2004. It is not possible to break down this figure to the level of detail requested. Police dogs are not necessarily trained for one purpose and are able to perform more than one activity.

Prior to 2004, data on the number of active police dogs was not collected.

Drink Driving

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for drink-driving resulted in custodial sentences in 2003 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by police authority. [218214]

Ms Blears: Motoring offences data for 2003 will be published shortly.

Drug Offenders Report

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what date he expects the statistical report Drug Offenders in England and Wales 2003 to be published; and if he will make a statement. [214322]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The report Drug Offenders in England and Wales 2003 was published on 1 March.

Education in Prisons

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisoners have *(a)* started, *(b)* completed and *(c)* dropped out of educational courses in prisons in each year since 1997; [217729]

(2) how many prisoners have received an educational qualification in each year since 1997. [217753]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested on individual achievement is not collated centrally and could be collected from individual establishments only at disproportionate cost.

However, since 2000–01, the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit and the Prison Service have collected information on participation and achievement at establishment level. Since 2000–01 the number of basic skills qualifications gained each year has been:

	Number of basic skills qualifications gained
2000–01	12,500
2001–02	16,000
2002–03	41,518
2003–04	46,517
2004–05 (to December 2004)	46,430

The number of work skills qualifications gained each year since 2000–01 was:

	Number of work skills qualifications gained
2000–01	n/a
2001–02	56,320
2002–03	89,201
2003–04	109,237
2004–05 (to December)	128,964

Immigration

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made with the review of immigration and public health. [217435]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The Cabinet Office has co-ordinated work between relevant Government Departments, including the Department of Health and the Home Office, to review imported infections and immigration. New measures to protect the public were announced in our five- year strategy for asylum and immigration 'Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain' (Cm 6472).

Infectious Diseases (UK Entrants)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are employed by the Government to test those entering the United Kingdom for tuberculosis; and at which ports of entry they are based. [217745]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department of Health advises that staff carrying out medical examinations at ports of entry in England are provided by the Health Protection Agency or the relevant primary care trust. Staff are not necessarily based full time on site at the port but may instead be on call when required. No figures are collected centrally on the number of staff involved. We understand that the position elsewhere in the United Kingdom is broadly similar.

Arrangements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a matter for the administrations responsible for those parts of the United Kingdom.

At overseas posts, a number of medical referees are retained to advise entry clearance officers on medical reports obtained by prospective entrants. No figures are collected centrally on the number of referees involved.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213613]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Prime Minister to him on 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1037W.

The annual cost of running the property referred to varies from year to year. In the last complete year 2003–04 the total cost was £9,557 excluding security provision, site rent and capital charge for the leasehold interest. The occupier is responsible for meeting all expenditure on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, and *(d)* private telephone bills. There are no domestic or maintenance staff employed by the Department.

The cost of electricity and gas in 2003–04 was £433 and £1,786 respectively. These costs are met by the current occupier with effect from 31 December 2004. Information on cost of official phone calls can only be found at disproportionate cost.

The total capital and refurbishment expenditure in each of the last five years has been:

Capital and refurbishment expenditure

	£
2000–01	0
2001–02	73,240
2002–03	27,440
2003–04	0
2004–05	0

A major programme of cyclical refurbishment—the first for some years—was completed in late spring 2002.

This was needed to maintain the repair and value property and to deal with the impact of substantial flood and storm damage.

Overseas Students

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many appeals were made by international students who had their visa applications rejected in each of the last five years, broken down by visa issuing post. [218901]

Mr. Mullin: The number of appeals made by international students who had their application for entry clearance refused, and broken down by visa issuing post, over the last five calendar years, is as follows:

Student appeals received 2000–04

Post	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Abu Dhabi	0	0	1	5	5
Abuja (BHC)	49	60	99	331	387
Accra (BHC)	120	384	893	1,317	1,065
Addis Ababa (BE)	2	2	8	15	9
Algiers	0	0	4	17	15
Almaty	0	1	1	3	19
Amman (BE)	3	3	5	4	10
Amsterdam	0	0	2	4	9
Antananarivo (BE)	0	0	0	1	0
Asmara	0	0	0	0	5
Athens (BE)	1	0	0	0	0
Bahrain	0	1	0	0	3
Baku	0	0	0	0	2
Bangkok (BE)	35	50	64	82	68
Banjul	0	5	66	70	57
Beijing (BE)	63	106	123	278	446
Beirut	0	2	1	6	10
Belgrade (BE)	2	1	8	4	15
Bogota	0	2	1	0	53
Bratislava (BE)	4	19	10	22	0
Bridgetown	0	1	0	1	0
Bucharest (BE)	11	10	11	15	10
Budapest (BE)	3	0	3	3	4
Buenos Aires	0	0	1	2	1
Cairo (BE)	5	7	18	23	13
Casablanca (BCG)	15	11	20	17	16
Chennai (BDHC)	23	51	68	36	54
Chicago	0	0	0	0	4
Chisnau	0	0	0	0	5
Colombo (BHC)	74	173	169	140	271
Copenhagen	0	0	0	8	4
Dakar	0	5	10	21	12

Student appeals received 2000–04

Post	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Damascus (BE)	2	2	1	1	5
Dar es Salaam (BHC)	57	65	103	87	85
Dhaka (BHC)	85	251	392	300	692
Dubai	0	0	2	22	14
Dublin	0	0	14	9	11
Dusseldorf (BE)	1	0	0	7	11
Ekaterinburg	0	0	0	3	6
Freetown (BHC)	2	26	29	46	103
Gaborone	0	0	3	12	13
Georgetown	0	0	3	12	7
Guangzhou (BC)	27	57	39	59	31
Hanoi (BE)	1	1	1	0	1
Harare	0	2	3	147	151
Havana	0	0	1	0	1
Hong Kong (BC)	3	3	6	7	28
Islamabad (BHC)	106	775	254	1,364	3,890
Istanbul (BCG)	9	34	87	58	31
Jakarta	0	0	0	7	16
Jedda (BCG)	1	0	5	4	4
Jerusalem	0	0	1	0	7
Kampala (BHC)	1	9	110	205	269
Karachi (BDHC)	72	147	30	0	188
Kathmandu (BE)	33	119	112	104	126
Khartoum	0	4	8	6	9
Kiev	0	0	6	14	33
Kingston (BHC)	4	11	10	135	153
Kinshasa (BE)	8	2	10	14	27
Kolkata	0	1	0	13	16
Kuala Lumpur	0	1	3	7	30
Kuwait City (BE)	2	1	0	2	14
Lagos (BDHC)	125	188	272	551	1,438
Lapaz	0	0	0	0	1
Lilongwe	0	0	1	0	4
Lima	0	2	1	0	0
Los Angeles	0	0	0	0	6
Luanda	0	0	0	0	2
Lusaka (BHC)	1	6	29	57	38
Manila (BE)	9	17	29	103	195
Maputo	0	0	0	1	1
Maseru	0	1	0	1	0
Mbabane	0	0	0	1	5
Minsk	0	0	3	6	2
Moscow (BE)	9	21	23	15	21
Mumbai (BHC)	24	41	175	273	472
Nairobi (BHC)	44	59	42	86	130
New Delhi (BHC)	14	72	100	286	328
New York (BCG)	1	0	0	1	42
Nicosia (BHC)	6	2	2	13	18
Oslo	0	0	0	1	0
Paris	0	1	1	2	9
Port Louis (BHC)	28	46	65	35	45
Port Moresby	0	0	0	0	1
Port of Spain (BHC)	1	4	3	6	5
Pretoria (BCG)	C	8	11	13	29
Quito	0	1	2	1	16
Rangoon	0	7	26	25	12
Riga	0	0	3	0	0
Riyadh	0	4	0	10	5
Rome (BE)	7	0	4	6	9
Sanaa	0	0	2	0	8
Santo Domingo	0	0	0	0	3
Sarajevo	0	0	0	1	0
Seoul	0	0	0	0	5
Shanghai (BC)	24	56	19	20	20
Singapore (BHC)	4	0	1	6	6
Skopje	0	0	12	8	17
Sofia (BE)	2	20	16	26	19
St Petersburg	0	3	4	7	4
Stockholm	0	0	0	0	1
Tallin	0	0	1	1	10
Tashkent	0	0	2	10	15
Tbilisi	0	0	0	0	1
Tehran	0	14	64	72	204
Tirana (BE)	2	4	6	12	35
Tokyo (BE)	3	3	8	1	4

Student appeals received 2000–04

Post	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Tripoli (BE)	1	1	2	4	26
Tunis (BE)	3	2	8	10	39
Ulaanbaatar (BE)	0	0	2	7	5
Vienna (BE)	0	1	0	1	0
Wellington (BHC)	0	0	0	0	1
Windhoek (BHC)	0	0	0	0	1
Yaounde	0	4	31	80	164
Zagreb (BE)	0	6	5	3	3

Source:
Central Reference System

UKvisas does not keep general statistics of appeals; these statistics are taken from UKvisas' central reference system and are subject to change. UKvisas makes every effort to ensure that statistics from our central reference system are accurate.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the questions, tabled by the hon. Member for Ashford on 2 December 2004, reference *(a)* 203020 and *(b)* 203021. [211747]

Ms Blears: I replied to the hon. Member on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 840 (203020) and on 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 731 (203021).

Plea Bargaining

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Government will bring forward amendments to the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill to ensure that plea bargaining will be exercised in a way that minimises the risk of miscarriages of justice. [218871]

Caroline Flint: The Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill includes building on the existing common law provisions relating to Queen's Evidence. Placing it on a statutory footing is intended to increase the use of Queen's Evidence while minimising the risk of miscarriages of justice. The Bill's provisions will increase the transparency of the process and provide for those who get a reduction in their sentence to be re-sentenced if subsequently it is discovered their co-operation was not genuine, both of which are significant additional safeguards.

Police

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 547W, on police administrative staff, how many police forces accept the contents of the Police Staff Council Handbook as the minimum terms and conditions for their staff; how many forces have not adopted *(a)* some of and *(b)* all the contents of the Handbook in respect of staff terms and conditions; what the position is of the Hampshire force; and if he will make a statement. [210760]

Ms Blears: Adoption of the terms and conditions of the Police Staff Council (PSC) of England and Wales Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook is by voluntary agreement by individual forces. Forces can take account of the handbook in deciding on the terms and conditions for their staff in the light of force requirements and circumstances. Neither the Home Office nor the Employers' Organisation collect information about which of the provisions of the Handbook individual forces have chosen to incorporate in local terms and conditions of service.

Hampshire constabulary police staff contracts of employment are agreed by the force taking into consideration the Police Staff Council Handbook terms and conditions.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 547W, on police administrative staff, which police forces are not members of the Police Staff Council (PSC); if he will make it mandatory for participating forces to adopt the contents of the PSC handbook as the minimum terms and conditions for police staff employed by those forces; and if he will make a statement. [210762]

Ms Blears: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the pay and conditions of police officers. [218277]

Ms Blears: The Government's plans for police reform are set out in the White Paper "Building Communities, Beating Crime". Chapter 4 of this paper contains our proposals for police workforce reform including those relating to police officers.

Police Vehicles

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accidents involving police vehicles there have been in each year since 1997 in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend. [218275]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the table. Information on accidents involving police vehicles in Southend is not collected centrally.

Road traffic collisions on public roads in Essex in which police vehicles were involved

	Number of collisions
1997–98	396
1998–99	406
1999–2000	392
2000–01	446
2001–02	392
2002–03	414
2003–04	345

Ports of Entry (Security)

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to increase security at ports of entry. [219869]

Mr. Charles Clarke: We have already made significant improvements to the security of the border with;

the closure of the Red Cross centre in Sangatte;

the expansion of our juxtaposed controls, (the establishment of frontier control zones in key locations overseas to enable UK immigration officers to consider and decide the admissibility of passengers prior to embarkation for the UK);

the deployment of new detection technology;

and the expansion of our airline liaison network overseas.

These measures have had a significant impact both on deterring illegal immigration and reducing asylum intake.

In our five-year strategy we announced our intention to further improve border controls through initiatives such as a further expansion of the asylum liaison network and the introduction of iris biometric automated gates at our major ports. Also, all visa applicants will be fingerprinted by 2008, and pre-boarding checks of all persons entering and leaving the UK will be introduced through the e-borders programme.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on postage by the Department in each year since 1997. [215022]

Fiona Mactaggart: The table provides the total cost of postage for the Home Department since 1997. The table also expresses the total as a percentage of Home Office spend for the relevant year.

Postage costs

	£	Percentage
1997	1,166,810	0.018
1998	1,076,196	0.013
1999	1,228,042	0.015
2000	1,819,914	0.020
2001	3,049,765	0.03
2002	2,713,405	0.026
2003	2,653,684	0.025

Prisons

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instructional officers serving in Her Majesty's prisons are on the old contract; and in which prisons they serve. [220244]

Paul Goggins: As at 28 February there were 32 instructional officers on the old contract serving in the following establishments:

Establishment	Number of instructional officers
Belmarsh	1
Channings Wood	1
Maidstone	1
Leyhill	1
Huntercombe	1
Featherstone	2
Kingston	2
Wandsworth	2
The Mount	7
Acklington	14

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether instructional officers in Her Majesty's prisons who have not signed up to the new contract are required to carry out escort duties in any prison. [220246]

Paul Goggins: No. One of the new terms and conditions introduced on 1 April 2003 for instructional officers, was that "instructional officers will escort prisoners as required by management once the activity has been risk assessed and a safe system of work applied". The terms and conditions for those instructional officers who decided not to accept the changes to working practices remain unchanged.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department(1) how many prison places are planned for each of the next five years; and what the projected prison population is for each of the next five years; [205384]

(2) how much prison capacity he expects to be available in each of the next five years. [217731]

Mr. Charles Clarke: As at 18 February 2005, the useable operational capacity for the prison estate was 76,527. It is anticipated that the operational capacity will be around 76,700 at 31 March 2005 and has the potential to reach 79,500 by 31 March 2006. In addition, planning for a programme of an additional 1,300 places has started. In the meantime, we continue to investigate options for providing further increases in capacity over the coming years and keep the number of prison places required under review.

Revised prison population projections were issued in January 2005. These new projections anticipate a prison population of between 76,500 and 86,000 in 2009. The National Offender Management Service will continue to monitor population movements, improve projections and keep prison capacity under review. Projected prison population for each of the next five years is presented in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 01/05 (Prison Population Projections 2005–11, England and Wales). A copy of this bulletin has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average amount of time spent on purposeful activity per week broken down by individual prison has been in each year since 1997. [217751]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The average number of weekly purposeful activity hours for each establishment during each of the financial years since 1996–97 is shown in the table.

Establishment	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05 to January
Acklington	25.6	25.5	23.8	23.8	23.5	23.2	23.6	24.4	24.4
Albany	18.8	24.0	23.8	19.2	23.5	24.2	21.6	22.2	20.6
Altcourse	n/a	24.6	20.5	25.5	32.9	34.3	32.7	34.4	36.8
Ashfield	n/a	n/a	n/a	24.0	28.3	27.1	25.7	29.3	31.1
Ashwell	33.0	32.6	33.3	30.8	31.1	31.7	29.2	31.0	30.5
Askham Grange	39.3	41.8	42.0	41.6	41.2	41.1	41.0	41.4	41.4
Aylesbury	25.5	22.6	20.9	18.4	15.7	17.4	17.8	19.1	20.5
Bedford	26.5	25.6	22.7	22.9	20.9	19.8	17.7	18.1	19.9
Belmarsh	12.7	11.8	13.2	12.8	13.3	11.0	11.3	14.6	16.2
Birmingham	12.8	10.9	13.3	15.2	16.0	19.3	19.9	18.8	18.2
Blakenhurst	23.2	20.1	21.8	22.1	23.3	18.9	19.6	19.1	20.2
Blantyre House	33.0	34.2	39.5	43.6	47.6	49.0	40.7	40.5	44.3
Blundeston	21.7	23.2	25.8	24.5	26.2	25.8	23.1	21.9	24.9
Brinsford	17.1	15.3	16.3	16.8	21.9	27.5	26.1	28.7	28.7
Bristol	19.6	20.1	21.3	20.9	22.6	21.1	21.3	22.3	21.3
Brixton	16.0	17.1	15.7	11.1	15.6	16.6	12.7	10.4	15.4
Brockhill	31.4	30.7	21.1	18.2	20.8	18.2	16.1	18.1	23.1
Buckley Hall	28.5	32.8	26.6	31.7	31.8	30.3	26.8	30.8	31.2
Bullingdon	23.6	20.9	21.2	14.4	14.6	13.8	13.7	17.5	18.6
Bullwood Hall	24.7	21.6	19.0	19.6	21.5	27.2	27.9	27.7	28.2
Camp Hill	26.1	20.9	19.3	19.9	22.0	21.4	19.3	19.1	21.6
Canterbury	20.6	17.5	18.5	19.9	19.6	18.0	17.4	21.9	22.1
Cardiff	22.4	22.0	21.3	20.6	23.6	20.4	19.1	21.5	24.1
Castington	22.3	23.4	20.7	19.8	24.6	25.1	21.9	22.9	28.0
Channings Wood	25.3	29.6	30.5	34.9	33.6	33.5	31.2	28.6	27.5
Chelmsford	18.2	16.0	15.8	16.8	18.2	18.8	15.4	15.8	19.5
Coldingley	33.1	38.1	40.7	43.8	40.9	38.2	35.3	34.0	35.0
Cookham Wood	24.9	23.6	22.3	24.4	24.2	22.0	23.0	22.5	25.4
Dartmoor	19.4	18.8	18.9	19.9	18.0	21.6	20.9	23.3	24.8
Deerbolt	21.7	21.7	19.9	21.1	21.4	21.1	19.9	20.5	23.1
Doncaster	24.0	16.7	17.0	18.3	19.1	20.1	19.6	19.6	20.6
Dorchester	19.3	16.2	14.4	19.5	17.2	15.7	18.2	17.6	16.3
Dovegate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	27.5	25.7	25.5	21.6
Dover	23.2	21.7	21.2	23.4	25.2	27.3	22.5	n/a	n/a
Downview	28.7	31.5	30.8	29.8	30.5	23.7	24.7	23.2	28.9
Drake Hall	35.9	35.1	34.9	35.9	35.8	35.8	33.5	33.3	35.3
Durham	17.6	16.7	20.2	18.7	19.8	20.3	19.1	18.0	17.7
East Sutton Park	37.3	38.4	40.1	40.1	41.2	42.0	43.1	46.4	46.0
Eastwood Park	21.7	19.7	21.6	21.6	23.6	19.4	18.8	17.9	18.6
Edmunds Hill	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	21.0	26.1
Elmley	19.8	19.0	20.2	21.8	21.6	18.6	18.6	20.6	19.0
Erlestoke	28.4	29.0	27.2	28.4	26.8	27.9	27.1	25.5	26.6
Everthorpe	23.5	25.8	27.0	26.3	27.1	28.0	31.6	28.1	25.1
Exeter	18.9	17.9	13.6	15.0	23.0	22.9	21.6	22.5	23.2
Featherstone	24.9	23.7	24.7	26.1	24.3	24.2	24.4	23.0	22.1
Feltham	20.0	19.6	15.5	15.2	14.4	24.7	22.3	28.1	28.5
Ford	34.6	33.7	35.6	38.8	38.3	39.8	39.4	37.6	38.1
Forest Bank	n/a	n/a	n/a	18.5	27.5	21.7	19.2	20.9	23.5
Foston Hall	—	21.3	23.4	25.7	25.4	25.4	25.3	24.5	24.1
Frankland	18.1	17.0	18.4	19.4	21.3	20.9	21.6	22.2	21.9
Full Sutton	22.1	18.0	17.6	18.7	17.8	17.4	16.8	19.0	19.8
Garth	19.5	21.0	21.3	21.2	23.7	23.4	23.4	24.2	23.7
Gartree	23.2	26.5	27.0	28.4	30.1	30.5	28.9	30.5	28.6
Glen Parva	18.8	16.5	16.7	16.0	18.3	18.2	17.9	17.4	18.0
Gloucester	22.7	20.6	26.4	29.4	29.5	20.5	16.2	20.2	20.2
Grendon	32.1	33.3	34.2	35.2	37.2	35.6	33.4	32.5	31.6
Guys Marsh	30.8	30.9	22.8	27.9	26.5	22.6	22.7	22.4	24.5
Haslar	25.6	21.4	18.8	16.1	16.7	15.2	15.0	15.4	16.4
Hatfield	39.5	37.2	32.5	40.6	36.7	37.1	38.4	n/a	n/a
Haverigg	35.0	33.8	33.9	33.8	33.6	31.1	30.4	29.9	29.3
Hewell Grange	41.6	41.2	42.7	41.8	44.3	42.6	41.1	42.1	42.0
High Down	17.5	15.7	13.9	16.4	15.8	15.9	14.1	15.2	14.4
Highpoint	16.1	17.7	23.2	20.9	18.9	18.9	18.0	19.9	20.2
Hindley	19.0	20.1	23.8	24.0	28.6	20.5	34.9	34.5	32.2
Hollesley Bay	27.3	28.1	28.1	33.8	36.2	36.5	32.6	38.3	42.8
Holloway	17.6	18.7	17.6	15.4	21.9	20.3	15.8	16.9	20.2
Holme House	16.0	16.0	15.8	16.6	16.6	15.5	14.4	15.8	16.7
Hull	20.6	18.6	20.1	22.5	21.9	20.5	15.3	15.8	16.0
Huntercombe	25.6	25.1	23.8	26.3	23.9	26.7	26.5	30.1	30.0
Kingston	28.1	28.6	23.5	23.9	24.2	24.3	23.3	25.1	26.0
Kirkham	48.3	54.8	43.5	44.3	43.7	43.4	41.3	40.4	41.7
Kirklevington	45.1	48.8	50.1	52.5	54.3	51.6	53.0	51.7	53.8
Lancaster	22.6	22.7	20.7	23.2	28.7	24.9	22.9	23.7	25.7

Establishment	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05 to January
Lancaster Farms	23.1	22.4	20.5	20.6	22.5	22.6	23.3	26.1	25.8
Latchmere House	72.2	72.8	70.2	74.1	63.6	61.2	55.6	57.6	59.4
Leeds	16.8	15.5	14.8	14.5	16.5	18.7	17.5	18.1	21.7
Leicester	21.3	21.4	20.5	19.3	19.0	21.0	21.4	23.1	23.2
Lewes	22.2	18.5	18.5	18.8	18.0	18.6	19.5	21.0	21.6
Leyhill	38.5	38.5	39.0	38.8	39.0	37.8	39.1	37.9	37.5
Lincoln	18.1	19.6	22.9	24.9	24.5	18.6	18.3	19.3	20.9
Lindholme	25.7	25.3	24.2	26.9	26.7	27.7	24.3	25.9	27.0
Littlehey	30.6	29.8	26.0	25.5	23.5	23.1	21.5	20.2	20.5
Liverpool	18.0	16.5	18.7	22.6	22.9	17.7	14.0	18.6	22.3
Long Lartin	18.8	15.6	17.0	16.5	17.8	18.3	18.5	15.7	19.5
Low Newton	23.7	21.7	20.2	25.5	25.1	23.7	23.9	24.6	24.9
Lowdham Grange	n/a	n/a	25.3	24.7	24.0	27.2	27.5	26.8	26.8
Maidstone	20.8	22.5	21.3	22.3	21.7	21.0	17.6	19.1	21.4
Manchester	20.6	29.4	26.7	22.2	19.4	19.7	19.8	19.6	19.4
Moorland	22.9	25.3	24.0	23.1	24.7	25.0	25.3	27.6	28.1
Morton Hall	39.9	39.1	37.8	41.4	41.7	30.7	32.0	31.9	31.3
Mount	19.2	18.4	18.0	18.6	18.3	20.0	19.7	20.4	21.8
New Hall	26.8	22.9	23.8	23.1	23.5	22.9	24.1	23.5	24.9
North Sea Camp	42.5	42.4	45.1	41.0	42.3	42.2	41.8	40.4	39.5
Northallerton	16.3	14.7	14.5	17.6	18.8	22.1	23.3	22.3	24.9
Norwich	15.1	18.1	18.0	19.2	20.0	18.9	17.4	17.9	21.6
Nottingham	23.4	18.1	15.3	20.6	18.3	17.2	18.1	19.2	20.7
Onley	20.5	20.0	18.4	17.4	18.6	18.0	23.0	28.1	26.3
Parc	n/a	n/a	30.0	36.2	25.3	26.8	24.4	26.3	31.1
Parkhurst	17.8	20.1	19.5	21.5	20.5	19.1	15.2	20.3	21.3
Pentonville	17.8	19.6	20.3	20.4	17.8	15.0	14.1	14.1	13.1
Portland	27.1	29.4	23.1	22.8	23.4	24.5	23.2	20.9	19.1
Preston	20.5	17.4	17.1	16.8	21.6	21.1	19.8	21.1	20.9
Ranby	29.3	30.2	26.4	25.8	25.4	23.6	24.1	25.1	25.4
Reading	26.8	24.2	23.8	31.7	29.2	24.4	19.3	18.3	22.5
Risley	23.8	22.7	21.9	22.3	23.8	25.2	22.7	23.7	24.3
Rochester	20.7	18.7	19.1	17.5	21.5	23.0	22.7	20.2	23.1
Rye Hill	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	26.0	29.4	28.5	28.5	27.5
Send	34.0	35.1	40.6	31.6	31.7	31.4	30.0	30.6	29.9
Shepton Mallet	25.5	23.7	22.7	20.7	23.6	23.0	23.5	24.6	24.4
Shrewsbury	21.1	21.4	22.7	23.2	24.9	23.8	17.8	19.5	20.0
Stafford	25.6	25.0	22.4	24.8	26.5	26.4	26.3	24.1	24.7
Standford Hill	43.9	43.7	44.1	39.7	41.0	39.7	39.8	38.1	37.0
Stocken	27.8	27.1	23.2	22.1	23.2	23.2	26.1	26.0	25.2
Stoke Heath	27.9	21.6	21.6	22.5	24.4	25.8	20.4	21.8	23.2
Styal	29.5	28.6	28.7	21.7	24.3	24.9	21.9	21.0	23.7
Sudbury	46.2	47.2	44.5	43.4	41.7	41.5	42.0	42.0	41.3
Swaleside	20.3	22.0	22.3	21.3	25.2	24.4	24.4	27.2	24.8
Swansea	16.1	15.0	20.0	20.8	22.4	22.0	19.7	21.1	23.0
Swinfen Hall	25.0	25.5	28.9	30.7	28.9	28.0	27.2	28.7	25.0
Thorn Cross	50.5	50.3	50.3	45.3	42.7	43.9	42.7	42.8	43.3
Usk Prescoed	35.7	35.5	34.9	37.5	38.8	37.9	37.1	35.9	35.9
Verne	30.6	30.9	27.2	30.9	27.6	28.4	31.6	30.9	31.4
Wakefield	17.8	17.8	18.2	20.0	19.0	18.2	18.0	16.0	16.8
Wandsworth	23.5	22.0	18.9	18.4	18.1	17.1	16.7	16.8	16.2
Warren Hill	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	26.2	22.3
Wayland	25.4	24.6	24.0	24.0	23.3	20.8	24.7	24.8	26.2
Wealstun	35.9	33.7	30.6	32.9	32.8	32.6	32.5	33.0	29.5
Weare	n/a	19.6	20.8	20.7	19.9	18.8	17.8	18.6	19.9
Wellingborough	26.2	25.1	24.9	25.0	25.3	28.1	25.0	22.6	22.6
Werrington	38.7	36.5	24.0	37.9	37.1	32.6	30.1	27.3	30.0
Wetherby	35.9	29.5	28.3	27.9	26.6	27.1	28.9	29.1	27.8
Whatton	31.9	30.6	28.8	29.9	29.9	30.7	29.8	29.8	31.8
Whitemoor	20.3	18.5	19.6	21.4	21.6	20.2	20.6	21.2	21.3
Winchester	17.7	17.2	15.7	15.2	16.8	19.0	18.8	20.4	22.1
Wolds	30.8	31.0	29.1	28.9	28.5	28.3	28.7	29.2	29.7
Woodhill	22.6	20.9	19.8	17.9	17.6	16.0	16.2	15.4	16.0
Wormwood Scrubs	14.4	13.6	14.2	19.3	21.3	18.5	14.6	18.4	22.2
Wymott	33.7	34.4	28.7	29.8	27.3	27.7	28.3	30.9	28.4

Notes:

1. Moorland and Hatfield merged in 2003–04.
2. Highpoint and Edmunds Hill began reporting separately in 2003–04.
3. Hollesley Bay and Warren Hill began reporting separately in 2003–04.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what definition of purposeful activity in prison he uses. [217752]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Prison Service definition of purposeful activity for 2004–05 consists of a list of 29 categories of activity undertaken by prisoners that are regarded as purposeful. Broadly these comprise work, education, training, programmes to tackle offending behaviour, resettlement activity and physical education. Prisons report the total weekly purposeful activity hours they deliver by these categories of activity. The categories of activity are listed in the following table.

Purposeful activities

Activity group	*Activities Include:*
Education	
Induction Assessment	Basic skills screening assessments
Basic and Key Skills up to Level 2	All education categories can include private study or 'homework' by prisoners where this can be validated and an audit trail maintained
Education leading to accreditation	Education activity where prisoners are working towards a recognised qualification (but excluding education leading to basic skills qualifications categorised above)
Skills training leading to recognised national accreditation	Vocational construction and industrial training courses e.g. industrial cleaning, catering, motor mechanics, office skills, hairdressing, painting, construction, electrical
Physical Education	PE where physical education officers teach and supervise prisoners
Other education	Not categorised elsewhere, including library use of more than 30 minutes
Work	
Prison maintenance work	Support to works and maintenance staff around the prison
Wing cleaning work	Cleaning work on wings
Other prison cleaning and orderly work	Cleaning and orderly work around the prison other than on domestic wings
Industries/ production workshops (Prison Enterprise Services Workshops on regime monitoring system)	Employment in production or industrial workshops such as textiles tailors, laundries, plastics, woodwork contract services etc (Any workshop that is predominately production based)
Agricultural business	Employment in prison farms, market gardens
Gardens amenity	Employment on prison gardens
Kitchen	Preparation or serving of food in prison kitchens, hotplate/serveries or messes
Other occupations	Employment not categorised elsewhere, (e.g. clothing exchange store workers, administrative clerks, barbers, paid community work)
Resettlement	
Induction	Prison induction courses
Maintaining safe and secure environment	Primary objective of activity relates to institutional behaviour e.g. suicide awareness, anti bullying
Sentence planning, parole interviews, other assessments with the prisoner not categorised elsewhere	
Accredited Offending Behaviour Programmes (OBPs)	Key performance indicator accredited courses
Non accredited OBPs	Any other programmes not categorised elsewhere
Tackling substance abuse	Interviews, assessments, individual or grouped drug or alcohol programmes, including counselling, assessment, referral, advice and throughcare services (CARATS) assessments
IDPR	Inmate development and pre-release training
Other resettlement and offending behaviour activity not covered	Probation, personal officer, PLU officer work. Job club and other employment advice. Accommodation advice or information. Specialist work, including probation or Citizens Advice Bureau
Family, social	Visits, earned community visits, compassionate licence
Temporary release on resettlement licence	Count up to eight hours a day if the time has not been categorised elsewhere.
Other Purposeful Activities	
Health education clinics and promotion	Including for example, well-man clinics and cancer awareness sessions but excluding medical treatment.
Voluntary work	Including sessions with external agencies not covered elsewhere
Other facility licence not covered elsewhere	
Chaplaincy	All faith religious activities including services, classes, pastoral visits and organised prayers.
Recreational sporting activities	Activities organised in addition to the establishment. PE programme and supervised by non-PE staff.

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether private sector prisons have access to *(a)* the Quantum IT infrastructure and *(b)* the e-OASys offender assessment system. [203380]

Paul Goggins: Private sector prisons do not currently have access to the Quantum IT infrastructure, although they do have access to the strategic Inmate Information System, and its local component, the Local Inmate Database System (LIDS), alongside their own IT provision.

In January 2005 limited access to the e-OASys offender assessment system was provided to all contracted establishments except HMP Wolds. It was not possible to provide this same level of access to HMP Wolds due to technical difficulties, but work in ongoing to rectify this problem.

Royal Family

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his policy that exemption from registration should be granted for members of the royal family if compulsory registration were to be introduced. [218248]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Should compulsory registration for ID cards be introduced under the terms of the Identity Cards Bill currently before Parliament, Her Majesty the Queen would be exempt as the Bill is not binding on the Crown. Clause 41 of the Bill allows for exemptions and exceptions to be made in any order requiring compulsory registration. No decisions have yet been taken on what exemptions and exceptions may apply. Prior to any order requiring compulsory registration, people will register with the scheme when applying for documents such as passports which will be designated under powers contained within the Identity Cards Bill. Members of the royal family other than Her Majesty the Queen hold passports and would therefore join the scheme in the same way as members of the public.

Sham Marriages

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suspected sham marriages have been reported to his Department by registrars in each month since 1997; how many prosecutions have been brought; how many convictions have been obtained; and what penalties have been imposed. [214320]

Mr. Browne: Information is only available since section 24 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 came into force requiring registrars to report suspicious marriages to the Immigration and Nationality Department (IND). In the last four years, IND has received the following number of reports:

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
January	22	75	110	364	166
February	41	67	159	420	—
March	57	76	210	458	—
April	52	65	201	386	—
May	94	95	176	329	—
June	68	87	195	317	—
July	67	109	242	239	—
August	55	86	172	212	—
September	68	107	260	250	—
October	82	171	259	205	—
November	78	140	323	183	—
December	68	127	377	215	—
Total	752	1,205	2,684	3,578	166

Since April 2002, over 110 individuals have been charged with a range of offences, including perjury, deception and conspiracy to defraud the Secretary of State. Data are not collected centrally on the number of prosecutions and convictions. There were at least 32 convictions last year in London and we understand that, where convictions have been obtained, sentences have ranged from six to 24 months.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215794]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer to the answer given by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 75W.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce vehicle crime by 30 per cent. from 1998–99 levels by 2004 was met. [219101]

Ms Blears: The latest annual British Crime Survey estimates for 2003–04 (published in July 2004) show a 30 per cent. reduction in vehicle crime against the baseline of 1999 (British Crime Survey 2000). We will know whether this target has been met when the British Crime Survey estimates for 2004–05 are published in July 2005.

Terrorism

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government have taken to combat the terrorist threat posed by United Kingdom citizens. [216549]

Mr. Charles Clarke: With the exception of the powers in Part 4 of the Anti- Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, which are immigration powers applicable to foreign nationals, counter terrorism measures are aimed at terrorists, whatever their background, section of society or nationality they may come from.

The Home Office provides the law-enforcement and security agencies with the powers and funding they need to do their job. There are two main pieces of legislation which they use to fight terrorism: the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 These Acts deliver UK-wide legislation that is effective in countering the threat we face from terrorism. The legislation includes measures to outlaw membership, support and fundraising for terrorist groups, seizure of terrorist cash and property, the creation of offences specific to terrorism at home and abroad, and special powers for terrorist investigations.

The Home Secretary introduced on 22 February a Bill—The Prevention of Terrorism Bill which contains new proposals for preventative control orders which are intended to disrupt and restrict individual's involvement in terrorist related activities. We are also looking at the scope for new terrorist related offences and other measures to bring suspected terrorists to justice. My hope is that we will be able to bring further legislative proposals on this as soon as time allows.

The Government have provided resources to finance a 50 per cent. increase in the size of the Security Service over the next three years. The bulk of these extra resources will go into counter- terrorism work. In 2005–06 dedicated ring fenced counter terrorism funding for the police service in England and Wales, including the Metropolitan police service, will amount

to £96 million revenue and £8 million capital. This is very nearly double the amount of the first dedicated counter-terrorism grants in 2002–03.

Combating the threat posed by terrorism does of course go beyond funding and legislation and it is important that we continue to build and develop partnerships at every level in accordance with our overall strategy—to prevent terrorism, to pursue terrorist networks, to protect the UK, its citizens and its critical infrastructure, and to plan for attacks in order to minimise their consequences. Our objective remains to reduce the threat from terrorism so that our people may continue to go about their business freely and with confidence.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* British Retail Consortium and *(b)* the Institute of Grocery Distribution Emergency Planning Liaison Group have been invited to take part in terrorist incident response exercises; and if he will make a statement. [218697]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* The Home Office runs a national programme of Counter Terrorist exercises to test the UK's response to terrorist incidents. Participation in these exercises by Government Departments, agencies and associated bodies depends on the content of the scenario for each exercise. To date, the scenarios have not required participation by these bodies. However, the Government is holding discussions on protective security with both the IGD and BRC.

Ticket Sales

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of convictions in 2004 for ticket touting at football matches. [220318]

Paul Goggins: Information from the Home Office court proceedings database shows that in 2003, 74 individuals were found guilty of ticket touting at football matches in accordance with section 166 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 which makes it an offence for "an unauthorized person to sell, or offer or expose for sale, a ticket for a designated football match in any public place or place to which the public has access or, in the course of a trade or business, in any other place".

Statistics on convictions for 2004 will be published this autumn.

Under-age Driving

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last reviewed penalties for under-age driving; and if he will make a statement. [219068]

Paul Goggins: The available information is contained in the table and gives the number of juveniles convicted of offences involving driving a motor vehicle in England and Wales, 2003.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2004 will be published in the autumn.

Number of juveniles found guilty at all courts for offences involving driving a motor vehicle, England and Wales 2003 [1,2]

Offence description	*Principal statute*	*Found guilty*
Manslaughter by driving	Common Law and Offences against the Person Act 1861 SS5, 9 and 10	10
Causing death by dangerous driving	Road Traffic Act 1988 S1 as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991 S1 and CJA 1993S 67	11
Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs	Road Traffic Act 1988 S 3A as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991 S3 and CJA 1993 S67	1
Causing bodily harm by furious driving	Offences against the Person Act 1861 S35	2
Aggravated taking of a vehicle	Theft Act 1968 S 12A as added by the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act 1992 S1	1,684
Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle	Theft Act 1968 S1	281
Unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle or being carried knowing vehicle to have been taken or driven	Theft Act 1968 S 12A as amended by the Criminal Justice Act 1988 S37	2,987
Aggravated taking of a vehicle	Theft Act 1968 S 12A as added by the Aggravated Vehicle Taking Act 1992 S2	649
Dangerous Driving	Road Traffic Act 1988 S2 as amended by Road Traffic Act 1991 S2	799
Driving etc. after consuming alcohol or taking drugs	Road Traffic Act 1988 various sections	1,556
Careless driving	Road Traffic Act 1988 S4(1), 4(2)	618
Accident offences	Road Traffic Act 1988 S 170(4)	316
Driving licence related offences	Various sections under the Road Traffic Act 1988 , Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1996 Reg 16, Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981 S 66*(a)*, Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 S 27(3)	3,466
Speed limit offences	Various sections under the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Motor Vehicles (Speed Units on Motorways) Regs 1973, Parks Regulations (Amendment) Act 1926	216
Motorway offences (other than speeding)	Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 S 17(4), Motorways Traffic (England and Wales) Regulations 1982	10
Neglect of traffic directions	Various section under the Road Traffic Act 1988, Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 and Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984	107

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Juveniles being between 10 and 17 years old.

PRIME MINISTER

Government Strategies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* five-year strategies and *(b)* 10-year (i) strategies and (ii) plans his Government have published since 1997. [219883]

The Prime Minister: Departmental strategies and plans are a matter for individual departments, and are available in the Libraries of the House.

Intelligence and Security Committee

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister for what reason details of the occasions and frequencies of meetings and visits of the Intelligence and Security Committee are not placed in the public domain; and if he will place such details in the public domain in the future. [220874]

The Prime Minister: Details of the occasions and frequency of Intelligence and Security Committee meetings are a matter for the Committee, as is the decision not to place these details in the public domain.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister whether he invited the Intelligence and Security Committee to visit the USA in February; whether he made proposals as to whom they should meet; and if he will make a statement. [220875]

The Prime Minister: No. Visits by the Intelligence and Security Committee are a matter for the Committee.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister for what purpose he will meet the Intelligence and Security Committee on 7 March; what is to be discussed; and if he will make a statement. [220876]

The Prime Minister: Such meetings are confidential and it would be inappropriate to disclose details of the discussions.

Royal Wedding

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister whether he will be attending the civil ceremony for the marriage of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles in his official capacity. [220497]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the press briefings given by my official spokesman on 23 February 2005. These are available on the Number 10 website.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Agency Workers Directive

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect of the Agency Workers Directive on the UK's labour market; and if she will make a statement. [220669]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Regulatory Impact Assessments were undertaken on the original and revised draft Agency Workers Directive, including an assessment of the potential labour market effects. A copy of the latest Regulatory Impact Assessment has been placed in the House of Commons Libraries.

The impact of the Directive on labour markets is clearly an important issue and we have sought to find a way forward on the Directive which all member states can accept, reflecting the diversity of labour markets across the EU and the need to protect workers without putting their jobs at risk.

Broadband

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the final report on the independent rates review was presented by the Government to the Broadband Stakeholders Group in November 2004; and if she will make a statement. [218953]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In practice the BSG and Government have taken this work forward together, in response to recommendations made by the Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG). The Department appointed a contractor to carry out an independent review of the rating system as it applies to telecommunications.

An interim status report based on this work was published on the BSG website in December 2004.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons the Government asked the Broadband Stakeholders Group to review apparent disparities between the Valuation Office Agency's calculation method of business rates for BT in comparison with other telecom companies rating system; and if she will make a statement on the powers of the Broadband Stakeholder Group to require the production of information relevant to the review. [219306]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: In its second Annual Report, the Broadband Stakeholders Group (BSG) recommended that Government should review the current regime for property taxes in respect of their application to cable/duct infrastructure.

In practice the BSG and Government have taken this work forward together. The terms of reference focused on the impact of business rating on investment rather than the method of calculation used for any individual company.

The BSG have the same powers to require information as anybody else. In practice the Government and the BSG have been working closely together.

Businesses

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses ceased trading in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [219659]

Nigel Griffiths: Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creations and closures includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were 291,000 business closures in England and Wales in 2003, a 16 per cent. decrease on the year before. A further 249,000 businesses closed down in England and Wales in the first nine months of 2004. This represents an increase of

15 per cent. on the first nine months of 2003. Closure data are not available for the UK, regions, local authorities or parliamentary constituencies.

DTI figures based solely on VAT de-registrations for Jarrow constituency, South Tyneside, the North East and the UK are shown in the table for 1997 to 2003. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

	Jarrow	*South Tyneside*	*North East*	*United Kingdom*
1997	95	165	3,885	148,230
1998	70	130	3,850	149,115
1999	90	150	3,870	153,400
2000	100	180	3,760	156,440
2001	90	160	4,035	152,840
2002	110	195	4,035	163,920
2003	95	180	4,010	174,355

Source:
(South Tyneside, North East, United Kingdom): VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service, available from: www.sbs.gov.uk/statistics/analytical/vatstats.php
Source:
(Jarrow): Inter-Departmental Business Register, adjusted by Small Business Service to be consistent with published VAT Registrations and De-registrations

VAT registration and de-registration data do not capture all business activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new businesses have started up in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [219660]

Nigel Griffiths: Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were 700 business start-ups in South Tyneside (which contains part of the constituency of Jarrow) in 2003 and a further. 600 in the first nine months of 2004. This represents an increase of 20 per cent. on the first nine months of 2003. Business start-up data for authorities and regions are not available for before 2003.

Barclays data show that there were 1,300 business start-ups in Gateshead (which also contains part of the constituency of Jarrow) in 2003 and a further 1,000 in the first nine months of 2004. This represents no change on the first nine months of 2003.

Barclays data show that there were 14,500 business start-ups in the North East in 2003 and a further 13,600 in the first nine months of 2004. This represents an increase of 20 per cent. on the first nine months of 2003.

Barclays data show that there were 445,000 (revised) business start-ups in England and Wales in 2003, a 16 per cent. increase on the year before. A further 396,000 businesses started up in England and Wales in the first nine months of 2004. This represents an increase of 14 per cent. on the first nine months of 2003.

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations for Jarrow constituency, South Tyneside, the North East and the UK are shown as follows for 1997 to 2003. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Jarrow	105	100	95	100	100	125	95
South Tyneside	190	195	190	170	180	220	210
North East	4,155	4,175	4,235	4,280	4,090	4,310	4,640
United Kingdom	185,950	184,770	178,450	179,585	168,445	175,700	189,890

Source:
(South Tyneside, North East, United Kingdom): VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service, available from the Library of the House and www.sbs.gov.uk/statistics/analytical/vatstats.php.
(Jarrow): Inter-Departmental Business Register, adjusted by Small Business Service to be consistent with published VAT Registrations and De-registrations.

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

Credit Cards

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans her Department has to impose a maximum interest rate for credit cards. [220779]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government have decided not to impose a maximum rate of interest for credit cards or indeed any other types of credit product. However we have committed to keeping the matter under review.

Direct Mail

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received concerning companies using misleading claims of a sweepstake win in direct mail advertising; and what discussions she has had with *(a)* Ofcom and *(b)* the Advertising Standards Agency in respect of such promotions. [220524]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I regularly receive representations about unfair trading practices which the Department discusses with enforcers and regulators as appropriate. I am therefore aware of the problems caused by bogus sweepstakes and prize draws which give the false impression that all recipients have won a substantial prize. These scams, which are estimated to cost UK consumers around £150 million of detriment a year, are a matter of concern. The Government therefore welcomes the decision taken by the European Parliament on 24 February to outlaw such scams as part of wider EU rules on unfair commercial practices to be adopted later this year. Prohibiting these practices in all

25 member states will ensure that more effective action can be taken against those scammers who locate themselves outside the UK in the hope of avoiding enforcement action being taken against them, including that available under Advertising Standards Authority's code of practice of advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing.

Employment Appeals Tribunal

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in how many *(a)* industrial tribunal cases and *(b)* appeals to the Employment Appeals Tribunal since 1997 the tribunal (i) decided and (ii) confirmed that a dismissal was unfair on the basis of the band of reasonable responses test. [220480]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The band of reasonable responses test is a fundamental test that is applied in cases of unfair dismissal that are brought before the Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal. However, the Employment Tribunals Service (ETS) does not keep statistics on the number of tribunal cases and subsequent appeals to the Employment Appeal Tribunal that have been decided or confirmed as an unfair dismissal, on the basis of this test.

The numbers of successful unfair dismissal employment tribunal cases are published each year in the ETS Annual Report which may be found on the ETS website at www.ets.gov.uk.

Inward Investment

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many jobs were created by inward investment in each region of the UK in each of the past 15 years. [219891]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The figures in the table are based on information provided by companies at the time of the announcement of the decision to invest in the UK. They are based on the companies best estimate of the number of new jobs associated with each investment.

There is no requirement on companies to notify inward investment decisions to UKTI and so these new jobs figures relate only to those projects where UKTI or its regional partners were involved or which have come to their notice.

Region	*1989–90*	*1990–91*	*1991–92*	*1992–93*	*1993–94*	*1994–95*	*1995–96*	*1996–97*
East Midlands	3,305	1,689	384	183	3,218	3,028	1,437	1,343
East of England	300	445	491	363	482	842	372	925
London	0	0	0	0	0	52	2,588	2,711
North East	4,021	2,164	3,710	2,312	2,256	5,780	6,125	3,089
North West	3,076	2,279	1,501	1,012	1,927	1,986	3,622	1,556
Northern Ireland	1,956	923	364	2,742	3,030	3,251	3,741	4,135
Scotland	7,828	5,637	3,884	4,497	7,335	7,678	9,092	9,928
South East	780	805	1,156	1,212	916	3,248	5,385	3,775
South West	545	580	2,190	265	1,065	1,386	1,718	2,304
Wales	3,978	3,356	5,195	2,382	3,913	3,151	4,429	10,397
West Midlands	7,237	4,618	1,892	1,588	3,370	4,797	7,074	4,350
Yorkshire and Humber	2,971	1,260	1,656	1,265	2,329	3,152	1,764	1,887
Total	35,997	23,756	22,423	17,821	29,841	38,351	47,347	46,400

Region	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
East Midlands	1,686	2,096	675	2,020	803	1,314	1,982
East of England	945	1,411	2,101	3,084	1,115	631	414
London	2,948	4,135	7,230	7,991	3,858	2,344	2,572
North East	2,764	2,304	3,479	4,959	2,788	4,648	1,919
North West	4,944	3,224	4,768	3,187	1,987	7,496	3,162
Northern Ireland	3,357	3,345	2,353	4,906	1,554	787	1,496
Scotland	7,688	6,447	10,728	9,314	6,623	3,599	1,632
South East	5,534	4,497	6,236	18,150	4,981	3,971	2,901
South West	3,205	3,008	4,814	4,109	933	653	2,147
Wales	4,976	5,591	4,161	4,520	3,869	4,083	4,064
West Midlands	5,681	5,483	6,458	4,867	5,307	2,369	2,391
Yorkshire and Humber	2,874	3,626	1,362	4,061	1,541	2,729	934
Total	46,562	45,167	54,365	71,168	35,359	34,624	25,614

Source:
IIG Database

Prior to 1994–95 figures for London were included in the South East figures.

Milk Industry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the reasons are for the continuing interest of the Office of Fair Trading in the milk industry. [219778]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Under UK competition law, it is the responsibility of the Office of Fair Trading to investigate allegations of anti-competitive behaviour or possible abuses of a dominant position. Decisions concerning investigations are a matter for the Office of Fair Trading.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what powers regional development agencies have to invest in and support investment in *(a)* transport infrastructure and *(b)* transport services; what restrictions apply to their powers; and if she will make a statement. [219438]

Jacqui Smith: England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) may decide to invest in or support investment in regional transport initiatives, assuming such initiatives are consistent with the goals of the regional economic strategies for their regions. The Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 provides broad powers to RDAs to do anything which they consider expedient in pursuance of their statutory purposes, which include promoting economic development and regeneration in their regions and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. In addition to their activities being subject to general requirements of the law, the Act places some specific restrictions on the use of such powers. RDAs may only give financial assistance to achieve their aims if the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry consents. Restrictions also apply to the disposal of land in certain circumstances and to the acquisition and use of housing by RDAs.

Solar Photovoltaics

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to ensure continuity of support to the UK solar PV industry when grant allocations under her Department's solar PV Major Demonstration Programme comes to an end later this year. [219804]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Major PV Demonstration Programme is due to end in March 2006. Grants are expected to be paid up to March 2007.

The Department will continue its support for PV through a "low carbon buildings" programme. The low carbon buildings programme is currently under development and there will be formal consultation on this later this year. The programme is expected to begin operating in 2006–07.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's estimate is of the amount of solar photovoltaics installed in the UK in 2004. [220204]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: 1,900 kWp of photovoltaics was installed in 2004 with grants from the Major PV Demonstration Programme.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average annual change since 2002 in solar photovoltaic prices has been under her Department's solar PV Demonstration Programme. [220256]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: For stream 1 projects (small scale and individual installations) under the Major PV Demonstration Programme, the average cost of PV is: £7,035 per kWp in 2002–03; £6,826 in 2003–04 and £6,296 in 2004–05. This represents a reduction of 6.6 per cent. between 2002–03 and 2003–04 and 7.8 per cent. between 2003–04 and 2004–05.

For stream 2 projects (medium and large installations) the averaged cost for PV is £6.871 per kWp in 2002–03 and £6,396 in 2003–04. This represents a reduction of 6.9 per cent. Data for 2004–05 is not yet available for stream 2 projects.

Sub-post Offices

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the sub-post offices in each area that have been redefined from *(a)* urban to rural classification and *(b)* rural to urban classification. [220656]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The classification of a post office branch as urban or rural is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). My officials have asked colleagues in POL to issue a direct reply to the hon. Member.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations her Department has launched with the active involvement of Post Office Limited on its definitions of sub-post office branch classification; and whether this information has been published. [220657]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. The classification of a post office branch as urban or rural is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). My officials have asked colleagues in POL to issue a direct reply to the hon. Member.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213817]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Milburn) on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 957W.

Excluding Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) services, DFID only has one additional vehicle. This vehicle is exempt from paying congestion charges as it is registered with the Public Carriage Office; a licensed private hire company.

Food Aid

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the estimated amount of food aid required by the World Food Programme is; how much food aid has been distributed to *(a)* Zambia, *(b)* Zimbabwe, *(c)* Malawi, *(d)* Lesotho, *(e)* Mozambique, *(f)* Swaziland and *(g)* Angola during current food aid distribution programmes; and what further action his Department is taking to ensure the distribution of food aid. [219699]

Hilary Benn: Latest information from the World Food Programme (WFP) shows that from July 2004 until the end of January 2005, a total of 182,579 metric tonnes of food was distributed in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and Angola. From 2005 until the end of December 2007, WFP has appealed for 656,000 metric tonnes of food to be delivered through its Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation. Angola is not part of this programme.

DFID is currently providing funding for the WFP operations in Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Improving the monitoring and evaluation of food aid distribution and strengthening information systems to provide better data on food insecurity are priorities for DFID in the region. DFID support for food aid programmes in southern Africa will continue to be based on a careful assessment of needs, combined with a review of the most effective and efficient responses to food insecurity, which might sometimes include other forms of support such as seeds or cash.

St. Helena

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the length of runway required for an airport on St. Helena; and if he will make a statement. [220308]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A report by Atkins Management Consultants, which I sent on 9 November 2004 to the hon. Member and other parliamentary colleagues, identified three possible options to maintain future access for St. Helena. Two of them would require providing an airport, while the third would replace the existing ship. The report indicated that the airport options would entail total runway lengths of either 2000m or 2250m, both inclusive of runway end safety areas. Decisions will be announced, in consultation with the St. Helena Government, as soon as it is possible to do so.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with Shelco regarding its proposal to build *(a)* an airport and *(b)* other infrastructure requirements on St. Helena; and if he will make a statement. [220309]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: I met with Shelco representatives on 8 September 2004. There have also been discussions between Shelco and the St. Helena Government. All investor interest in St. Helena is welcome and will be considered on an equal footing.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what estimate he has made of the level of public funding necessary to sustain St. Helena in the next 10 years *(a)* without an airport and *(b)* with an airport; and if he will make a statement; [220311]

(2) what assessment he has made of St. Helena's potential for earning income from tourism *(a)* without an airport and *(b)* with an airport; and if he will make a statement; [220313]

(3) what assessment he has made of the potential for St. Helena to attract tourists from *(a)* France, *(b)* the United States of America and *(c)* the United Kingdom if an airport is built on the Island; and what assessment he has made of the implications for UK support to St. Helena of an increase in tourism on the island. [220321]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Data of the kind requested, but not necessarily in this exact form, has been compiled for an analysis of three shortlisted access options which is under consideration. The outcome will be announced, in consultation with the St. Helena Government, just as soon as it is possible to do so. At that stage, in keeping with our previous practice for material prepared to shortlist the options, we shall consider publication as appropriate.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much public funding has been made available to St. Helena in each year since 1997. [220312]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID bilateral disbursements for St. Helena in the financial years 1997–98 to 2003–04 were as follows:

Financial year	*£000*
1997–98	8,384
1998–99	8,594
1999–2000	9,185
2000–01	9,968
2001–02	9,833
2002–03	9,343
2003–04	10,419

St. Helena also receives some assistance from the FCO Good Governance Fund and FCO Economic Diversification Programme. Those disbursements were as follows:

£000

	Disbursements
1997–98	211
1998–99	163
1999–2000	231
2000–01	212
2001–02	321
2002–03	436
2003–04	260

In addition, over the same period, allocations totalling some €14.35 million (around £9.5 million) were made to St. Helena by the European Commission (EC), of which the UK share was about 13 per cent. Disbursement of the EC allocations is on going.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Poverty

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020 and *(b)* halving it by 2010; and if he will make a statement. [219346]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* Our first step towards eradicating child poverty as set out in our current Public Service Agreement target is to reduce the number of children in low-income households by a quarter by 2004–05.

The sixth annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6239), published in September 2004 is available in the Library and sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion; the Government's child poverty strategy is clearly outlined in the Treasury's Child Poverty Review published with the 2004 Spending Review.

Child Support Agency (Mr. Lovelace)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will personally take up with the Child Support Agency the case of Mr. Lovelace, a constituent of the hon. Member for Vale of York. [219741]

Mr. Pond: My noble Friend the Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Baroness Hollis) will meet the hon. member to discuss the case of Mr. Lovelace.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people *(a)* of working age and *(b)* over state pension age have been in receipt of council tax benefit since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [220575]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available. Information on the number of people in receipt of council tax benefit is not held by constituency.

Disability Rights Commission

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the latest recommendations of the Disability Rights Commission with regard to employment are; and how his Department intends to implement them. [219870]

Maria Eagle: The Disability Rights Commission made a range of proposals and recommendations concerning employment in "Disability Equality: Making it happen—First Review of the Disability Discrimination Act". The majority of these were implemented through the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 which came into force on 1 October 2004 and we indicated in our response to the commission's review that the remaining recommendations were for possible future consideration.

The following table sets out the commission's proposals and recommendations concerning employment issues and the Government's position.

Disability equality: making it happen—first review of the Disability Discrimination Act

DRC proposal	*Government position*
Disability Rights Commission Proposals	
The DDA should apply to practical work experience and to examining bodies	Practical work experience and many types of examining bodies were covered in DDA Amendment Regulations 2003. Note: The Disability Discrimination Bill currently before Parliament will bring general qualifications bodies within the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act.
The DDA should apply to constructive dismissal and to post-employment discrimination.	Covered in DDA Amendment Regulations 2003.
It should be unlawful under the DDA for employers to instruct or pressurise other people to discriminate and DRC should be able to take action in such situations.	Covered in DDA Amendment Regulations 2003.
The DDA employment provisions, which allow justification for failure to make a reasonable adjustment, should be removed.	Covered in DDA Amendment Regulations 2003.
The definition of "victimisation" currently in the DDA should be broadened.	Covered in DDA Amendment Regulations 2003.
The Part 2 employment regulations in relation to reasonable adjustments to physical features should be amended.	The provisions in the Employment Regulations about Approved Document M were revoked from 1 October 2004.
Disability Rights Commission Recommendations	
Employers should make reasonable adjustments in anticipation of having disabled employees.	For possible future consideration.
Less favourable treatment should only be justifiable where there is a genuine occupational requirement.	For possible future consideration.
Employment Tribunals should be able to recommend employers change their practices generally.	For possible future consideration.
Disability-related inquiries before a job is offered should be permitted only in very limited circumstances.	For possible future consideration.
The DDA should apply to volunteers.	For possible future consideration. However, the Disability Rights Commission has been asked to produce a voluntary code of practice on volunteers.
The DDA should apply to all statutory office holders, political office holders (including councillors), magistrates and school governors.	Many office holders covered in DDA Amendment Regulations 2003. The draft Disability Discrimination Bill documents outline our commitment to include local councillors. Note: The Disability Discrimination Bill currently before Parliament includes proposals to cover local councillors and the public office holders not covered by the DDA Amendment Regulations 2003

Disability equality: making it happen—first review of the Disability Discrimination Act

DRC proposal *Disability Rights Commission Proposals*	*Government position*
The armed services should be covered by the DDA.	This recommendation is rejected. Provision for the exemption of the armed forces was recognised in the Article 13 Employment Directive adopted in November 2000. Ministry of Defence are working on voluntary guidance for service personnel who become disabled.
The reasonable adjustment duty should be extended to cover omissions to act.	Covered in DDA Amendment Regulations 2003.
Alter tribunal procedures so that tribunals order and fund a joint medical report.	For possible future consideration.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Audit Board of the Administrative Commission on Social Security for Migrant Workers met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [217887]

Mr. Hutton: I have been asked to reply.

This body met once during each of these presidencies. Meetings were held on 11–12 November 2003 (Italian presidency), 7–8 June 2004 (Irish presidency), 17–18 November 2004 (Dutch presidency). Three officials from the Department attended the meeting during the Italian presidency and two officials attended the others. All meeting were in Brussels.

Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the total value of the guaranteed minimum pension accumulated since 1978 in contracted-out occupational pensions. [219560]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the annual cost to the Department of not reducing state pensions of pensioners who are hospital in-patients. [220584]

Malcolm Wicks: The estimated cost of not reducing state pensions of pensioners who are hospital in-patients is £23 million per year.

Notes:

1. The cost is in 2004-05 prices and rounded to the nearest £1 million.

2. Estimates based on DWP 5 per cent. administrative data sample at 30 September 2003 and 31 March 2004.

3. This cost takes no account of any changes in expenditure on any other benefit.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to amend *(a)* sections 101B and 101C of the Pension Schemes Act 1985 and *(b)* section 37 of the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999. [220343]

Malcolm Wicks: This legislation was introduced in December 2000 to enable couples to share the value of their pensions on divorce. It allows a former spouse to acquire a pension in her, or his, own right, providing security of income in retirement and a clean break settlement. Section 101C of the Pension Schemes Act 1993 in particular specifies that pension credit benefit paid under a pension sharing order in an occupational pension scheme must be paid from age 60 to 65. Each scheme sets its own normal benefit age within this range. We do not plan to change this.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many new claimants left incapacity benefit at the *(a)* four month and *(b)* 12 month stage of their claim in each quarter since January 2003 in (i) pathways to work pilot areas and (ii) non-pathways areas. [215776]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 10 February 2005]:* The information is in the table.

People move off incapacity benefit for a variety of reasons. These include failing the Personal Capability Assessment, death, retirement, and because their condition improves and they either return to work or claim a different benefit.

All incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance terminations in the quarters shown, by duration of claim and area

	All	*4 Months or less*	*From 4 to 12 months*	*More than 12 months*
Pathway to work areas				
February 2003	13,600	4,600	3,600	5,400
May 2003	12,400	4,400	3,300	4,700
August 2003	13,900	4,200	4,000	5,800
November 2003	13,800	4,400	3,800	5,600
February 2004	14,200	4,600	3,600	5,900
May 2004	15,200	5,000	3,900	6,300
August 2004	11,500	4,200	3,000	4,300
Non pathway areas				
February 2003	157,000	49,700	40,600	66,700
May 2003	153,800	50,800	44,200	58,900
August 2003	169,500	51,500	43,600	74,400
November 2003	173,700	53,700	44,300	75,700
February 2004	159,700	46,600	43,300	69,900
May 2004	162,900	45,900	43,500	73,400
August 2004	113,900	34,500	31,800	47,500

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance and credits-only cases.

3. The figures have been updated to include late notified terminations, including terminations for retirement pension. Figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters. For illustration purposes, total terminations for August 2003 increased by 34 per cent. in the year following their initial release.

4. Pathways to Work programme commenced in three pilot areas in October 2003 and a further four in April 2004.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. sample.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claimants of incapacity benefit were in receipt of *(a)* incapacity benefit only, *(b)* incapacity benefit in combination with each other benefit to which a claimant may also be entitled and *(c)* each other (i) benefit and (ii) combination of benefits to which a claimant may be entitled in each of the last five years; and what the average weekly level of benefit received by a claimant was in each case. [219392]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the tables.

Incapacity benefit (IB) severe disability allowance (SDA) claimants[1] with income support (IS), disability living allowance (DLA), housing benefit (HB), and council tax benefit (CTB), in Great Britain

	1999		May 2000		2001	
Benefit combination	*Caseload*	*Average weekly amount (£ pw)*	*Caseload*	*Average weekly amount (£ pw)*	*Caseload*	*Average weekly amount (£ pw)*
IB/SDA[2] only	921,200	74.45	908,300	72.81	900,700	72.71
IB/SDA[2] with IS only	632,700	88.05	656,800	91.05	687,600	95.22
IB/SDA[2] with DLA only	518,800	127.26	511,200	128.01	519,400	130.79
IB/SDA[2] with IS and DLA	476,800	161.70	499,500	165.35	535,600	173.28
IB/SDA[3] with HB only	30,000	[4]	20,000	[4]	20,000	[4]
IB/SDA[3] with CTB only	50,000	[4]	50,000	[4]	40,000	[4]
IB/SDA[3] with HB and CTB	150,000	[4]	140,000	[4]	130,000	[4]

	2002		May 2003		2004	
Benefit combination	*Caseload*	*Average weekly amount (£ pw)*	*Caseload*	*Average weekly amount (£ pw)*	*Caseload*	*Average weekly amount (£ pw)*
IB/SDA[2] only	871,600	71.84	834,600	71.50	824,400	71.41
IB/SDA[2] with IS only	683,500	96.17	681,000	99.08	662,000	99.61
IB/SDA[2] with DLA only	538,800	131.94	552,600	132.78	563,500	134.39
IB/SDA[2] with IS and DLA	552,900	166.23	590,600	170.53	606,700	171.89
IB/SDA[3] with HB only	20,000	[4]	20,000	[4]	[4]	[4]
IB/SDA[3] with CTB only	40,000	[4]	40,000	[4]	[4]	[4]
IB/SDA[3] with HB and CTB	120,000	[4]	120,000	[4]	[4]	[4]

[1] Includes Credit only cases, except where stated (see [3]).
[2] Working age claimants are men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59. Excludes a small number of claimants over State Pension Age (almost all SDA claimants).
[3] HB/CTB figures cover IB/SDA recipients only, i.e. do not include Credits only cases.
[4] Signifies information not available; (see notes)

Notes:

1. Figures refer to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Due to the estimation procedure to produce the figures for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and the collection procedures in Scotland, HB/CTB figures are rounded to the nearest 10,000. All other working age caseloads are rounded to the nearest 100.
3. Average weekly amounts are not available for HB/CTB recipients where overlaps are removed.
4. Council tax benefit cases exclude any Second Adult Rebate cases.
5. Housing benefit cases exclude Extended Payment cases.
6. Figures refer to where the claimant and/or partner are aged in receipt of the relevant benefit.
7. May 2003 is the most recent data available for HB/CTB.
8. Average amounts refer to the combined amount of the benefits listed and are rounded to the nearest penny.

Sources:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Working Age Client Group sample.
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 1999 to 2003.

Pension Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the effect on the number of pensioners in receipt of pension credit in 2009–10 of linking the basic state pension to earnings from 2006–07 onwards. [218691]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* If the basic state pension was uprated in line with earnings from 2006–07 onwards and the savings credit threshold was increased in line with prices as now, 150,000 fewer benefit units would be in receipt of pension credit by 2009–10. If the savings credit threshold was increased in line with the increase in the basic state pension about 250,000 fewer benefit units would be in receipt by 2009–10.

Notes:

1. The figure is rounded to the nearest 50,000 to account for the large potential margin for error in the estimate.

2. Overall pensioner incomes are assumed to rise in line with average earnings.

Source:

Figures are calculated using the department's policy simulation model and the family resources survey 2002–03 projected forward to 2009–10

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the largest possible entitlement for the savings credit element of pension credit has been in each year since its introduction; and what the projection is for each of the next five years on the assumption that the guarantee credit grows in line with earnings and the savings credit grows in line with prices. [219701]

Malcolm Wicks: The following table sets out the maximum entitlement to the savings element of pension credit payable for single people and couples for the financial years 2003–04 to 2009–10. The figures for the years 2003–04 to 2005–06 are the actual maximum entitlements to the savings element payable for those years. The figures for subsequent years are estimates based on the assumptions set out in the notes to the table.

Maximum amounts of the savings element of pension credit

Financial year	*Maximum savings element-single people*	*Maximum savings element-couples*
2003–04	14.79	19.20
2004–05	15.51	20.22
2005–06	16.44	21.51
2006–07	18.42	24.42
2007–08	20.34	27.27
2008–09	22.29	30.12
2009–10	24.33	33.15

Notes:

1. Figures are in line with current uprating policy. The Chancellor announced in the pre-Budget report that the guarantee element of pension credit would be uprated in line with earnings over the current spending round (to 2007–08). The savings credit threshold is currently equal to the maximum rate of basic state pension and is assumed to rise in line with prices.
2. The estimates for the financial years 2006–07 to 2009–10 are based on the 2004 pre-Budget report assumptions for average earnings growth and growth in the retail price index.

Social Security Payments (Pensioners)

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the interaction between pension credit and other social security payments for *(a)* those in residential care homes and *(b)* those not in residential care. [220573]

Malcolm Wicks: The policy on charging for residential care is the responsibility of health departments. The current financial assessment for residential care takes account of an individual's income, including benefit income, leaving each resident with a personal expense allowance. Pension credit, which may include an amount of savings credit, is taken into account in the council's financial assessment. For those individuals in receipt of the savings credit, they are left with the amount for personal expenses and in addition receive a savings credit disregard. For individuals living in their own homes and being financially assessed for home care and their non-residential care services, the savings credit is fully disregarded.

Payment of attendance allowance (AA) and disability living allowance (DLA) stops after four weeks residence in a care home, except where a resident can meet the full cost without help from a local authority or other source of public funding (other than payments for free nursing care), as this does not affect payability of AA/DLA for self funders. The mobility component of DLA can continue in payment because care home costs do not cover mobility needs. Pension credit recipients who have been in a care home for 13 weeks or more at the end of the specified qualifying week are not eligible for a winter fuel payment.

State Pension

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have had no (i) own-rights or (ii) own or spouse rights entitlement to the basic state pension because they did not have the minimum of 25 per cent. of qualifying years in each of the last 20 years. [219744]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The information is not available in the format requested. However, the information in the table shows the number of men and women in receipt of either or both graduated retirement benefit and additional state pension who do not receive any basic state pension.

As at March:	*Men*	*Women*
1985	3,000	172,500
1986	2,800	164,200
1987 [1]	2,900	175,700
1988	3,100	176,000
1989	3,200	177,300
1990 [1]	3,600	180,000
1991	3,800	176,800
1992	4,100	157,200
1993	4,200	151,100
1994	4,500	144,600
1995	5,000	138,900
1996	5,800	128,600
1997	6,600	118,300
1998	7,300	112,200
1999	7,700	103,700
2000	8,300	98,100
2001	9,100	95,500
2002	10,100	91,000
2003	11,600	85,800
2004	13,300	83,000

[1] September

Notes:

1. Numbers are taken from a 10 per cent. sample prior to March 1995 and a five per cent. sample after March 1995 and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Figures include overseas cases.
4. A basic state pension is paid to those who fully or partially satisfy the contribution conditions for a Category A or Category B basic state pension, either in their own right or, where applicable, on the basis of their spouse's or former spouse's National Insurance contributions.

Source:

IAD Information centre 10 per cent., sample prior to March 1995 and a five per cent., sample after March 1995. Figures are as at 31 March or 30 September for the years shown.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* proportion of (i) men and (ii) women who will fail to meet the minimum of 25 per cent. of qualifying years for a basic state pension in (A) each of the next five years, (B) 2010, (C) 2030, (D) 2040 and (E) 2050; and what estimate he has made of the (1) net and (2) gross cost for each of these years of the requirement for a minimum of 25 per cent. of qualifying years entitlement; [219745]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost of paying pensions under reciprocal agreements to people in other countries who would build up an entitlement to the basic state pension if the 25 per cent. rule on the number of

qualifying years were to be removed in *(a)* each of the next five years, *(b)* 2010, *(c)* 2030, *(d)* 2040 and *(e)* 2050. [219746]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The information is not available in the format requested. However, as at March 2004, there were 13,300 men and 83,000 women in receipt of either or both graduated retirement pension and additional state pension who did not receive any basic state pension. This accounted for less than 1 per cent. of total recipients of state pension.

The additional gross cost would be around £95 million in 2004–05 if those people were treated as having at least nine qualifying years for entitlement to a basic state pension. On the same assumption, approximately £5 million of that sum relates to pensioners living overseas outside the European economic area in a country with which the UK has a reciprocal agreement to uprate state pensions.

Notes

1. This cost is provided by the Government Actuary's Department and assumes a full national insurance record for at least nine years.

2. The available data is an extract based on those in receipt of benefits in Great Britain and overseas. There is not sufficient information available on contribution records to provide a more comprehensive estimate, neither is sufficient information available to estimate the net costs.

3. It is also expected that large numbers of overseas cases with a small number of contribution years could become entitled to the basic state pension.

4. The estimate for pensioners living overseas does not include the additional costs of paying basic state pensions to those with less than 25 per cent. qualifying years who live in the European economic area.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the inequalities between the level of development achieved by children in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged areas and the rest of England by 2008 will be met. [220137]

Margaret Hodge: I have been asked to reply.

The target for 50 per cent. of children to reach a good level of development was set in July 2004. It is based on the 2003 Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) results and data from Sure Start local programmes. It is provisional as the 2003 FSP data were published as 'experimental statistics'. FSP data for 2004 will be published on 17 March , and for 2005 later this year. At this point we will be able to confirm the target and establish the baseline against which progress towards the target can be assessed.

Vibration White Finger

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the implications for claims for *(a)* disablement benefit and *(b)* reduced earnings allowance from those suffering from vibration white finger of proposals for changes in the prescription of the disease made by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council. [219282]

Jane Kennedy: The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) published its report on Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome in July 2004. The principal recommendation was that the terms of prescription for PD A11 (Vibration White Finger) be extended to include sensorineural symptoms, in addition to the existing vascular symptoms. The recommendations in that report were fully accepted. Revised regulations to implement the report should be introduced this summer.

It is hard to be accurate about how many claims will be made, or how many people will benefit, as a result of the changes. Provisional estimates are that over 60,000 new claims may be made, though the number who will actually receive benefit may be small in relation to the total number of claims.

People claiming as a result of this extension to prescription will not be entitled to reduced earnings allowance (REA). This is because a person cannot be entitled to REA where the prescription for that disease is extended on or after 10 October 1994. This is the effect of The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, Schedule 7, paragraph 11(1).

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate how many people became newly entitled for the 2004–05 winter fuel payment who would need to claim the payment; and how many claims have been received from such people. [220574]

Malcolm Wicks: We estimate that approximately 700,000 individuals in Great Britain reached age 60 in the qualifying period for the 2004–05 winter fuel payment. About half of these have been paid automatically but others, who are not in receipt of certain benefits, will need to make a claim. By 25 February, 351,894 claim forms had been received.

HEALTH

Asian Bird Influenza

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which streams of Asian bird influenza pose a threat to the UK; and which vaccines he is stockpiling to protect against possible outbreaks of flu. [219808]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Highly pathogenic forms of avian influenza type A viruses are of most concern as these are known to have caused infections in people. Of these, A/H5N1, A/H7N7 and A/H9N2 have caused outbreaks of infection in the past five years. Because of their potential to adapt to become more transmissable to humans, or to exchange genes with a human influenza virus to produce a completely novel virus capable of pandemic spread, all pose a threat.

There is as yet no vaccine available for the prevention of the disease. The National Institute for Biological Standards and Control has secured an isolate of the current avian influenza virus strain and has produced a

candidate vaccine virus using "reverse genetics" technology for use should this be required. We are working closely with other countries, the World Health Organisation, the European Commission and manufacturers to ensure that a vaccine can be developed as quickly as possible once a pandemic flu strain emerges.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he is taking to prepare for a possible outbreak of avian flu; and if he will make a statement. [218016]

Miss Melanie Johnson: On 1 March, we published the United Kingdom health departments' influenza pandemic contingency plan, together with an announcement of our plans for procurement of antivirals. This puts the UK in the forefront of international preparedness for a possible flu pandemic. The document is on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken by his Department to protect against possible mutations of the avian flu virus; and if he will make a statement. [218063]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* There is no confirmed evidence of person-to-person spread of avian influenza in South-East Asia. Guidance for the national health service on the detection, diagnosis and treatment of potential cases of avian flu has been prepared by the Health Protection Agency (HPA), in collaboration with the Department, and is published on the HPA's website at www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/avianinfluenza/menu.htm.

In response to outbreaks of avian influenza in South-East Asia, the European Commission has imposed a ban on the importation of birds of all species from affected areas until December 2005.

On 1 March, we published the United Kingdom health departments' influenza pandemic contingency plan, together with an announcement of our plans for procurement of antivirals. This puts the UK in the forefront of international preparedness for a possible flu pandemic. The document is on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu.

Breast Cancer Screening

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of women aged *(a)* 50 to 64 and *(b)* 65 to 70 years have been screened for breast cancer on the NHS in (i) England, (ii) each strategic health authority and (iii) each primary care trust in each year since 1997. [218174]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information requested since strategic health authorities and primary care trusts were established in 2002 has been placed in Library.

Courses (Transport Costs)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his policy is on the provision of assistance with transport costs to mature students attending NHS sponsored courses at university; what other support is available to those who live outside areas identified for assistance with transport costs; and if he will list for each midwifery course sponsored by the NHS the areas within which assistance with transport costs is available. [216931]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* The provision of travelling expenses for mature students attending courses at university is a matter for national health service employers locally. Information about travelling costs is not held centrally.

Defibrillators

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated cost is per usage of NHS defibrillators located in non-NHS premises, including capital cost amortisation over the estimated useful lifetime of the equipment. [216531]

Miss Melanie Johnson: It is difficult to give an accurate estimated cost per usage, as the total life expectancy of the automated external defibrillators that are currently in use is not known.

The current cost, with 303 defibrillator deployments, works out at accrued cost of £4,950 per deployment, but this does not take account of the lifespan of the defibrillators.

Therefore:

For five years life expectancy, current data suggests there would be 440 deployments at a cost of £3,409 per deployment.

For seven years life expectancy, current data suggests there would be 616 deployments at a cost of £2,435 per deployment.

For 10 years life expectancy, current data suggests there would be 881 deployments at a cost of £1,702 per deployment.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress made towards implementing a dental NHS IT system. [219394]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* Work is progressing to finalise definition of the functional requirements for clinical information technology (IT) systems in both primary and secondary care to link to the national programme for information technology in the national health service. The requirements for primary care dental IT will be informed by the new contractual arrangements for primary care dentistry, which will be implemented by April 2006.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acres of vacant, dormant, unused and under-utilised land are owned by his Department; and if he will estimate the number of homes that could be built on the land if it was made available. [219683]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* The majority of surplus land remaining in the ownership of the Secretary of State for Health is included in a transfer of land and property to English Partnerships (EP). This transfer, which was announced in April 2004, will assist the Government's sustainable communities plan. Around 1,650 hectares of land will transfer to EP and it is estimated that this has the capacity to provide around 15,000 homes.

Diagnostics

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate he has made of excess unused capacity within the NHS for diagnostic services; [218194]

(2) whether primary care trusts will have the choice of whether to purchase services under the new purchasing contract for diagnostics services. [218195]

Mr. Hutton: *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* Primary care trust's (PCT) capacity planning identified the need for significant increases in diagnostic capacity to meet the 18-week waiting time target. For example, the number of scans required will need to increase from 6.4 million in 2004–05 to 8.9 million in 2008.

This additional capacity is required quickly and I believe that the independent sector is well placed to provide some of this capacity. That is why we announced the procurement of £1 billion over five years, which includes one million scans annually. This still leaves significant growth for the national health service.

The Department has been working with strategic health authorities and PCTs to develop specific proposals for the procurement, choosing what they wish us to purchase for them. Since PCTs have identified these requirements, we expect all of them use the services that will be provided from the procurement.

Doctors (Training)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pre-registration training places there have been for doctors in England in each year since 1980. [219679]

Mr. Hutton: The number of medical pre-registration house officers in England in each year since 1980 is shown in the following table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services—medical pre-registration house officers: as at 30 September each year

	Number
1980	2,654
1981	2,716
1982	2,710
1983	2,826
1984	2,773
1985	2,838
1986	2,813
1987	2,790
1988	2,862
1989	2,944
1990	3,018
1991	3,056
1992	3,041
1993	3,086
1994	3,019
1995	3,224
1996	3,217
1997	3,356
1998	3,447
1999	3,543
2000	3,641
2001	3,685
2002	3,953
2003	3,969

Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Down's Syndrome

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been provided for research into Down's syndrome *(a)* in total and *(b)* with specific reference to brain development in each year since 1997–98; and what plans he has to support further such research. [216429]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body, funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The Department funds research to support policy and to provide the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the national health service.

Both the MRC and the Department are currently supporting research into Down's syndrome. Past expenditure on such research is shown in the table.

£000

	MRC	*Department of Health research programmes*[1]
1997–98	352	531
1998–99	143	611
1999–2000	164	522
2000–01	245	380
2001–02	470	67
2002–03	431	70
2003–04	[2]—	111

[1] Includes expenditure on projects partly but not wholly related to Down's syndrome.
[2] Not yet available.

An analysis of expenditure that separately identifies the part of Down's syndrome research costs attributable to work on brain development is not available.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by NHS organisations. Details of completed and ongoing projects, including a number concerned with Down's syndrome, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee (i) for the implementation of the Community action programme for the prevention of AIDS and certain other communicable diseases and (ii) on the action programme on rare diseases in the framework of the action plan for public health met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218365]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Committee for the implementation of the Community action programme for the prevention of AIDS and certain other communicable diseases and the committee on the action programme on rare diseases in the framework of the action plan for public health did not meet during the Italian, Irish or Dutch presidencies.

I refer the hon. Member to the series of Command Papers on prospects for the EU—Cm6174 laid in April 2004. Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005, which cover the periods of the above presidencies and are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's website at: www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the implementation of the Community action plan to combat cancer met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215913]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This committee has been disbanded. It last met in 2002. It was set up to advise on the Europe Against Cancer programme which was completed in December 2002. It is not known where the committee met.

Gynaecology

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many women were given hysterectomies in an NHS hospital in the latest year for which figures are available; [219704]

(2) what steps are being taken to ensure that women who, with clinical support, request a less invasive treatment as an alternative to hysterectomy receive their treatment of choice on the NHS; and if he will make a statement; [219705]

(3) how many NHS trusts offer access to a multidisciplinary team including gynaecologists and an interventional radiologist to diagnose and treat uterine fibroids as recommended by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence; [219706]

(4) what guidance is given to NHS trusts on the use of uterine artery embolisation for fibroids. [219707]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There were 49,600 hysterectomy operations (OPCS4 codes Q07, Q08) performed in national health service hospitals, England in 2003–04.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued revised full guidance on fibroid embolisation in October 2004; this is available on its website at www.nice.org.uk. NICE decided that the procedure is safe and that most patients have improved symptoms. However, NICE considers that more information is needed about how well it works, how long it works for and how it affects a woman's ability to become pregnant.

Once NICE guidance is published, health professionals are expected to take it fully into account when exercising their clinical judgement. However, NICE guidance does not override the individual responsibility of health professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Decisions about patterns of services delivery are a matter for individual health authorities and trusts to determine locally, taking into account local population needs, priorities and resources. We do not, therefore, collect information on this centrally.

Health Services (Burnley)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been made available for frontline health services in Burnley in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [219493]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The tables show the revenue allocations made to East Lancashire Health Authority (HA) between 1996–97 and 2002–03 and Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Primary Care Trust (PCT) between 2003–04 and 2007–08.

Revenue allocations to East Lancashire HA: 1996–97 to 2002–03

	£000
1996–97[1]	230,808
1997–98[1]	240,684
1998–99[1]	253,100
1999–2000[1]	349,892
2000–01[1]	384,249
2001–02[1]	416,738
2002–03[1]	461,132

Revenue allocations to Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT: 2003–04 to 2007–08

	£000
2003–04[1]	241,264
2004–05[1]	264,963
2005–06[1]	289,574
2006–07[2]	339,612
2007–08[2]	371,238

[1] Between 1996–97 and 2002–03, revenue allocations were made to HAs. From 2003–04, revenue allocations were made to PCTs. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the allocations made prior to 2003–04 with those made from 2003–04 as they were made to different organisations. Unified allocations covering hospital and community health services (HCHS), prescribing and general medical services cash limited allocations were first made in 1999–2000. Therefore, the allocation figures from 1999–2000 are not comparable with previous years which cover HCHS only.

[2] Allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 are not directly comparable with previous years because there have been significant baseline changes since the last allocations round—for example, devolution of £5 billion funding for general practitioners—which inflate the increases.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been made available for improving buildings in Burnley for *(a)* general practitioner practices, *(b)* East Lancashire Acute Trust, *(c)* Burnley General Hospital and *(d)* other health services in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [219494]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not available in the format requested. The following table shows the net book value of purchased capital additions

(buildings, dwellings and transfers from assets under construction) for the East Lancashire hospitals national health service trust and its predecessor trusts.

£000

	Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley health care NHS trust	Burnley health care NHS trust	East Lancashire hospitals NHS trust
1997–98	1,733	1,231	n/a
1998–99	9,074	7,341	n/a
1999–2000	1,460	6,838	n/a
2000–01	2,108	1,787	n/a
2001–02	7,432	2,430	n/a
2002–03	2,390	8,577	n/a
2003–04	n/a	n/a	4,350

Notes:
1. The figures in the table do not include private finance initiative (PFI) expenditure where PFI costs are revenue expenditure in the books of NHS bodies.
2. Capital investment will vary between years owing to the investment decisions at individual NHS bodies.

Sources:
Audited summarisation schedules of the East Lancashire hospitals NHS trust 2003–04.
Audited summarisation schedules of the Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley health Care NHS trust and the Burnley health care NHS trust 1997–98.

Heat-related Illnesses

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has made for combating the health effects of increasing levels of UV radiation due to the decline in cloud cover and ozone depletion. [218812]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) has carried out ultra violet (UV) measurements of solar UV in the United Kingdom and these have shown a small upward trend. However, the data are still being analysed and may be within experimental uncertainties. The incidence of skin cancer, due to UV exposure is rising in most middle latitude countries. This is attributed to behavioural factors (sunbathing, holidays in the sun etc.) and not changes in the intensity of incident ultra violet radiation or other meteorological factors.

The "SunSmart" campaign is funded by the Department and run by Cancer Research UK and seeks to educate people about the dangers of excessive exposure to UV and gives simple steps to avoid the harm. The messages would be equally valid and useful and possibly even more necessary, should UV levels in the UK rise because of meteorological changes.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average annual cost of treating an AIDS patient in England was in the last year for which figures are available. [217474]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government do not routinely collect data on the cost of treating AIDS patients.

Hospices

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral answer by the Prime Minister on Wednesday 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 305, what proportion of the sum of £50 million has to date been allocated to hospices; and if he will list the hospices concerned. [219278]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Reports on the use of the £50 million central budget for specialist palliative care in 2003–04 have been received from 32 of the 34 cancer networks. The remaining two networks received their allocations later than the others and were not included in the 2003–04 data collection exercise. The 32 networks received a total of £45.83 million and £38.38 million of this amount was spent in-year on specialist palliative care. £24.74 million (53.98 per cent. of the allocation) was used to support voluntary sector services, mostly hospices.

Investment plans for the use of the £50 million were developed by cancer networks in consultation with local stakeholders, including those in the voluntary sector. Decisions on which voluntary sector organisations should be allocated funding were made locally and this information is held at cancer network level.

Hospital Infections

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will state what powers NHS matrons have to withhold payment to cleaning service providers. [209006]

Mr. Hutton: Guidance issued to the national health service emphasises the importance of involving nurses in setting up cleaning contracts and monitoring standards. Matrons have the power to instigate a process whereby payment can be withheld if cleaning standards are not maintained.

Illegal Cigarettes

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the health implications of trade in illegal cigarettes. [220208]

Miss Melanie Johnson: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, has received representations from ASH and other health groups raising concerns that the availability of cheap illegal tobacco is undermining the Government's tobacco control strategy, particularly the use of high duty rates to discourage people from smoking. Smuggled tobacco has meant a continuing supply of cheap tobacco, often targeted on areas of deprivation.

This is why the Government, in "Tackling Tobacco Smuggling," published in March 2000, has set challenging targets for Her Majesty's Customs and Excise to reverse the growth in tobacco smuggling. As a result, in the first four years of the strategy, the total number of cigarettes smuggled into the United Kingdom each year has been reduced by over five billion, a reduction of over a third.

Infectious Diseases

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the reasons are for the delay in publishing guidance based on the recommendations of the Department's working group on healthcare workers and infectious diseases. [218192]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* In developing guidance on the health clearance of new health care workers for serious communicable diseases, it has been necessary to take into account the Cabinet Office review of imported infections and immigration, which has been considering the impact of immigration on public health and relevant issues, including health screening.

Guidelines will be published by the summer.

Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust

Mr. Best: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust has received the additional £5 million allocated after the external review of services in 1999; [214904]

(2) what assessment he has made of the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust's financial position; and if he will make a statement; [214906]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact on services at the Leeds Community and Mental Health Trust of its financial deficit. [215214]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 161–62W.

Malnutrition

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many elderly people were diagnosed as suffering from malnutrition in *(a)* Greater London, *(b)* each London borough and *(c)* England in each year since 2002–03. [220179]

Dr. Ladyman: In 2002–03, eight London residents aged 65 years or more were admitted to hospitals and diagnosed as suffering from malnutrition. In 2003–04, the number was 11. The corresponding figures for England are 112 and 116 respectively. Figures for individual London boroughs are not available.

Meat Hygiene

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what procedures the Meat Hygiene Service has put in place to ensure that trade union health and safety representatives can inspect all premises on which Meat Hygiene Service staff work. [219000]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I am advised that the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) has no legal basis upon which to authorise its appointed Unison trade union safety representatives to enter or inspect licensed fresh meat premises which are owned by a third party, and in which MHS staff are deployed. In partnership with Unison, the MHS has pursued this matter with the Health and Safety Executive and legal advisers, including seeking voluntary access agreements with industry representative bodies. The MHS understands that some plants have agreed access on this basis. However, as it stands, and pending any future changes to the relevant health and safety legislation, there is no further action that the MHS can take. Unison representatives were advised accordingly in January 2003.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what facilities the Meat Hygiene Service makes available to its inspection staff at meat plants to ensure that staff can store foodstuffs and consume meals and other refreshments in a clean, safe and hygienic environment; [219001]

(2) what facilities the Meat Hygiene Service makes available to its inspection staff to *(a)* wash, *(b)* shower and *(c)* ensure personal hygiene and cleanliness, in line with the MHS zoonosis risk guidance, when undertaking their duties at meat plants. [219002]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I am advised that the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) enforces the provisions of the Fresh Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995 (as amended); the Poultry Meat, Farmed Game Bird Meat and Rabbit Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995 (as amended); and the Wild Game Meat (Hygiene and Inspection) Regulations 1995; which require that "adequate facilities" are provided by plant operators to enable MHS inspection staff to carry out their duties. These facilities include those required to enable MHS staff to wash, shower and ensure their personal hygiene and cleanliness.

In ensuring that adequate facilities are provided, the MHS also has an obligation to ensure that premises, including plants in which its inspection staff work, comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (as amended). Regulations 22 and 25 place a responsibility on all plant operators to provide facilities for rest and eating meals in the premises they control or own.

The plant operator is the primary duty holder under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations. Some plant operators provide canteen facilities which are available to be shared by MHS inspection staff. Where shared eating facilities are not available, the MHS has provided refrigerators in some plants exclusively for the storage of food by inspection staff, and has also provided items such as microwave cookers and electric kettles for their usage.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment has been undertaken by the Meat Hygiene Service of the ergonomic and manual handling risks to its meat inspection staff; [219010]

(2) what measures the Meat Hygiene Service has put in place to remove the ergonomic risks to its inspection staff. [219011]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I am advised that an ergonomic aspects of work policy supported by guidance and an inspection/risk assessment checklist was agreed with UNISON and issued by the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) in June 2002. In accordance with this policy, any individual who considers their health is at risk from ergonomic factors would be referred to BMI Services Ltd. for an assessment. In the light of their report, adjustments to the working conditions would be made where these were considered reasonable as required by statute. Where ergonomic

factors in a licensed meat plant are of general concern, a report from BMI Services Ltd. may be commissioned. This would be referred to the MHS regional office for consideration with the plant operator before being reviewed by the joint MHS/UNISON health and safety committee for any recommendations they wish to make. The MHS has also provided ergonomic/manual handling training at both instructor and risk assessor level to 20 employees who will be deployed to review potential risks in licensed premises as appropriate.

MRSA

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in *(a)* England and *(b)* Leicester South conduct regular checks to identify cases of MRSA. [217981]

Miss Melanie Johnson: All acute national health service trusts are required to report methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bloodstream infections as part of the mandatory surveillance system introduced by this Government in April 2001.

National Electronic Library

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the reasons are for the decision to terminate access to the Drug and Therapeutics bulletin database on the National Electronic Library for Health in May; and if he will make a statement. [216254]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are no plans to terminate access to the electronic version of the Drug and Therapeutics bulletin available via the National Electronic Library for Health. This version of the bulletin will remain available to all national health service health professionals in England.

NHS Appointments

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role the NHS Appointments Board has in the approval of a foundation trust's chairman elected from within the Board of Governors; and if he will make a statement. [219519]

Mr. Hutton: None.

NHS Counter Fraud Compliance Unit

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date the NHS Counter Fraud Compliance Unit was proposed for closure in the Arm's Length Body review; what recent transitional arrangements have been proposed; and if he will make a statement. [218034]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* The devolution of the work of the National Health Service Counter Fraud and Security Management Service (CFSMS) compliance unit was intended to be 31 March 2005, with closure of the unit at the same time.

Unfortunately, an error occurred at the time of publication of "An Implementation Framework for Reconfiguring the Department of Health's Arm's Length Bodies" and the date for closure was shown as 1 October 2005, not 31 March 2005 as previously indicated in communication to compliance unit staff. Staff in the compliance unit were contacted once it became clear that an error had been made.

The CFSMS is continuing to consult with UNISON regarding transitional arrangements. These include retaining a small number of staff to undertake work on decommissioning the compliance unit for a limited period of time. This is in addition to the nine members of staff who will be retained to form a patient fraud support unit.

NHS Estates

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which functions of NHS Estates will remain with the Department of Health after 1 April; and which functions will transfer to other bodies; [218732]

(2) when he expects employees of NHS Estates to be informed of recent decisions on the organisation's future. [218803]

Mr. Hutton: The implementation framework for reconfiguring the Department's arm's length bodies, published on 30 November 2004, sets out the future arrangements for NHS Estates functions, post its dissolution.

A number of policy functions will be transferred to the Department, including "Procure 21" and decontamination. Responsibility for national health service advisory services will transfer to strategic health authorities. The National Patient Safety Agency will take on the implementation of programmes concerning food and cleaning, and certain design related projects.

Inventures trading services are likely to be disposed of through a managed closure.

Employees of NHS Estates are being updated on a regular basis on decisions made about the organisation's future.

NHS Spending

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the proportion of GDP spent on public healthcare in *(a)* 1996 and *(b)* 2005. [218172]

Mr. Hutton: The table shows the total public expenditure on health in the United Kingdom and expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).

	Total public health expenditure (£ billion)	*Total public health expenditure as a percentage of GDP*	
1996–97 Outturn	42.8	5.53	Cash
2005–06 Plan	88.6	7.13	Accruals

Note:
2005–06 data is consistent with the National Statistics release on 20 July 2004. 1996–97 data is on different basis and published in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2004. Data is available going back to 1998–99 that is on a consistent basis with the 2005–06 data.

NHS University

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the forecast total cost of the NHS University is from its establishment to its abolition; [219442]

(2) what the forecast cost is of abolishing the NHS University; [219443]

(3) what the average cost to his Department per student has been of providing a course at the NHS University. [219753]

Mr. Hutton: The audited accounts of the NHS University special health authority for the period 1 December 2003 to 31 March 2004 show expenditure of £13.3 million. The budget for the financial year 2004–05 is £44.6 million. Actual expenditure will only be determined once the financial year has been completed.

The NHSU remains scheduled for dissolution by July 2005. The part year cost of running the NHSU in 2005–06, and forecast transition costs, will be set as part of the 2005–06 budgets for the Department's arm's length bodies.

The Department does not hold information on the average cost per student of a course at the NHSU. Although the NHSU provides training direct to staff working in the national health service, it also provides training in partnership with a wide range of education and training providers.

The NHSU is not solely a provider of training. It undertakes other research and co-ordination activities on behalf of NHS learners.

Overseas Visitors

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the Government's response to the replies received on the consultation paper "Proposal to Exclude Overseas Visitors from Eligibility to Free NHS Primary Medical Services". [218568]

Mr. Hutton: We plan to publish the results of the consultation at the same time as we announce our preferred way forward. However, these proposals have highlighted some complex issues which we are now considering and we will make the planned announcement when we have resolved these.

Shipman Inquiry

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of each stage of the Shipman Inquiry, broken down by main budget headings; and what the cost was of legal fees paid to each party represented. [215623]

Mr. Hutton *[pursuant to the reply, 24 February 2005, Official Report, c. 793W]:* I regret that there was an error in my previous answer. The table detailing the legal fees of the represented parties funded from the inquiry's budget should have read as follows:

Legal fees of represented parties funded by Shipman Inquiry (to 31 January 2005)	£000
Tameside Families Support Group	2,159
Detective Inspector David Smith	126.5
Mr. Alan Massey, funeral director	27
Mrs. Primrose Shipman	35
Market Street surgery staff	28.5
Dr. Alan Banks, Medical Adviser, West Pennine Health Authority	19.5
Tameside Register Office staff	15
Mrs. Christine Whitworth, executor of victim	0.4
Dr. Michael Overton, relative of victim	0.3
Mrs. Christine Schofield, housing manager at sheltered housing complex	1.4
Mayfair Chemists (Hyde) Ltd. and Co-op Health Care Ltd.	3.5
Total	2,416.1

Skin Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Government (1) have spent on promoting public health policies aimed at protecting against skin cancer in each of the last 10 years; and how much it plans to spend in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; [212308]

(2) how much of the money spent by his Department aimed at protecting against skin cancer over the last 10 years has been spent through Cancer Research UK. [212309]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Annual figures on expenditure of sun awareness campaigns undertaken by the Health Education Authority are not available between 1996–97 and 1998–99.

Amounts invested in sun awareness campaigns are shown in the table.

	Amount (£)
1999–2000	543,000
2000–01	50,000
2001–02	126,000
2002–03	140,000
2003–04	150,000

Funding of approximately £400,000 over the next three years from March 2004 has been approved for the Cancer Research UK to run its "SunSmart" sun awareness campaign on behalf of the United Kingdom health departments, following the successful launch of "SunSmart" last year.

Student Midwives

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many student midwives were in receipt of non-means tested state financial support in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [218778]

Mr. Hutton: Non-means tested national health service bursaries have been awarded to 1,514 and 1,677 Diploma in Higher Education midwifery students in the academic years 2002–03 and 2003–04 respectively.

Sudan 1

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the Food Standards Agency contacted the Health Protection Agency in connection with contamination of the food chain by Sudan 1 dye; and if he will make a statement; [218626]

(2) what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the World Health Organisation and *(b)* the US Food and Drug Administration on contamination of UK food by Sudan 1 dye; and if he will make a statement; [218627]

(3) what discussions his Department has had with the Institute of Grocery Distribution Emergency Planning Liaison Group about Sudan 1 dye contamination of the food chain; and if he will make a statement; [218696]

(4) when the Food Standards Agency contacted the Central Science Laboratory in York in connection with contamination of the food chain by Sudan 1 dye; and if he will make a statement; [218698]

(5) what discussions officials from *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Food Standards Agency have had with (i) the European Commission and (ii) the Global Food Safety Initiative about contamination of the food chain by Sudan 1 dye; and if he will make a statement; [218699]

(6) when *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Food Standards Agency first informed (i) the British Retail Consortium, (ii) the Institute of Grocery Distribution Emergency Planning Liaison Group and (iii) individual food retailers about the risk of food contamination by Sudan 1 dye; and if he will make a statement. [218700]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* The Food Standards Agency (FSA) contacted a wide range of stakeholders on the issue of Sudan contamination of food. No discussions were held specifically with the Institute of Grocery Distribution Emergency Planning Liaison Group.

The FSA has not contacted the Central Science Laboratory in connection with this contamination. The FSA helped fund development of cheap tests for Sudan 1 dye, working with Public Analysts Laboratories.

Officials from the FSA were first in contact with the European Commission about contamination of foods with Sudan 1 in June 2003 when instances of contamination were initially identified. This contact has continued on a regular basis regarding this contamination. The FSA has had no direct contact with the Global Food Safety Initiative.

The FSA first informed the British Retail Consortium and other stakeholders of the risk of contamination of food with Sudan 1 in July 2003.

No formal contact was made between the FSA and the Health Protection Agency over this incident of contamination of food with Sudan 1. It is the FSA's responsibility to protect public health in relation to food.

No direct contact has been made with the World Health Organisation or Food and Drug Administration on the issue of contamination of United Kingdom foods with Sudan 1.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the recall of food products known to contain the Sudan 1 dye. [219376]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A written statement on the recall of food products known to be contaminated with Sudan 1 was made to the House on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 74WS.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what forms of cancer may be caused by the Sudan 1 dye; what symptoms may be shown by those consuming the dye; and what degree of risk is associated with the dye. [219377]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Sudan 1 can cause liver cancer in laboratory rats. Although Sudan 1 could contribute to an increased risk of cancer in humans, at the levels present in food that risk is likely to be very small. It is not possible to further quantify the risk, but experts advise that exposure should be kept as low as possible. Since Sudan 1 is not permitted for food use, it should not be present in food at all.

Sun

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Government have spent on advising the public that vitamin D obtained from sunlight is essential for health. [212311]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government provide advice on vitamin D and sunlight as part of the "SunSmart" campaign, which is run by Cancer Research UK on behalf of United Kingdom health departments. The Government give advice to the public on the benefits for health of obtaining vitamin D from gentle sunlight in all relevant publications. There is no separately identified budget.

Killer Disease Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to reduce substantially mortality rates from the major killer diseases by 2010. [219231]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The latest information on cardiovascular disease and cancer mortality shows a 27.1 per cent. and 12.2 per cent. reduction respectively, compared with the baseline period of 1995–97. We are ahead of where we planned to be at this stage and are on track to deliver both a 40 per cent. reduction in cardiovascular disease mortality and a 20 per cent. reduction in cancer mortality by 2010.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce mortality rates from heart disease by at least 40 per cent. in people under 75 years by 2010 will be met; [219232]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the inequality in mortality rates from heart disease and stroke between the fifth of areas with the worst health and deprivation indicators and the population as a whole by at least 40 per cent. by 2010 will be met. [219245]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department regularly assesses the likelihood of delivery of these targets and continues to be confident they will be met or exceeded. In 2004, a major risk assessment was conducted on the

cardiovascular mortality target and this concluded that the Department and the national health service are on track to meet or exceed these commitments.

Tuberculosis

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of tuberculosis were diagnosed in each of the last five years; and how many sufferers were born abroad. [217979]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Protection Agency publishes this data on its website at:

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/tb/epidemiology/table14.htm.

Variant CJD

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will commission a research project into the effectiveness of pentosan in the treatment of variant CJD. [213864]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Following advice from the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee, the Department commissioned two research programmes in 1999 to study the therapeutic benefit of pentosan polysulphate (PPS). The first study, lead by Dr. Christine Farquhar of the Institute for Animal Health's Neuropathogenesis Unit in Edinburgh, showed that PPS was effective in preventing the development of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease in mice, but only if given at the time of infection or shortly after. It was not effective if given after clinical disease had developed. The second study, lead by Dr. Harbans Sharma from Manchester University, studied the pharmacokinetics (uptake) of PPS in mice and in human volunteers. These studies showed that PPS was very poorly absorbed by the body when taken orally and did not enter the brain.

The Department is currently considering proposals for further research by Dr. Farquhar and Dr. Sharma.

Vitamins

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Government has spent on free vitamins for mothers and babies in each of the last 10 years. [212310]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Government spending on vitamins since 1995–96, the last year for which figures are available, is shown in the table.

Financial year	*Amount (£)*
1995–96	22,000
1996–97	31,000
1997–98	22,000
1998–99	21,000
1999–2000	17,000
2000–01	13,000
2001–02	13,500
2002–03	13,000
2003–04	12,500

Waiting Times

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 564W, on waiting times, when he intends to begin *(a)* monitoring and *(b)* publishing waiting times from general practitioner referral to start of treatment. [218344]

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what procedures will be counted under the 18-week waiting time target for hospital treatment; [218193]

(2) what statistics he plans to collect on waiting times for diagnosis; what procedures will be covered; whether *(a)* average and *(b)* maximum waits will be collected; and what the timetable will be for publication of these statistics. [218702]

Mr. Hutton: *[holding answers 28 February 2005 and 1 March 2005]:* The 18-week target applies to waiting times for all patients referred by a general practitioner (GP) to a consultant and includes waits for any necessary diagnosis.

By the end of 2008, waiting times will be measured from GP referral to start of treatment. The Department is currently working with the national health service to develop proposals for monitoring diagnostic waiting times and delivery of the 18-week target. The further detailed information requested is therefore not yet available.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Atomic Test Veterans

Llew Smith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent assessment the Legal Services Commission has made of the application by British atomic test veterans for legal aid. [220643]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) granted limited funding in June 2002 to two firms of solicitors to undertake preliminary investigations.

The LSC made an assessment of the atomic veterans' Multi Party Action (MPA) in October 2004. This action includes British veterans among other nationalities. The LSC is currently awaiting further information from the solicitors to enable a decision to be made about whether further funding should be provided. Once the information is available the LSC will first consider the merits and then whether the action is affordable from the cash limited budget, having compared it with other major group actions that are being proposed. This is the standard procedure that the LSC currently applies to any major MPA.

Data Protection Act

Mr. Evans: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what provisions *(a)* within and *(b)* under the Data Protection Act 1998 are designed to ensure that designated data controllers dispose of information in an appropriate manner. [220209]

Mr. Leslie: There are no specific provisions in or under the Data Protection Act 1998 that identify approved methods for data controllers to carry out the deletion, erasure or destruction of personal data, or to effect the physical disposal or destruction of the data processing medium. However, under the terms of

the 7th Data Protection Principle, data controllers are required to take appropriate technical measures against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data, and against accidental loss of personal data.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who the ministerial design champion for his Department is. [215654]

Mr. Leslie: I am the Ministerial Design Champion for the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Land Search Charges

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Government has to vary land search charges. [219916]

Mr. Lammy: I should first explain that in relation to land search charges the Department for Constitutional Affairs only has responsibility for local land charge fees, which include the fees for official and personal searches of the local land charges register, in England. However, I also have Ministerial responsibility for the fees payable to Land Registry under the Land Registration Act 2002, the Land Charges Act 1972 and the Agricultural Credits Act 1928. There are no plans to change the fees payable to Land Registry for searches of the land register, the land charges register or the register of agricultural charges.

Under the Local Land Charges Act 1975, the Lord Chancellor has responsibility, with the concurrence of HM Treasury, for setting local land charge fees in England.

On 1 March the Government successfully introduced an amendment to the Constitutional Reform Bill that will alter the Local Land Charges Act 1975 to give local authorities in England the power to set fees for local land charge services, with the exception of personal search fees, 1 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 849. If the amendment is enacted the new power will come into force on a date to be fixed.

The amendment will allow local authorities to set fees, which, taking one year with another, will enable them to recover an amount up to, but not in excess of, the costs they incur in providing local land charge services. In setting fees, local authorities will have to have regard to guidance issued by the Lord Chancellor. An illustrative version of the type of guidance the Lord Chancellor may issue has been placed in the House Library. Further consultation will be undertaken before any guidance is issued.

The amendment does not change the position in Wales, where the National Assembly for Wales has, since 31 December 2004, had responsibility for setting local land charge fees. Nor does it change the position in relation to fees for personal searches of the local land charges register, where a review is to be undertaken before any decision on changing the arrangements for setting these fees is made.

It is expected that the study into the market for property search information being conducted by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) will include consideration of the issues relating to personal searches. The OFT aim to complete the study this summer. I will consider in the light of the OFT report whether any further work is necessary to complete the review before making any decisions on the way forward.

Legal Costs (Traveller Encampments)

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the total cost to public funds of providing legal advice, assistance and support in relation to planning applications and appeals in respect of Traveller encampments was in the last period for which figures are available; [216647]

(2) in how many legal cases no longer before the courts and involving a Traveller or a group of Travellers appealing against a decision by a local planning authority the Community Law Partnership has given advice. [219514]

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the eligibility requirements for legal aid are for *(a)* Travellers and *(b)* home owners; [219917]

(2) what support the Legal Services Commission (LSC) provides to Travellers; and how much the LSC has spent on such support in each of the last five years; [219918]

(3) how many full-time equivalent staff in his Department deal with issues relating to Travellers; [219949]

(4) pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1296W, whether the Travellers' legal helpline provides advice in relation to *(a)* eviction actions and *(b)* planning enforcement actions; [220172]

(5) pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1296W, on Traveller sites, when the Government began funding the Community Law Partnership to provide legal support to Travellers; and how much funding was provided in each year. [220187]

Mr. Lammy: It is not possible to identify individual grants of legal aid to Gypsies and Travellers in some categories of law because we do not collect information to indicate whether clients are from these ethnic groups or follow any particular lifestyle.

The Community Law Partnership has held a contract with the LSC to provide publicly funded services since January 2000. It has held a contract with the LSC since April 2002 to provide telephone advice to Gypsies and Travellers on housing matters, including eviction and planning enforcement actions. Its grants have been as follows.

	£
April 2002-March 2003	131,675
April 2003-March 2004	131,675
April 2004-March 2005	50,000

In addition, Legal Help, which provides for basic advice and assistance on questions of English law including, planning applications and appeals, is available subject to satisfying the statutory tests of the

applicant's means and the merits of the case. The LSC does not hold data on how much Legal Help is awarded to Gypsies and Travellers.

Legal Representation at planning applications and appeals is generally outside the scope of legal aid. However, since April 2000, funding can be made available in exceptional cases under section 6(8)*(b)* of the Access to Justice Act 1999, when the relevant criteria are satisfied, for example, where the case concerns the applicant's home. This protects the applicant's fundamental rights and ensures a fair hearing. It is not possible to give a precise figure for total costs but, since April 2000, a maximum of £45,000 plus VAT (excluding Legal Help costs) has been spent on planning applications in relation to Traveller encampments. The costs over the last five years break down as follows.

	£
April 2001-March 2002	14,600 plus VAT
April 2002-March 2003	7,000 plus VAT
April 2003-March 2004	0
April 2004-March 2005	23,644 plus VAT

According to our records, legal aid has been granted to the Community Law Partnership for representation in 16 such cases. We do not know whether all these cases have concluded.

The Ormiston Children and Families Trust and the Fenland Citizens Advice Bureau has received a Partnership Initiative Budget grant to pilot the provision of information and advice services on social welfare law specifically to Gypsies and Travellers in Cambridgeshire. LSC funding amounted to £5,050 in 2003–04 and £17,200 so far in 2004–05.

The eligibility criteria for legal aid for Gypsies and Travellers are the same as for other individuals in England and Wales.

Allowances are given within the financial eligibility tests for civil legal aid to disregard equity held in a homeowner's principal home up to a limit of £100,000, in addition to payments for a mortgage of up to £100,000.

No member of staff at the Department for Constitutional Affairs deals solely with issues relating to Travellers.

Population Censuses

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Registrar General was permitted to retain the 1921 to 1971 decennial population censuses for England and Wales during the period 1997 to 2004 in his Department for renewable periods of 10 years. [220594]

Mr. Leslie: Decennial population censuses for the period from 1921 to 1971 are approved for retention in the responsible department under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958. The Lord Chancellor's Retention Instrument number 38 (signed in 1996) approves retention of the 1921 and 1951 censuses. The Lord Chancellor's Retention Instrument number 63 (signed in 2001) approves retention of the 1961 and 1971 censuses. There are no surviving decennial population census records for 1931 and no census was taken in 1941.

Court Disputes Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to reduce the proportion of disputes that are resolved by the courts; [219144]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to reduce unnecessary delay and cost in the legal system; [219145]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to increase year on year the level of satisfaction of users by taking speedy, high quality decisions in the legal system and ensuring that outcomes are enforced effectively; [219146]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to increase year on year the number of people who receive suitable assistance in priority areas of law involving fundamental rights or social exclusion; [219151]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to modernise the constitution and ensure proper access to information by citizens; [219152]

(6) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to deliver justice in partnership with the independent judiciary; [219153]

(7) whether the public service agreement target to increase value for money from the criminal justice system by 3 per cent. per year was met in 2004; [219154]

(8) whether the public service agreement target to increase efficiency in the criminal justice system by at least 2 per cent. a year, including the delivery of legal aid, was met in 2004. [219155]

Mr. Leslie: Progress against these targets is set out in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' autumn performance report (Cm 6391) which was presented to Parliament in December 2004.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce public fear of crime and antisocial behaviour. [219156]

Mr. Leslie: Plans to deliver this Public Service Agreement target, which was announced as part of the 2004 Spending Review and come into effect on 1 April 2005, are currently being developed. Progress will be covered in the Departmental Report 2005 and the Autumn Performance Report 2005 both of which will be laid before Parliament later this year.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of care cases being completed in the courts within 40 weeks by 10 per cent. by 2009–10 will be met; [219159]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to achieve earlier and more proportionate resolution of legal problems and disputes; [219160]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase advice and assistance to help people resolve their legal disputes earlier and more effectively; [219161]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the opportunities for people involved in court cases to settle their disputes out of court; [219162]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce delays in resolving those disputes that need to be decided by the courts; [219163]

(6) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to enable the development of democratic institutions of Government that command public confidence; [219164]

(7) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to create a modern, efficient and effective Department that has the capacity and capability to deliver excellent public services. [219165]

Mr. Leslie: Plans to deliver these Public Service Agreement targets and Strategic Objectives, which were announced as part of the 2004 Spending Review and come into effect on 1 April 2005, are currently being developed. Progress will be covered in the Departmental Report 2005 and the Autumn Performance Report 2005 both of which will be laid before Parliament later this year.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Gambling

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many meetings *(a)* officials and *(b)* Ministers in her Department have held with foreign based casino operators in the last 18 months; what the date of each meeting was; and who the attendees were. [219805]

Mr. Caborn: Since the publication of the report of the Gambling Review Body (Cm 5206) in July 2001, the Department has undertaken a very extensive programme of consultations with interested bodies about options and proposals for changes to gambling law in Great Britain. There have been two formal public consultations, the first on the Review Body's report and the second on the draft clauses published for pre-legislative scrutiny in November 2003.

In addition to these consultations the relevant Government Departments have corresponded with and met individual companies (including those who have expressed an interest in trading in Great Britain as well as those already doing so), trade associations, charities and other bodies concerned with problem gambling or who benefit from lotteries, local authorities, trade unions, law enforcement agencies, academics and many other bodies and individuals, including members of the public, with an interest. These contacts, designed to ensure that the Government's policy proposals are sound and take full account of all relevant benefits, costs and risks, have involved both Ministers and officials. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Code.

Departmental Policies

Geraint Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Croydon, Central, the effects of the Department's policies and actions on Croydon, Central constituency since 1997. [220384]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Croydon, Central since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. Two school sport partnerships involving eight School Sport Co-ordinators and 36 Primary Link teachers is based in Croydon, Central. They have received two Sport England grants totalling £678,454. To achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. Sports facilities in Croydon, Central have benefited from three Sport England Lottery grants totalling £3,018,850.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England, London grants increased from £13.6 million to £133.8 million, including from 1 April 2003 funding to major national arts organisations in London. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in London will be £151.6 million. Croydon, Central has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals, including the Croydon Clocktower.

Young people in Croydon, Central benefit from the London Youth Music Action Zone, known as Sound Connections. Since 2000, the Action Zone has been awarded three grants totalling £1,245,000, and so far it has successfully engaged over 2,000 young people in music-making opportunities.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Croydon, Central will be

among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Croydon, Central also benefits from the Renaissance in the regions museums initiative. The London Museums Hub in partnership with several museums, including Croydon Museum, is working with local refugee groups on an exhibition to be displayed in the museum or a local community centre.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity in the Croydon area. FilmLondon have funded a number of film related activities in the Croydon, Central constituency including £1,000 towards the Croydon Film Festival in 2001–02 and £7,000 to the Croydon Film Fund between 2001–03.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Croydon, Central with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 5,715.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on New Year's Eve to 11 am on New Year's Day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Croydon, Central, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Croydon, Central has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including the London Development Agency. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Croydon, Central.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth £217,367 to Croydon, Central since 2 May 1997, including £100,637 to the Church of St John the Baptist from 2002 to 2004 and £81,000 to St Peter's Church from 2003 to 2004.

In common with all those in the United Kingdom, the public library branches in Croydon, Central constituency are connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million Lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community and informal learning value of public libraries. Croydon Council has recognised this value and took part in an initiative called the Croydon Online Community Network. This enabled some libraries—two of them in Croydon, Central—to be connected to the Croydon Online Network and the creation of a Croydon Job Mart website and a Croydon Health Information Network. Housebound users were also enabled to connect to the internet. The project received a total award of £128,000 from the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund in 1998–99. A proportion of this was of benefit to libraries in the Croydon, Central constituency.

In 2003 the London Borough of Croydon were successful at stage one of the application process for PFI credits, and were allocated £4.6 million on a provisional basis for the Ashburton Learning Village project, which incorporated a new branch library, support for an improved household library service, and music service. This will be of direct benefit to residents within the Croydon, Central Constituency.

Information from the National Lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Croydon, Central has benefited from 221 awards totalling just under £13 million. Of these, 47 awards worth over £5.6 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Digital Broadcasting

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 237–38W,

on Digital Broadcasting, what the technical restraints on DTT transmissions from the Sutton Coldfield transmitter are. [219657]

Estelle Morris: Viewers in Solihull will be receiving their conventional television signals from the main Sutton Coldfield transmitter. Sutton Coldfield does broadcast the full range of digital services, but congestion of the spectrum means that their coverage currently has to be limited to avoid causing interference to viewers of analogue television services.

Although many viewers in the West Midlands are able to receive digital services from Sutton Coldfield, the coverage restrictions result in patchy digital coverage in and around Solihull.

At switchover, these restrictions will be removed and enable the coverage of the digital services to be increased to ensure that everyone who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels in analogue form (BBC 1 and 2, ITV, Channel 4/S4C and Channel 5) can receive them on digital systems.

Growth Areas (Funding)

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding her Department has earmarked for growth areas to ensure that they have the resources required to meet the demands of a growing population. [218334]

Mr. Caborn: The majority of the Department's funding is delegated to its non-departmental public bodies. We have not, therefore, earmarked any direct funding for the growth areas although we do recognise that culture has a vital contribution to make to them and are working closely with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. We have also encouraged our NDPBs to engage with local delivery vehicles and local regeneration partnerships within the growth areas and they are actively involved in a number of pieces of work including:

the joint funding of a Cultural Coordinator for the North Kent section of the Thames Gateway by Culture South East, Arts Council England South East, Sport England South East, South East England Museum and Library Archive and Tourism South East. The Coordinator will work with these agencies and other partners to ensure a strategic and coordinated approach to the development of cultural provision with Thames Gateway North Kent;

the development of cultural guidance for development bodies within the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area. This work, due to be published on 15 March, has been coordinated by Culture South East, Living East and Culture East Midlands working with English Heritage, Sport England, Arts Council England, Tourist Boards, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, regional bodies advising on architecture and the built environment, and screen and media agencies from within the three regions as well as Government offices and local authorities.

Libraries

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was spent on library *(a)* buildings and *(b)* books in Greater London in each year since 2001–02. [220180]

Estelle Morris: The following information shows the funds spent on library premises and books in Greater London.

This information derives from the Annual Public Library Statistics published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). 2002–03 is the latest data available. Because of the way the statistics are calculated and presented, the books figure also includes the purchase of pamphlets.

Funds spent on library premises in Greater London

	£
2001–02	17,818,383
2002–03	20,183,505

Funds spent on books in Greater London

	£
2001–02	13,222,992
2002–03	13,196,648

Licensing Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what recent representations she has had from amateur sports clubs regarding the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003; [220099]

(2) what recent representations she has had from the police regarding the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003; [220100]

(3) what recent representations she has received from alcohol abuse charities regarding the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003; [220162]

(4) what recent representations she has had from religious groups regarding the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003; [220165]

(5) what recent representations she has received regarding the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. [220279]

Mr. Caborn: There have been two recent public consultations on *(a)* draft Regulations and an Order under the Licensing Act 2003 which took place between 15 September and 10 November 2004, and *(b)* draft fee regulations under the 2003 Act which took place between 4 November and 23 December 2004.

In respect of *(a)* we received 269 responses from 230 public bodies, organisations and individuals, some of which responded more than once. These included two from amateur sports clubs; 10 from police forces including one from their representative body (the Association of Chief Police Officers); 0 from alcohol abuse charities; and 0 from religious groups. We also received a response from a Member of Parliament on behalf of The National United Temperance Council.

In respect of *(b)* we received 427 responses, including 97 from amateur sports clubs and their representative bodies; one from a police force and one from ACPO; 0 from alcohol abuse charities; and 0 from religious groups.

Since these consultations ended we have received correspondence from a wide range of groups and individuals including from sports clubs and their representative bodies, individual police officers, individuals from the field of alcohol abuse charities, and from those representing religious groups. This correspondence has primarily concerned the level at which fees have been set and the potential impact of 24 hour opening.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many extended licences have been issued since the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [220164]

Mr. Caborn: 7 February marked the start of the transition from the old licensing regimes to the arrangements under the Licensing Act 2003. However, the 2003 Act will not be fully implemented until November 2005. It is therefore too soon to say how many licences have been issued varying the hours of operation.

Lottery Funding (Travellers)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the Traveller community groups and organisations that have received Lottery funding since May 1997. [219951]

Estelle Morris: The following lists all successful Lottery awards that have been granted to groups that feature the words 'Traveller' or 'Gypsy' in their name, or in project description. This does not mean that all the groups listed are Traveller groups or organisations.

Ackworth Concert Society
Action Group For Irish Youth
Advisory Council—Education of Romany and Other Travellers
An Tearmann Playgroup
An Tearmann Project
BIAS Brent Irish Advisory Service
Bagworth Forward Group
Belfast Public Libraries
Belfast Traveller Support Group
Belfast Travellers Education And Development Group
Black Bull Clog
Brent Irish Advisory Service
Call of the Wild
Cardiff Gypsy Sites Project (Ltd.)
Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire
Craigavon Travellers Support Committee
Crathie Opportunity Holidays
Creative Development Partnership
CSV
Dave Kelbie-Lejazzetal
Derry Travellers' Support Group
Deva Arts
East Norfolk Travellers Association
EHCPA Community Playbus Association
Fellow Travellers
First Steps Pre-School and Family Group
Gainsborough Traveller Initiative
Generator X
Groundwork Southwark
Gypsy Council
Gypsy Traveller Needs Association
Hart Voluntary Action
International Gypsy Band Swap
Irish Community Care Manchester
KIDS
Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange
London Borough of Bromley
London Borough of Hillingdon
London Gypsy and Traveller Unit
Marianne Olyver Gypsy Orchestra
Mela Group—Healthy Nations 2000
Murston Early Years Project
Museum of East Anglian Life
National Travellers Action Group
New Forest And Romsey Mobile Community Project
Norfolk Local Education Authority
Northamptonshire County Council (Education/Community Learning)
Northern Ireland Council for Travelling People
Patchway, Bradley Stoke and Stoke Gifford Play Association
Presfield Special School
Radical Gypsy
Raynehurst Junior School
S.T.E.P
Save the Children
Scottish Gypsy Traveller Association
Serious Events Ltd.
Sheffield Gypsy and Traveller Support Group
Sheila Douglas
Smooth Ride Guides
St. Johns Parent Partnership Fund
St. Peter's Playgroup
Stoke-On-Trent Citizens Advice Bureau
Surrey County Council
The Abbey Lawn Trust
The Bromley Gypsy Traveller Community Project
The Dawnay Primary School
The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen
The Gypsy Community Project
The Queen's School, Wisbech
Traveller Education and Information Project (North East)
Traveller Girls Group
Traveller Movement (NI)
Travellers Funhouse
Travellers Rest Community Football Club
Travelling Homeopaths Collective
Unique Coffee Bar
Unst Youth Centre Trust
Upper Springfield Development Trust
Uxbridge College
Witchford Traveller Group
Women's Music and Performance Workshops
Wrexham Catholic Forum for Traveller Children

Wroughton Infant School

York Travellers Trust

Young Travellers Education Project

This information is available from the Department's searchable Lottery award database at www.lottery.culture.gsi.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the Lottery distributors.

MadforArts Project

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on what occasions the MadforArts Advisory Panel has met since its formation; who attended the meetings; if she will publish the *(a)* minutes and *(b)* accounts of expenses claimed for each meeting; and if she will make a statement. [219419]

Estelle Morris: The MadforArts Advisory Panel has met only once, on 6 September 2004. Eight members of the panel attended, plus one support person and four staff from the MadforArts team. The Advisory Panel has an informal advisory role and no minutes were taken, nor are there any published expense accounts. The costs involved for the meeting were £1,011.23. The next meeting is due to be held on 10 March 2005.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public funding the MadforArts Advisory Panel *(a)* received and *(b)* allocated in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [219420]

Estelle Morris: The MadforArts Advisory Panel does not receive or allocate any public funding. Its only costs are expenses for panel meetings.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what mechanisms have been put in place to invite feedback about the MadforArts project; and if she will make a statement. [219421]

Estelle Morris: There are a large number of ways in which users of the MadforArts website are encouraged to provide feedback. These include:

opportunities throughout the site for users to contact managers of the project;

a discussion forum for all users, which includes several threads requesting feedback and future ideas, set up by the project team and three threads set up by the project's users;

opportunities for users to suggest events, articles or features that they would like the website to cover;

regular opportunities for those attending related events to provide feedback and thoughts on the project;

opportunities for users to give their own ideas on the future of the project, and the direction they would like it to take;

a weekly e-mail bulletin to all users which asks for feedback; and

evaluation forms distributed to active users of the project which ask for feedback and suggested improvements.

In addition, all suggestions for improvement that have arisen in the more general debates on the discussion board have also been logged and noted by the project team.

Motorsport

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what resources are available to assist in the development of karting facilities for young people. [220251]

Mr. Caborn: The Motor Sports Association (MSA)—the UK's governing body for motor sports—is active in supporting the development of karting for young people. In partnership with the National Schools Karting Association, the MSA provides opportunities for young people to experience the sport at events held at karting facilities, which can themselves apply to the Club Development Fund for support on safety infrastructure and equipment.

Furthermore, the development of three international-standard karting tracks in the UK was one of the recommendations to emerge from the Department for Trade and Industry's Motorsport Competitiveness Panel in July 2003. The industry-led Motorsport Development Board, formed to advise on implementing these recommendations, is currently addressing them as part of a "whole sport" approach to widening participation.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what resources have been made available to fund motorsport development in each of the last three years; and to which projects it has been allocated. [220252]

Mr. Caborn: Between April 2000 to March 2004, £8,330,644 was made available by the Department for Trade and Industry, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the regional development agencies for the east of England, East Midlands, south east of England and West Midlands to fund motorsport development.

Using the programme headings subsequently devised by the Motorsport Competitiveness Panel, this funding was allocated to projects for:

Project	£ *Funding allocated*
Motorsport Academy	1,747,000
Motorsport Learning Grid	331,000
Business Development	2,439,144
Widening Sporting Participation	414,000
Energy Efficient Motorsport	94,500
Development of Volunteer Officials	0
Other regional revenue projects	435,000
Other regional capital projects	2,870,000

The same Departments and agencies have also committed £16 million to implement the recommendations of the Motorsport Competitiveness Panel. Between April 2004 to March 2009 a total of £1,751,478 has been provided to first-year development projects for:

Project	£ *Funding allocated*
Motorsport Academy	291,511
Motorsport Learning Grid	300,000
Business development	245,250
Widening sporting participation	350,325
Energy efficient motorsport	326,500
Development of volunteer officials	37,100

Additional funding will be allocated to the delivery of these projects in the following years, subject to the approval of the Motorsport Development Board.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Department for Trade and Industry Motorsport Competitiveness Panel reported; and what steps have been taken by her Department to implement its conclusion. [220253]

Mr. Caborn: The Motorsport Competitiveness Panel report was published in July 2003. The Motorsport Development Board was subsequently appointed to provide industry and sporting leadership on the five year programme to implement the Competitiveness Panel's recommendations, meeting for the first time in November 2003.

The Board is in the process of producing delivery plans for each of the areas of the Competitiveness Panel's recommendations and to-date it has supported projects under the six broad recommendations: Motorsport Academy, Motorsport Learning Grid, Business Development, Widening Sporting Participation, Energy Efficient Motorsport (EEMS), and Development of Volunteer Officials.

National Lottery

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the total amount *(a)* allocated and *(b)* distributed by each of the lottery distribution bodies in each year since 1994. [218569]

Estelle Morris: The figures appear in the following table by calendar years. Those for 1995 incorporate the last few months of 1994, before which the lottery did not operate.

The figures in the 'allocated' columns are available from the Department's searchable lottery award database at www.lottery.culture.gsi.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the lottery distributors. The figures for 2004 are not yet final due to lags in the reporting process.

The figures in the "distributed" column represent draw-down by the distributors from the National Lottery Distribution Fund (NLDF), and include administrative costs.

1995

Lottery distributor	*Allocated*	£ *Distributed*
Arts Council England	206,611,779	21,839,037
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	4,307,651	289,217
Arts Council of Wales	8,927,997	1,697,021
Community Fund	154,198,448	9,289,002
Heritage Lottery Fund	107,816,131	31,341,926
Millennium Commission	330,973,165	5,307,031
New Opportunities Fund	0	0
Scottish Arts Council	13,192,932	1,395,777
Scottish Screen	0	0
Sport England	93,941,707	18,576,000
Sport Scotland	8,951,222	2,793,143
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	4,574,880	677,417
Sports Council for Wales	4,953,171	791,956
UK Film Council	0	0
UK Sport	0	0
Awards for All	0	0

1996

Lottery distributor	*Allocated*	£ *Distributed*
Arts Council England	469,874,349	108,000,732
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	7,062,937	1,423,718
Arts Council of Wales	12,975,071	7,058,727
Community Fund	287,688,900	112,830,703
Heritage Lottery Fund	340,408,844	74,658,667
Millennium Commission	430,308,405	29,237,983
New Opportunities Fund	0	0
Scottish Arts Council	36,114,453	10,328,628
Scottish Screen	0	0
Sport England	105,789,797	78,571,000
Sport Scotland	13,957,583	8,827,095
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	6,529,998	3,904,247
Sports Council for Wales	13,464,328	5,140,464
UK Film Council	0	0
UK Sport	0	0
Awards for All	0	0

1997

Lottery distributor	*Allocated*	£ *Distributed*
Arts Council England	311,086,127	274,755,968
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	4,740,377	3,068,466
Arts Council of Wales	18,398,152	12,348,056
Community Fund	213,578,949	202,872,982
Heritage Lottery Fund	474,151,639	131,937,484
Millennium Commission	1,125,429,317	461,693,783
New Opportunities Fund	0	0
Scottish Arts Council	24,195,170	22,842,498
Scottish Screen	0	0
Sport England	159,449,315	135,869,000
Sport Scotland	12,139,367	12,732,069
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	7,618,882	6,712,468
Sports Council for Wales	18,223,262	12,122,000
UK Film Council	0	0
UK Sport	200,000	0
Awards for All	0	0

1998

Lottery distributor	*Allocated*	£ *Distributed*
Arts Council England	134,616,217	337,445,773
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	10,402,112	4,088,256
Arts Council of Wales	12,499,587	15,353,233
Community Fund	273,595,067	257,885,805
Heritage Lottery Fund	318,130,322	182,286,502
Millennium Commission	41,143,277	340,291,889
New Opportunities Fund	0	837,098
Scottish Arts Council	37,331,278	22,303,532
Scottish Screen	0	0
Sport England	209,491,814	225,890,000
Sport Scotland	26,205,559	21,096,467
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	10,515,805	6,962,029
Sports Council for Wales	6,971,813	12,895,838
UK Film Council	0	0
UK Sport	12,160	0
Awards for All	2,577,779	0

1999

Lottery distributor	*Allocated*	£ *Distributed*
Arts Council England	203,611,377	233,995,234
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	8,622,996	8,850,837
Arts Council of Wales	14,366,083	14,219,222
Community Fund	483,936,056	355,530,515
Heritage Lottery Fund	212,445,756	256,505,732
Millennium Commission	42,946,129	559,325,000
New Opportunities Fund	408,714,012	31,304,340

1999

Lottery distributor	Allocated	£ Distributed
Scottish Arts Council	13,682,936	30,044,461
Scottish Screen	0	0
Sport England	261,971,374	357,600,000
Sport Scotland	22,320,874	20,384,294
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	6,267,805	9,806,819
Sports Council for Wales	4,754,354	16,032,000
UK Film Council	5,823,653	0
UK Sport	11,011,950	6,593,712
Awards for All	23,781,933	0

2000

Lottery distributor	Allocated	£ Distributed
Arts Council England	86,474,573	217,088,700
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	1,522,456	5,778,377
Arts Council of Wales	10,346,757	13,380,923
Community Fund	345,487,914	398,789,671
Heritage Lottery Fund	172,157,650	282,853,899
Millennium Commission	38,069,526	526,157,000
New Opportunities Fund	202,446,377	138,250,000
Scottish Arts Council	14,549,320	24,624,354
Scottish Screen	3,392,911	768,327
Sport England	326,022,512	236,566,000
Sport Scotland	20,012,659	23,684,361
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	3,662,642	7,036,999
Sports Council for Wales	3,240,967	8,360,000
UK Film Council	18,743,451	7,552,509
UK Sport	24,005,579	24,754,538
Awards for All	45,277,329	0

2001

Lottery distributor	Allocated	£ Distributed
Arts Council England	134,032,103	213,432,591
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	3,578,985	6,570,211
Arts Council of Wales	14,856,977	10,795,542
Community Fund	294,421,984	393,717,444
Heritage Lottery Fund	239,401,618	269,130,010
Millennium Commission	24,018,954	253,133,000
New Opportunities Fund	437,489,154	196,950,000
Scottish Arts Council	15,370,258	24,687,218
Scottish Screen	3,361,188	3,509,906
Sport England	306,433,258	265,500,000
Sport Scotland	26,357,483	24,658,552
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	2,880,828	4,551,340
Sports Council for Wales	16,952,842	9,581,000
UK Film Council	27,052,929	10,393,199
UK Sport	66,885,806	24,337,678
Awards for All	34,986,253	0

2002

Lottery distributor	Allocated	£ Distributed
Arts Council England	145,654,795	197,055,996
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	2,738,993	6,494,499
Arts Council of Wales	7,692,050	13,674,242
Community Fund	264,743,005	366,824,140
Heritage Lottery Fund	316,206,330	260,025,901
Millennium Commission	103,325,941	111,616,000
New Opportunities Fund	421,743,571	344,000,000
Scottish Arts Council	19,721,417	16,179,128
Scottish Screen	0	3,965,625
Sport England	370,027,014	323,158,000
Sport Scotland	29,540,413	21,015,710
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	232,268	4,906,272
Sports Council for Wales	17,932,555	17,820,200
UK Film Council	28,408,618	19,925,712
UK Sport	10,793,311	24,735,256
Awards for All	57,452,142	0

2003

Lottery distributor	Allocated	£ Distributed
Arts Council England	139,925,310	165,646,000
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	2,503,191	7,161,402
Arts Council of Wales	11,369,669	17,143,903
Community Fund	249,530,222	319,352,073
Heritage Lottery Fund	332,587,785	308,243,299
Millennium Commission	3,951,425	167,857,000
New Opportunities Fund	708,706,606	524,000,000
Scottish Arts Council	23,505,990	24,810,738
Scottish Screen	0	3,916,874
Sport England	146,346,884	260,700,000
Sport Scotland	13,738,206	26,425,456
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	312,170	4,296,357
Sports Council for Wales	13,103,820	22,064,074
UK Film Council	40,498,691	39,216,822
UK Sport	10,055,879	20,884,077
Awards for All	50,438,0430	0

2004

Lottery distributor	Allocated	£ Distributed
Arts Council England	96,220,792	205,775,705
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	734,745	7,572,031
Arts Council of Wales	5,219,598	18,485,335
Community Fund	203,570,917	277,656,357
Heritage Lottery Fund	168,873,139	322,783,001
Millennium Commission	24,444,086	54,047,000
New Opportunities Fund	369,330,322	564,000,000
Scottish Arts Council	12,878,072	26,211,777
Scottish Screen	0	0
Sport England	182,052,180	181,500,000
Sport Scotland	5,219,543	34,185,194
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	464,192	6,242,388
Sports Council for Wales	12,740,743	19,599,690
UK Film Council	28,470,772	38,050,168
UK Sport	4,687,157	18,247,661
Awards for All	49,312,948	0

2005 to date

Lottery distributor	Allocated	£ Distributed
Arts Council England	763,877	14,924,626
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	0	544,802
Arts Council of Wales	0	638,514
Community Fund	21,320,847	12,373,704
Heritage Lottery Fund	0	17,546,405
Millennium Commission	0	3,294,000
New Opportunities Fund	6,220,853	31,000,000
Scottish Arts Council	415,199	1,325,570
Scottish Screen	0	0
Sport England	0	8,500,000
Sport Scotland	0	1,632,160
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	0	364,298
Sports Council for Wales	0	2,638,000
UK Film Council	2,649,403	1,929,391
UK Sport	127,651,842	1,966,378
Awards for All	1,450	0

Note:

"Allocated" and "distributed" columns naturally differ because many awards are not distributed in the year in which the money is allocated.

"Awards for All" is a joint scheme and not a distributor, so it does not draw down money itself from the NLDF.

The table excludes the lottery proceeds used to fund NESTA (£200 million in 1998 and further £95 million in 2003).

Nightclubs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what plans she has to review the procedures for the licensing of nightclubs; [220499]

(2) if she will bring forward proposals to require local authorities to publicise more widely applications for licensing of nightclubs. [220558]

Mr. Caborn: There is no legal definition of "nightclub". The procedures for the licensing of all premises selling alcohol or providing regulated entertainment or late night refreshment were reviewed during the White Paper consultation on licensing and the subject of detailed scrutiny during the Licensing Bill's passage through Parliament. The Licensing Act 2003 and Guidance to Licensing Authorities explain the new procedures and can be read on the Department's website (www.culture.gov.uk). The requirements for advertising applications for the grant or variation or review of premises licences are contained in regulations that are also available on our website. These include the need to display for 28 consecutive days, a legible notice prominently at or on the premises to which the application relates where it can be conveniently read from the exterior of the premises and, in the case of a premises covering an area of more than 50 sq m, a further notice in the same form and subject to the same requirements every 50 m along the external perimeter of the premises abutting any highway; and also to publish a notice in a local newspaper or, if there is none, a local newsletter or similar document at least once during the 10 working days after the application is given to the licensing authority. We do not think that there is a case for further extending the publicising of applications for licences for nightclubs.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by five to 16-year-olds so that the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality physical education and school sport within and beyond the curriculum increases to 85 per cent. by 2008 will be met; [219959]

(2) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by five to 16 year olds so that the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality physical education and school sport within and beyond the curriculum increases to at least 75 per cent. in each School Sport Partnership by 2008 will be met; [219961]

(3) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of adults and young people from priority groups visiting designated historic environment sites by three per cent. by 2008 will be met; [219963]

(4) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of adults and young people from priority groups accessing museum and galleries by two per cent. by 2008 will be met; [219964]

(5) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of adults and young people from priority groups who attend an arts event at least twice a year by three per cent. by 2008 will be met; [219965]

(6) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of adults and young people from priority groups who participate in an arts activity at least twice a year by two per cent. by 2008 will be met; [219966]

(7) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of adults and young people from priority groups who engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity level of sport at least three times a week by three per cent. by 2008 will be met; [219967]

(8) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of adults and young people from priority groups who participate in active sports at least 12 times a year by three per cent. by 2008 will be met; [219968]

(9) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the productivity of the tourism, creative and leisure industries by 2008; [219974]

(10) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase participation in culture and sport. [219977]

Mr. Caborn: Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets will replace the Department's existing PSA targets and will run from April 2005–08. Delivery plans are under development for each of the PSA targets and the projects that will support the delivery of the targets.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by five to 16-year-olds so that the percentage of school children in England who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality physical education and school sport within and beyond the curriculum increases from 25 per cent. in 2002 to 75 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [219960]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by adults and young people from priority groups; [219969]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve significantly the value for money of her Department's sponsored bodies; [219973]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase significantly the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by new users aged 20 and above from priority groups. [219976]

Mr. Caborn: Information on the Department's performance against its Public Service Agreement targets 2002 was published on 22 December 2004 in the DCMS Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6435). Copies of the report are available in the House Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to modernise delivery to the customer by ensuring that her Department and its sponsored bodies improve performance and pursue institutional excellence. [219972]

Mr. Caborn: The Department does not have a Public Service Agreement "to modernise delivery to the customer by ensuring that her Department and its sponsored bodies improve performance and pursue institutional excellence." We do however have a PSA target "to improve significantly the value for money of the Department's sponsored bodies, measured by a matrix of NDPB indicators".

Information on the Department's performance against this Public Service Agreement target was published on 22 December 2004 in the DCMS Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6435). Copies of the report are available in the House Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to develop appropriate regulatory frameworks that protect consumers' interests and improve productivity. [219975]

Mr. Caborn: The Department does not have a Public Service Agreement 'to develop appropriate regulatory frameworks that protect consumers' interests and improve productivity'. We do however have a PSA target 'to improve the productivity of the tourism, creative and leisure industries'.

Information on the Department's performance against this Public Service Agreement target was published on 22 December 2004 in the DCMS Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6435). Copies of the report are available in the House Library.

Southend-on-Sea (Cultural Heritage)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with English Heritage regarding the cultural and architectural heritage of Southend-on-Sea; and if she will make a statement. [220163]

Mr. Caborn: There have been no discussions between the Department and English Heritage regarding the cultural and architectural heritage of Southend-on-Sea.

Ticket Sales

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the merits of introducing legislation to control or limit the sale of tickets for *(a)* music concerts, *(b)* music festivals, *(c)* other sporting events and *(d)* the theatre by (i) street based and (ii) online ticket touts. [220314]

Estelle Morris: None in respect of *(a)* , *(b)* or *(d)* . The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 already prohibits ticket touting at football matches as these raise special public order issues. My right hon. Friend is currently considering what steps she would need to take in respect of ticket touting to meet the requirements of the International Olympics Committee, should we win our bid to host the Olympics in London.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received from the music industry on proposals to introduce legislation to control the sale of tickets for music concerts or festivals *(a)* by street based ticket touts and *(b)* on online auction website. [220315]

Estelle Morris: None.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what advice her Department gives to people considering buying tickets for music events from individuals offering such tickets on online auction websites. [220316]

Estelle Morris: We have not been asked to give advice on this issue. Individuals need to decide whether or not in their view the cost is reasonable and represents value for money.

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will meet representatives of the music industry to discuss the operation of the law as it affects the sale of tickets for music events *(a)* by ticket touts and *(b)* on online auction websites. [220317]

Estelle Morris: I understand that following concerns raised by the promoters of the T in the Park Festival, a broader discussion of music industry stakeholders is planned to agree a common position on ticket re-sales by touts. I will of course be happy to consider holding a meeting with representatives of the industry once this has been agreed.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Departmental Advertising

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many advertising contracts were signed by her Department in the period *(a)* 1 September 2004 to 1 March 2005 and *(b)* 1 September 2003 to 1 March 2004, broken down by (i) television, (ii) radio, (iii) press, (iv) direct mail and (v) other advertising; and what the value was in each case. [218972]

Derek Twigg: All advertising undertaken by my Department is contracted through Central Office for Information (COI).

The information requested is outlined in the following table.

	(a) 1 September 2004 to1 March 2005	*(b) 1 September 2003 to1 March 2004*
(i) TV	747,781	—
(ii) Radio	994,658	853,921
(iii) Press	1,072,916	2,096,936
(iv) Direct mail	—	—
(v) Other	575,984	385,441

All financial information is exclusive of VAT.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213623]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has a total of five staff restaurants and one bar in its five headquarter buildings. The staff restaurants are operated by catering contractors whilst the bar is run by its members as a private club. The cost of providing these canteen facilities since 1997 is as follows:

	£
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	111,766
1999–2000	130,437
2000–01	119,541
2001–02	99,794
2002–03	13,500
2003–04	35,000

n/a = Not available

A breakdown by (i) running, (ii) staffing, (iii) supply costs of each year could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what input she has had to the review of the disabled facilities grant; [218843]

(2) how much her Department contributed towards vital housing adaptations for disabled children in each of the past three years. [218844]

Margaret Hodge: DfES is working with ODPM and DH as one of the three government departments undertaking the review of the disabled facilities grant. ODPM is the lead department in the review.

Information is not collected centrally on contributions towards housing adaptations. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants holds information on expenditure by personal social services. CIPFA makes no distinction between children and adults when collecting information on adaptations which it lists together with information on equipment expenditure.

"Actual expenditure" for 2001–02 and 2002–03 for 'Equipment and Adaptations' was £62,716,000 and £57,063,000 respectively, across 'Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment' and 'Learning Disabilities'. "Estimated expenditure" for 2003–04 is £63,924,000. DfES contributes to these funds but exact figures for children and adaptations are indeterminable due to the way information is collected.

Child Care (Easington)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places there were in the Easington constituency in each of the last three years; and what the occupancy rates were in each year. [214928]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the form requested. The available information on child care places and nursery education places is shown in the tables.

The available information on child care places, for Durham local authority area, is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Number[1,2] of registered child care places for children under eight years of age by type of care—Durham local education authority area—position at 31 March each year—2003 and 2004

Type of care	2003	2004
Full day care	2,300	2,800
Sessional day care	1,400	1,400
Child minders	3,100	3,400
Out of school day care	4,700	1,900
Crèche day care	500	500

[1] Rounded to the nearest 100 places.
[2] Data Source: Ofsted

The figures for 2003 and 2004 were derived from the Ofsted database of registered child care providers. There are no figures for 2002.

Figures for the ratio of enrolments to places were published in the overview report on the "2002/03 Childcare and Early Years Workforce survey", which is available on the sure start website, www.surestart.gov.uk. The figures for full day care, sessional day care (playgroups), out of school clubs and child minders were 1.47, 1.43, 0.97 and 0.87 respectively.

With the introduction of the National Day Care Standards and the transfer of responsibilities for registration and inspection of childcare providers from Local Authority Social Service Departments to Ofsted in September 2001, child care places were classified according to the type of day care provided: full day care, sessional day care, child minder, out of school day care or crèche day care. Ofsted have produced figures based on this classification on a quarterly basis from March 2003. Their latest figures were published on 19 January 2005 in their report "Registered Childcare Providers and Places, 31 December 2004", which is available on their website, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications.

The available information on nursery education places, for Durham local authority area, is shown in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up three and four-year-olds Durham local education authority area—position in January each year

	2002	2003	2004
3-year-olds			
Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	3,800	3,500	3,400
Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	[3]940	[3]980	[4]1,000
Total 3-year-olds	4,700	4,500	4,400
4-year-olds			
Maintained nursery and primary schools[5]	5,200	5,100	4,800
Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	[6]300	[7]380	[8]400
Total 4-year-olds	5,500	5,500	5,200

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the nursery education grant data collection exercise.
[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[5] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the nursery education grant data collection exercise.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.
[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Table 3: Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up three and four-year-olds by parliamentary constituency—Durham local education authority area—position in January 2004

Constituency	3-year-olds: Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	3-year-olds: Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[3]	Total 3-year-olds
Bishop Auckland	580	220	800
City of Durham	460	280	740
Easington	600	110	710
North Durham	560	140	700
North West Durham	670	100	760
Sedgefield[6]	510	180	690
LEA total	3,400	1,000	4,400

Constituency	4-year-olds: Maintained nursery and primary schools4	4-year-olds: Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers5	Total 4-year-olds
Bishop Auckland	840	90	940
City of Durham	750	150	890
Easington	860	50	910
North Durham	790	40	830
North West Durham	860	30	890
Sedgefield[6]	700	50	750
LEA total	4,800	400	5,200

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[6] Constituency does not include figures from providers within Darlington LEA

Fire Safety (Schools)

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what precautions for fire safety are required in the design of new school buildings; what plans she has for mandatory fire sprinklers; and if she will make a statement. [218607]

Derek Twigg: Since April 2001, all new building work at schools has been subject to the Building Regulations. With regard to fire safety, the design of new school buildings must comply with Part B of the Regulations.

The Building Regulations do not require the installation of sprinkler systems in schools, but this does not prohibit local education authorities from specifying their use. Currently the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is carrying out a review of the fire safety aspects of the Building Regulations and its accompanying guidance Approved Document B. The review will include schools and it should be completed early in 2006. The decision on whether or not to install sprinklers in new schools needs to be taken locally. For example, in the Department's Managing School Facilities Guide 6, "Fire Safety", we give the example of a school in an area of high arson risk as being a suitable candidate for their installation see www.teachernet.gov.uk/fire. However, we are mindful of the need to provide more detailed advice than before and have produced new draft guidance—"Designing and Managing Against the Risk of Fire in Schools". This stresses the value of using risk assessments to determine what sort of fire detection and alarm systems should be used in a new school, and whether or not sprinklers should be installed. This advice will be subject to public consultation, which will commence shortly, and we expect to publish it in the early autumn.

GCSEs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the quality of the GCSE exam. [220277]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The GCSE is an internationally known and respected qualification. The White Paper, 14–19 Education and Skills makes clear that we will preserve and strengthen it in the future.

Revealweb

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support the Department plans to provide for Revealweb: the National Database of Accessible Resources after March 2006. [218477]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The Department of Culture Media and Sport, through the Museums Libraries and Archives Council, supported the establishment of Revealweb with a grant of £100,000 per year for three years (2003/04;2004/05;2005/06). It was made clear that funding was to cease after 2005/06 and that it would become the responsibility of the managers of Revealweb, to sustain the project thereafter.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has set up a link between the Reveal website and the DfES special educational needs (SEN) inclusion site. We have also publicised Reveal in our regular SEN update, which is available free on subscription.

The DfES is not planning to provide any financial support for Revealweb. We are already providing substantial funding—over £600 million—to schools, colleges and universities to improve access to education, including access to the curriculum.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps her Department is taking to publicise the options available to parents who do not believe their child's school is compliant with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001; [217658]

(2) when the Government plans to review the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 in schools; [217659]

(3) what steps the Government is taking to ensure that all schools become compliant with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001; [217660]

(4) what measures are in place to assess whether the accessibility plans produced by schools under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 are meeting the needs of all disabled children; [217661]

(5) how many schools are complying with the duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 to produce accessibility plans. [217662]

Margaret Hodge: The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 amended both the Education Act 1996 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. To help schools, local education authorities and others meet their amended special educational needs (SEN) duties under the Education Act 1996 the Department published the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2001). To help schools meet their duties under part 4 of the amended Disability Discrimination Act, the Disability Rights Commission produced a Code of Practice in 2002. The Code of Practice explains, and provides guidance on, the duties schools have not to discriminate, without justification, against children for a reason related to their disabilities and to make reasonable adjustments to prevent discrimination. In June 2002 the Department for Education and Skills issued separate guidance to schools on carrying out their duty to draw up and publish plans for improving access to disabled pupils.

The Department for Education and Skills has made widely available a guide for parents and carers on the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The Disability Rights Commission provides advice to parents and schools on disability discrimination and runs a dedicated telephone help line. Parents have the right to appeal to the SEN and Disability Tribunal and admissions appeal panels if they think their children have suffered discrimination or if they disagree with the decisions of their local education authority about their child's special educational needs. The Tribunal has made available to parents publications explaining their rights of appeal, how they can make an appeal, and what this entails.

The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) consider how well schools are meeting the needs of children with special educational needs as part of their inspections; they consider how schools are complying with their duty to produce accessibility plans and the quality of those plans. OfSTED's recent survey reviewing the implementation of the revised inclusion framework introduced as a result of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, "Special Educational Needs and Disability—towards inclusive schools," found that schools had a growing awareness of the benefits of inclusion and that there had been some improvements in practice. It also identified the need for further progress, for example, of the schools surveyed around 50 per cent. had produced a disability access plan. OfSTED recognised that the broad and sustained programme of action under the SEN strategy "Removing Barriers to Achievement" (February 2004) is designed to bring about improvements to the provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The programme includes the development of practical resources for schools that should help them to comply fully with their duties under part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on delivering special needs education in North Yorkshire. [218053]

Margaret Hodge: Delivery of special needs education within North Yorkshire is a matter for determination by the local education authority (LEA) within the framework of law and guidance issued by Government. It is an essential function of every LEA to make effective arrangements for special educational needs (SEN) by ensuring that the needs of pupils are identified and assessed quickly and matched by appropriate provision. Under section 315 of the Education Act 1996, LEA arrangements for SEN must be kept under review.

Monitoring of standards in schools and LEAs including SEN provision, is the responsibility of Ofsted, who undertake regular inspections within a framework agreed between the Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector.

Specialist Schools

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the Specialist Schools grant-in-aid from her Department was spent on developing overseas networks in the last period for which figures are available. [218956]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: 1.5 per cent. of the grant-in-aid made available to the Youth Sport Trust in 2004–05 covered opportunities for designated specialist schools to engage in international professional development. None of the grant-in-aid made available to the Specialist Schools Trust is used for this purpose.

Student Loans

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in how many cases the Student Loans Company has accepted mitigating circumstances when reassessing unreturned annual review forms in each of the last five years; and in how many cases appeals were rejected in each year. [219863]

Dr. Howells: The Repayment of Teachers' Loans scheme was created in 2002 on a three-year pilot basis. It is administered on my right hon. Friend's behalf by the Student Loans Company in accordance with the Education (Teacher Student Loans) (Repayments etc.) Regulations 2003.

In 2002/03, a total of 88 appeals against exclusion from the scheme were considered but rejected by the Student Loans Company. In 2003/04, 91 appeals were rejected. The company is unable to provide information on how many rejections involved cases of unreturned annual review forms.

Sure Start

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the effects of the Sure Start programme in Weymouth and Portland. [215523]

Margaret Hodge: The Weymouth and Portland Sure Start local programme was approved in 2002 and supports around 800 children and their families living in Littlemoor, Melcome Regis, Westham and Underhill

vards. The programme has been allocated a total of 2,306,719 revenue funding and £1,000,000 capital unding from its inception up to the end of 2005/06.

The programme delivers a wide range of services to upport local families including: occupational therapy, ounselling services; health and social services, respite are for parents, individual support for children dentified as needing developmental help and training in oth parenting skills and basic education.

Since opening, Sure Start Weymouth and Portland as helped improve the quality of life for local families. All new parents are contacted within the first two nonths of the birth of their baby by a qualified Sure tart project worker. The percentage of children dentified with speech and language development delay as been found to be much higher than the national verage (37 per cent. as opposed to the national 20 per ent.) and these children and their parents are now rovided with one-to-one help both at home and hrough support when they attend pre-school. Local chools and parents are beginning to report much better evels of overall development, including speech and anguage development, when children go on to full ime education.

Local health visitors advise the local programme of all vomen identified with post natal depression. These vomen are offered a range of help, depending on their eeds, either from local health services or from the Sure tart Local Programme which can include one-to-one upport.

Recent Sure Start Unit monitoring reports show that he programme is in contact with 544 of the 794 children n their area. The programme has strong parental articipation both in the management board, which has 0 parent representatives (up from three since 2000); nd in activities where parents act as volunteers, ncluding two parents who are involved in local valuation of the programme with Bournemouth Jniversity.

Mr. Stinchcombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the ffects of the Sure Start programme in the constituency f Wellingborough. [216684]

Margaret Hodge: There is one Sure Start Local rogramme (SSLP), one Neighbourhood Nursery (NN) nd one children's centre (CC) in it's planning stages n Wellingborough.

The Wellingborough Sure Start local programme was pproved in 2003 and supports around 730 young local hildren and their families living in the catchment area. t has an indicative allocation of £1,075,000 capital rant, all of which has been approved and has received evenue of £700,000 in 2004/05, and will receive 768,752 in 2005/06 and £768,752 in 2006/07. The atchment area comprises three separate estates which ach form part of three wards—Queensway, Croyland Kingsway) and Hemmingwell. The programme elivers a wide range of services to support local amilies including:

continuity of care and midwifery support

health advice and parenting support for child development and behaviour issues

joint working at clinics e.g. a parent support group running at a health visitor clinic

Children's Information Service to provide information about Sure Start area

Mobile Toy library linking up with existing Parent and Toddler groups

Playgroup activities, continuous throughout holidays

Flexible childminders

Speech and language therapy

Since opening, Sure Start Wellingborough has helped improve the quality of life for local families. Local health visitors report back to the local programme on all women identified with post natal depression—including specific referral to the Sure Start programme to provide support. The programme funds a HomeStart worker to train and support an increased number of volunteers. There are four support groups currently running weekly where there are quality play activities and support for parents. A new group is starting in 2004/05 specifically for teenage parents. Groups which will run for specific periods of time are: Speakeasy (helping parents to talk about sex appropriately with their children), Parentzone (parenting course), EarlyStart (adult literacy and numeracy with activities with their children).

Health visitors aim to visit all children within two months of birth and give parents information about Sure Start services. Visit or contact is offered to all parents/carers not seen in the preceding three months. "Roadshows" taken round to all three estates on a rolling programme provide information on aspects of parenting and respond to requests from parents for information. This five week programme deals with a theme each week which corresponds to one of the Sure Start objectives . The SSLP health visitor and midwife also provide outreach services.

As a recently approved round 5 Sure Start Programme, Wellingborough have only recently been required to submit reach data, however recent Sure Start Unit monitoring reports show that the programme is seeing 122 of their 729 children (17 per cent.) each month, and saw 11 per cent. new children in September 2004 as well as visiting 89 per cent. of new babies in the catchment area within the first two months of their lives.

The programme has recognised the need to broaden parental consultation to all .families. They have employed community development workers to work with parents in setting up the forum and continuing consultation.

The Croyland Neighbourhood Nursery is the only one in the constituency and opened as a 42 place nursery in March 2004. The nursery was awarded £202,851 revenue funding up until 2007, and also received a one off capital grant of £175,000 from the Big Lottery Fund. It is part of the planned children's centre and based on a school site.

The children's centre will bring together the SSLP and the NN and also includes a maintained nursery school and a pre school. The centre has an indicative allocation of £80,000 revenue from 2004–06 with a total indicative capital allocation of £350,000. The Croyland Centre will be situated in Croyland Ward and will work closely with the SSLP to provide integrated daycare and education. Centre managers are currently negotiating provision at

both sites with the Primary Care Trust and Lifelong Learning. The Sure Start midwife is already working with a community midwife to provide ante-natal care on all three Sure Start estates. Family support will also be available on both sites, with the exact nature of this dependent on the expressed needs of the families. A pre-school in the town will be extended to provide a further 24 daycare places.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effects of the Sure Start programme in Milton Keynes. [216694]

Margaret Hodge: The Milton Keynes Sure Start local programme was approved on 8 August 2001 and supports around 800 children under 4 and their families living in Stony Stratford, Wolverton and Bradwell Abbey. The programme delivers a wide range of services to support local families including: outreach and home visiting; home start; training courses for parents e.g., assertiveness training, book start and a food co-op.; Asian Women's Group; and Urdu help line.

Since opening, Sure Start Milton Keynes has helped improve the quality of life for local families. For example the programme report that: the percentage of women breastfeeding at birth has risen from 45 per cent. in 2002–03 to 67 per cent. in 2003–04. Recent Sure Start Unit monitoring reports show that the programme saw an average of 42 per cent. of children in the Sure Start area each month between September 2003 and September 2004. The programme visits all new babies in the first two months of life. The programme has strong parental participation; the management board has five parent representatives.

Furthermore the programme will be designated as a children's centre in March 2006 and will form one of the three children's centres planned for Milton Keynes. The Neighbourhood Children's Centre, Fishermead has been designated and the Water Eaton centre has been given approval to proceed. Milton Keynes received capital allocation of £512,167 and a total of £325,112 revenue to support the delivery of these children's centres for the period 2004–06.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on Sure Start funding in Morecambe and Lunesdale. [216779]

Margaret Hodge: Like many other areas of the country, young children and their families in Morecambe and Lunesdale have benefited from significant Sure Start funding since 2001. There is one Sure Start local programme in Morecambe and Lunesdale (Sure Start North Lancaster). This programme received a revenue grant of £794,303 in 2004–05. It has an indicative revenue allocation of £814,161 for 2005–06 and for 2006–07. The programme has had £960,000 of its £1,000,000 capital allocation approved for specific projects in the area.

Evidence from local evaluation shows that a six-week breastfeeding peer supporters training programme was put in place for women living in the Sure Start area. five of eight women initially participating completed the course and were presented with a certificate of achievement. A second training programme held in October 2003, with women from a wider geographical area, resulted in 10 women successfully completing the course. The Baby Club started in March 2002 as a means to identifying clients with, or at risk o developing post natal illness. Between 1 January 2002 and 1 August 2004, over 3,000 visits to the Baby Club were made by parents and 3,200 by babies. In 2004 weekly attendance averaged at 18 parents and their babies.

The programme has also put together a comprehensive volunteer policy and developed an induction and training programme to help volunteers develop their skills and build awareness of community issues such as cultural diversity and child protection. Once basic training is completed (and CRB clearance has been gained) volunteers can move into work experience placements within any area of Sure Start's work. Volunteers have work shadowed midwifery, health and childcare colleagues and others have completed individual community based projects. 13 volunteers have completed the in-house programme, as well as parents on the management and partnership boards. Many have moved on to FE such as Pre-School Diploma and Access to Higher Education, while others have pursued training in job search techniques or employment.

Lancashire county council has a planned children's centre reach of 16,629 children under the age of five by March 2006. It is developing two children's centres in the Morecambe and Lunesdale area, creating 82 new integrated early education and care places. Sure Start North Lancaster is one of the two children's centres and has been allocated indicative revenue funding of £175,496 for 2005–06. It will deliver 71 integrated early education and care places by March 2006; 41 of which will be new children's centre funded places. The centre will reach children and families in the wards of Skerton East, Skerton Central, Skerton West and part of Bulk. An indicative children's centre capital allocation of £400,000 has been made available to the Ridge Primary School which will link to the North Lancaster children's centre and deliver further outreach services and integrated early education and care as part of the core offer. The centre is expected to be designated by April 2005.

The other children's centre is being developed in the Poulton ward based on a former Social Services Family Centre site. Lancashire county council have allocated indicative children's centre revenue of £317,134 and indicative children's centre capital of £1,000,000 to this centre which is expected to be designated by March 2006. This centre will create 41 new integrated early education and care children's centre funded places.

Lancashire county council has also developed two neighbourhood nursery projects in the Morecambe and Lunesdale area delivering a total of 57 new early education and childcare places. Sure Start has made available revenue funding of £284,215 and £23,505 capital grant in total to Lancashire County Council for these two projects.

Mr. Prosser: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of the Sure Start programme in Dover. [216822]

Margaret Hodge: The Dover Sure Start local programme has been performing very well since it started in September 2000, providing support to around

817 children and their families. It was reviewed in October 2004 where it was evidenced that the programme was well established in the community. It is demonstrating excellent engagement with the children's centres agenda and is currently working towards developing children's centre status for St. Radigunds. It is also contributing to the development of children's centres at The Ark Centre, Tower Hamlets; Buckland; and Sunshine Corner, Aylesham.

The programme provides services for communities within St. Radigunds, Buckland and parts of Barton and Pineham. It sees all babies within two months of their birth and offers a wide range of services including: Sure Start befrienders; speech and language services; community health visiting; community midwifes; toy and equipment library; community shop; community psychiatric nursing; social worker; Playlink; Homestart; breakfast club; and daycare. The management board is chaired by a parent and there is strong parental involvement in the programme.

The total amount of Sure Start revenue funding the programme will receive from 2000–06 will be £4,353,948. It has also received £1,288,517 capital grant. The programme has invested £715,000 of this money towards the creation of a multi-purpose building in St. Radigunds.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effects of the Sure Start programme in Loughborough. [217082]

Margaret Hodge: Sure Start Charnwood local programme was approved in April 2003 and provides services to a diverse community. The amount of revenue grant approved for 2003–07 is £2,694,849. The programme also has £1,000,000 capital grant available.

The Sure Start programme provides services to 679 children and their families in the area. The programme has provided us with the following information about the services that it provides.

Services include English language classes, crèche, IT classes, home visits and clinics run by health visitors, support for children with special needs, library outreach, child care classes, mother and toddler groups, and activity outings. Support is offered to families in crisis and with ongoing needs through family support workers and through volunteers.

There are seven parents on the management board and parents take an active role in interviewing and appointing all new staff members. Bookstart plus provides books for babies at seven months old to encourage parents to read to, and look at books with, babies, 99.7 per cent. of babies received a Bookstart bag during 2003–04.

Sure Start services will be extended in Loughborough through the two planned children's centres. One will serve the community in the Cobden area; this has already been designated. The other will serve families in the Shelthorpe area. Leicestershire's children's centre allocation for 2004–06 is £203,740 revenue and £368,890 capital.

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make a statement on the effects of each Sure Start programme in Rochdale; [217106]

(2) what research she has conducted on the effects of Sure Start programmes in Rochdale on *(a)* literacy, *(b)* speech and language development, *(c)* levels of breast feeding, *(d)* smoking cessation and *(e)* post-natal depression; [217107]

(3) what assessment she has made of levels of satisfaction of parents in Rochdale with the services provided by Sure Start programmes. [217108]

Margaret Hodge: There are three Sure Start local programmes in Rochdale constituency; Castlemere, Deeplish and Newbold approved in 2000; Belfield, Hamer and Waddleworth approved in 2001; and Kirkholt, Turfhill and Wellfield approved in 2003. Between them the three programmes provide services to 2,300 young children living within their respective catchment areas. The programmes deliver a wide range of services to support local families including training in parenting skills, access to health services at the centres and outreach support to children and families in their home.

The programmes' funding for the current and future years is as follows:

Programme name	*Capital Approved*	*Revenue 2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
Castle mere Deplish and Newbold	982,206	769,660	788,902	788,902
Belfield, Hamer and Waddleworth	684,417	753,375	772,209	772,209
Kirkholt, Turfhill and Wellfield	256,760	645,000	661,125	661,125

These programmes are developing into children's centres and will contribute towards achieving our goal of a children's centre in every community by 2010.

The Department does not conduct research on the impact of individual Sure Start programmes. Instead, a comprehensive national level evaluation system is in place that looks at programmes across the board and will examine the effectiveness of Sure Start for children, families and communities over time.

Programmes carry out their own local evaluation. The available data from these show that since opening, the Castlemere Deeplish and Newbold and Belfield Hamer and Waddleworth local programmes achieved a 20 per cent. increase in the number of children scoring above average levels in the speech and language measure assessment on children aged 2 years, and a reduction of 6 per cent. in the number of children scoring below the average levels.

Since these two programmes were approved there has been on average an increase of 60 per cent. in the number of mothers breastfeeding.

A user satisfaction survey is conducted by each programme after its opening and thereafter on a three-year cycle. Within the Castlemere, Deeplish and Newbold local programme area 95 per cent. of families responded that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied"

with the programme's services in April 2003. In September 2003 the corresponding survey in the Belfield, Hamer and Waddleworth local programme area showed that 98 per cent. of families were "satisfied" or "very satisfied". The Kirkholt, Turfhill and Wellfield programme is due to report in September 2005.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Sure Start centres in each region have parental support and relationship support services. [217153]

Margaret Hodge: There are 524 Sure Start local programmes across England.

All 524 Sure Start local programmes deliver parenting support services to families in their areas. These services range from general advice on parenting skills to more specialised help and support for families in times of crisis. This work includes support to parents undergoing relationship problems and can include respite care. In delivering family support services local programmes work in partnership with a wide range of partners from the mainstream to the voluntary sector.

We expect all local programmes to develop into children centres to help us meet our target of a children's centre in every community by 2010. All these centres will offer family support services.

Phil Sawford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been allocated to Sure Start provision in Kettering in each year since it was first introduced; and if she will make a statement on the programme. [217285]

Margaret Hodge: Kettering has one Sure Start local programme (SSLP), one Neighbourhood Nursery (NN) and one planned children's centre (CC) receiving funding from the Sure Start Unit. Money has been allocated as indicated in the following table.

£

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
SSLP Revenue	358,501	525,500	750,002	768,752	768,752
Capital	1,000,000	—			
NN Revenue	—	30,075	108,271	60,150	18,045
CC Revenue	—	—	[1]40,000	[1]40,000	[2]—
Capital	—	—	[1]135,000	—	—

[1] Indicative.
[2] Not yet allocated.

"Sure Start 4 Wards", the Sure Start local programme which supports families and young children across Kettering, was approved in September 2002. The programme works closely with a number of providers to improve support for young children and their families, delivering a variety of services including: reading groups; parent support; fathers' group; parenting skills; baby massage; breastfeeding support; and outreach services through Citizen's Advice Bureau.

The Sure Start programme undertook a local evaluation of their services in 2003/04 and as part of this they recruited and trained eight parents to take a questionnaire out to a range of local toddler groups. The survey also included the opportunity for parents to feedback their suggestions for improvements. 75 per cent. of respondents said the quality of the Sure Start services they received was "very good" and that their child had done new things as a result of involvement with the programme.

The programme has invested £938,000 of their capital grant in a new building which will provide a family centre, 26 full day care places and accommodation for up to 20 multi-disciplinary workers under one roof.

The Grange Neighbourhood Nursery opened in January 2004 and provides 62 full daycare places, 54 of which are funded through Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative. This nursery is based on a school site which also incorporates a Healthy Living Centre and a community sports and arts facility.

A children's centre is planned for the Grange school which is approximately half a mile from the Sure Start local programme building. Both sites will provide integrated full daycare places and early learning in due course and an additional 24 places will be created by extending another setting. The children's centre will build on the existing provision already available in Kettering.

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the effects of the Sure Start programme in Inner Burton in East Staffordshire. [218383]

Margaret Hodge: Sure Start Inner Burton was established in 2001. 687 families with a total of 717 children are currently registered with the programme. It has received a capital allocation of £1 million and a revenue allocation of £746,000 in 2003–04 and £764,650 in 2004–05. We have just written to the programme announcing its future revenue allocations of £783,766 in 2005–06 and the same amount in 2006–07.

The programme has achieved a number of successes, including raising the proportion of mothers with children breastfeeding from 40 per cent. in 2002–03 to 50 per cent. in 2003–04. In 2002–03 the programme made 21,000 face to face contacts with children and families.

East Staffordshire children's centre is located in the north of the programme's area and provides integrated education and day care on a full day, part day, or casual crèche basis, combined with health, family support and a range of services including JobCentre Plus drop-in sessions and Children's Information Service signposting. Other services and facilities planned or provided include a toy library, training room and access to computer facilities for parents.

Families in the programme's area will also have access to outreach services provided at Queen Street Community Centre, to be opened in March 2005, which will consist of a child minder support group, volunteer

training, speech and language therapy sessions, antenatal activities, English as a second language classes, a Saturday group and evening dads' group.

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what estimate she has made of the number of families who have participated in the Sure Start programme in Hartlepool since the programme began; [218505]

(2) what plans she has to roll out the Sure Start programme to cover all of Hartlepool; [218506]

(3) what estimate she has made of the effects of Sure Start on the educational attainment of children in Hartlepool since the programme began. [218507]

Margaret Hodge: There are three Sure Start local programmes in Hartlepool, which are all at different stages of development. Sure Start South is a round two programme and began to develop its services from 2000. It has received £2,972,982 revenue and £1 million capital grant to date. Sure Start North is round three and services began to be delivered in 2000. It has received £2,349,675 revenue and £1 million capital grant to date. Sure Start Central began to deliver services in 2003. It has received £1,425,000 revenue and £1 million capital grant to date.

The three programmes have provided services to approximately 2,673 families since they began to deliver services. This is broken down as follows: Sure Start South 533; Sure Start North 1,014; and Sure Start Central 1,136.

There are seven neighbourhood nurseries in Hartlepool providing a total of 291 places. Two of these are linked to the local programmes (Sure Start Central and Sure Start South). The total funding for these nurseries is £1,143,201 capital and £938,063 revenue. There were a total of 1,050 three-year-olds in free nursery education places across Hartlepool in 2004. The figure for four-year-olds was 1,100.

Each of the local programmes has implemented a number of initiatives within their respective catchment areas to help improve children's ability to learn.

Such initiatives include:

Bookstart Plus project has been developed in conjunction with Hartlepool libraries. The initiative provides a free book for all children living in the Sure Start area when they are 12-months-old and library membership.

Chattersacks scheme in local primary schools nurseries aimed to encourage families to be involved in children's learning, language development and early reading skills.

Delivery of full day care and regular playgroup sessions using Birth to Three Matters and the Foundation Stage framework, to ensure that all children are offered a well structured routine that will enhance their all round development.

Various play sessions/groups to promote speech and language development, in particular all children in the Sure Start area are involved in the speech and language measure and implemented as part of the Sure Start Pathway of care.

The impact of these services are demonstrated by the following.

Library membership of children aged 0–3 in Sure Start South catchment area has increased from a baseline 5 per cent. in 2000/01 to 12.7 per cent. in 2003/04.

Language development—the Sure Start South programme also reports that there has been a small increase in local word count scores (56 to 59) which are higher than national figures from Sure Start Unit (46 to 47). The proportion of children with higher word count scores has also increased slightly and there are no parental concerns about language.

Sure Start Central has linked closely with all schools in the programme's catchment area and operates a joint health, social and education methodology. Each school has a COOL project offering sporting and educational opportunities for the 5–11 age range and they see 80+ children per session in the areas.

Sure Start will be expanded in Hartlepool through the roll out of children's centres. There is already one designated children's centre based on the site of Rossmere primary school, St. Teresa's RC primary school and Sure Start Hartlepool South. Four more children's centres will be designated by March 2006. Both the central and north programmes will be included in this.

Hartlepool local authority is planning to open a further five children's centres by March 2008 with a town wide approach to create a children's centre in every community by 2010.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the effects of the Sure Start programme in Fleetwood. [218775]

Margaret Hodge: The Sure Start Fleetwood local programme was approved in 2001 and supports around 667 children and their families living in the Pharos and Mount wards, part of Bailey ward and Park ward. The programme has been allocated a total of £2,721,463 revenue funding and £1,000,000 capital funding from its inception up to the end of 2005/06.

The programme delivers a wide range of child, family health and parental support services to local families. As Fleetwood has one of the highest incidences of teenage pregnancy in England, the programme offers a well attended weekly Young Parents group to support and advise teenage mothers and fathers. The programme has also been successful at encouraging mothers to breast feed their babies. Six out of eight mothers attending the Baby Group now breast feed compared with two out of eight last year. Five mothers are also undertaking a twelve week accredited training course run by the Breast Feeding Network, which will be followed by a breast feeding home visiting support service to help mothers continue breast feeding.

The Start Now! Project run by programme brings together a number of organisations (Jobcentre Plus, Wyre Primary Care Trust, Connexions, Blackpool and the Fyde College, NHS recruitment, Wyre borough council) who offer co-ordinated advice and support for parents wishing to move into employment and training. These agencies have found that this group has enabled them to reach parents who would otherwise not use their main service. This one stop shop approach allows parents with complex needs to receive a joined up collaborative service and has been very successful in encouraging parents into training and employment.

The local new deal for lone parent advisors are working full time from the Sure Start main centre which has to be proved mutually beneficial with the NDLP advisors reporting an improved uptake of their services. In the last three months, six parents have moved into

training and 24 parents have moved off income support into employment. This is a significant increase compared to the previous five month period where only ten parents had been placed into employment.

The Sure Start Fleetwood local programme has a high level of parental involvement and participation. Parents are taking an active role within the programme with 11 of the 18 volunteers being local parents who initially used Sure Start services. The Partnership Board also includes seven parent representatives, one of which is the Vice Chair of the Board.

Fleetwood has one neighbourhood nursery called Y tots which is attached to the Sure Start Fleetwood local programme. The nursery has received a total of £302,400 in revenue funding and provides 56 full day care places. Both the Sure Start local programme and the neighbourhood nursery are located within one building and form Fleetwood children's centre. All the core services will be delivered from the centre and to a further three wards on an outreach basis in community buildings and a primary school. The implementation plan for the centre received approval to proceed from the Unit in July 2004.

In addition, there were 800 free nursery education places taken up by 3-year-olds in maintained schools and other maintained private, voluntary and independent providers within the Blackpool, North and Fleetwood parliamentary constituency area in 2004. The equivalent figure for 4-year-olds was 860.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many awards of the Sure Start strengthening families grant were made in each region in each of the last three years. [219802]

Margaret Hodge: No such awards have been made in the last three years as this is a new grant programme. Proposals for funding from this programme are currently being assessed and successful applicants will be announced shortly.

Ms Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the effects of the Sure Start programme in Birmingham, South West. [217584]

Margaret Hodge: The Birmingham, South West Sure Start local programme was approved in February 2003 and supports 867 children under four and their families living in the Bartley Green Ward and Welsh House Farm Housing Estate in Birmingham. To date the programme has had access to £1,402,122 in revenue funding and £960,000 in capital funding. A further £1,112,400 in revenue funding over the next two years (2005/06—2006/07) has been allocated.

The programme has helped improve the quality of life for local families through the delivery of a wide range of services including: the development of a Teenage Pregnancy/Parent Group to support pregnant teenagers and young mums under 21; the provision of a Child Psychologist and Speech and Language Therapist; the availability of nutrition and dietetics services; access to the Relate Counselling Service and Money Advice Service for families; working with the charity KIDS in the West Midlands to provide support to children with additional needs/disabilities; working in partnership with Barnardos' "Community Plus Project" to provide family support and advice; outreach workers who provide flexible one to one support and advice for parents; group sessions for parents on parenting; provision of safety equipment for families and advice on home safety formulated with the West Midlands Fire Service; and links with Fircroft College enabling parents to access training courses. Several parents are undertaking South Birmingham PCT's short course Introduction to Community Family Work' which leads on to the OCN Certificate in Family Work.

The development of a children's centre on the programme's Doddington Grove site will extend Sure Start services to children under five and their families. The new children's centre will act as a base for high quality child care integrated with early learning as well as deliver other services like health, family support and advice and training to help parents take up work opportunities. Designation is expected later this year.

PSA Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what recent assessment she has made of whether the public service agreement target to ensure that 50 per cent. of children reach a good level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage will be met by 2008; [219214]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve children's communication, social and emotional development.[219216]

Margaret Hodge: The target for 50 per cent. of children to reach a good level of development was set in July 2004. It is based on the 2003 foundation stage profile (FSP) results and data from Sure Start local programmes. It is provisional as the 2003 FSP data were published as 'experimental statistics'. FSP data for 2004 will be published on 17 March, and for 2005 later this year. At this point we will be able to confirm the target and establish the baseline against which progress towards the target can be assessed.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by two percentage points by 2010 will be met. [219218]

Margaret Hodge: We set this target to be challenging, but achievable. The Social Exclusion Unit's 1999 "Bridging the Gap" report identified three important elements in reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training: an improved curriculum offer, appropriate financial support and high quality advice guidance and support focused on the needs of young people.

The strategies set out in the recent 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper, alongside the earlier "Supporting Young People to Achieve" and "Every Child Matters" publications, build on the good practice and progress that has been made since Bridging the Gap. This includes the success that Connexions has had in achieving its own target to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training between 2002 and 2004. They will make sure we give the

right tools and support to the statutory and voluntary services that work to prevent young people becoming disengaged and reengage them if necessary, giving a sound basis for meeting the target.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the public service agreement target for the level of education, training and employment outcomes of care leavers aged 19 to be at least 75 per cent. of those achieved by all young people in the same area by 2004 was met. [219263]

Margaret Hodge: The Department publishes progress against all its outstanding PSA targets in its annual departmental report and autumn performance report. Progress against our last spending review targets, including the one referred to in this question, was reported most recently in the 2004 autumn report, published last November, together with commentary where appropriate. A copy of the report is available from the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of progress towards the public service agreement target to narrow the gap between the proportions of children in care and their peers who are cautioned or convicted. [219265]

Margaret Hodge: The Department publishes progress against all its outstanding PSA targets in its annual departmental report and autumn performance report. Progress against our SR02 targets, including the one you refer to, was reported most recently in the 2004 autumn report, published in November, together with commentary where appropriate. Copies of the reports are available from the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the under-18 conception rate by 50 per cent. by 2010 will be met. [219266]

Margaret Hodge: Since 1998—the baseline year for the strategy—the England under-18 conception rate has fallen by 9.8 per cent. The 2010 PSA target is very challenging and achieving it will require sustained and strengthened implementation of the strategy at national and local level, involving a wide range of services, professionals, parents and young people. That is why we have written to local authority chief executives, asking them to strengthen delivery of local strategies in high rate neighbourhoods and on teenagers most at risk—50 per cent. of conceptions occur in the 20 per cent. of wards with the highest rates. Local areas have been given new data and analysis to help them to effectively target local strategies.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the public service agreement target to increase the stock of Ofsted-registered childcare by 10 per cent. by 2008 will be met. [219269]

Margaret Hodge: In order to monitor performance against this public service agreement target, the number of childcare places registered by Ofsted is monitored quarterly. The latest quarterly data ending December 2004 shows we have created over 64,000 registered childcare places since March 2004. We are therefore well on track to meet the target of increasing number, by 10 per cent. by April 2008.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the public service agreement target to increase the take-up of formal childcare by lower income working families by 50 per cent. by 2008 will be met. [219270]

Margaret Hodge: My Department made an initial assessment in July 2004, when the public service agreement targets for April 2005 to March 2008 were set. This was based on evidence from the Department for Work and Pension's family resources survey. The target level of 50 per cent. will be confirmed once baseline data is confirmed in spring 2006.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of whether the public service agreement target to introduce a successful light-touch childcare approval scheme by April 2005 will be met. [219271]

Margaret Hodge: The childcare approval scheme (CAS) was launched on 8 December 2004 and from 4 January 2005 carers have been able to apply for approval using application forms downloaded from the dedicated website or obtained via the CAS helpline. CAS has successfully met every milestone during implementation and will be fully operational from the target date of 6 April 2005. Any applications processed prior to 6 April 2005 will be valid from this date.

The first applicant to be approved was notified on 22 February 2005.

Teacher Salaries

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average salary for a secondary school teacher is in *(a)* England and *(b)* the Romford and Havering constituencies. [219375]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In March 2003 the average salary for full time teachers in maintained secondary schools in England was £31,340. Salary information is not available at constituency level, however for Havering local education authority the figure was £34,560. This information is for all grades and includes all allowances.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

China (Arms Embargo)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he held with Ministers in EU member states about the lifting of the arms embargo with China; and if he will make a statement. [220360]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* The Government supported the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU Arms Embargo on China.

Member states discussed the embargo at the European Council in December 2004 and invited the Luxembourg Presidency to take forward work on the review. The Council underlined that

> "the result of any decision should not be an increase of arms exports from EU Member States to China, neither in quantitative nor in qualitative terms".

EU leaders also recalled the importance of the criteria of the Code of Conduct on arms exports, in particular criteria regarding human rights, stability and security in the region and the national security of friendly and allied countries. Subject to satisfaction on these issues as laid out in the conclusions of the European Council, the Government could envisage embargo lift.

Until the review process is complete, the Government continue to implement the Arms Embargo as set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) on 3 June 1998, *Official Report*, columns 240–41.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the Government held with representatives of the aerospace industry before the agreement by the EU to lift the arms embargo on China, with particular reference to the impact of the lifting of the embargo on the potential of the industry to do business with companies in the United States; and if he will make a statement. [220362]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* Government officials have informed representatives of the UK aerospace and defence industry of the EU's review of its arms embargo on China and of US attitudes towards this review. Officials informed industry of the resolution of the House of Representatives of 1 February on this arms embargo, and discussed with them the possible meaning of references to "limitations and constraints" to transatlantic defence co-operation as mentioned in that resolution.

The US has a legitimate and understandable interest both in the effectiveness of the EU's system of arms control and in the stability of the East Asian region. We have to do our very best to address US concerns and reassure them on the effectiveness of the EU Code of Conduct. The latter, and not the embargo, is the key to controlling EU arms exports to China.

Egypt

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with President Mubarak on human rights in Egypt, with particular reference to the imprisonment of Ayman Nur. [217188]

Mr. Mullin: We have regular discussions with Egypt on a wide range of issues, including human rights. Where there is evidence of human rights abuse we make representations to the Egyptian authorities.

The United Kingdom, together with other European Union partners, raised the case of Ayman Nour with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 February 2005. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed the case with the Egyptian Foreign Minister on 28 February 2005. We recognise that Egypt regards Mr. Nour's arrest and subsequent detention as an internal matter. However, as well as our concerns about human rights, this case raises broader issues about Egypt's commitment to political reform.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to the Government of Egypt concerning the arrest of Dr. Ayman Nour MP. [218417]

Mr. Rammell: The UK, together with other EU partners, raised the arrest of Ayman Nour with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 February. While we are aware that Egypt regards Mr. Nour's arrest and detention as an internal matter, we are concerned that the circumstances of his arrest and detention risk sending negative signals about Egypt's commitment to political reform, especially in election year. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary also discussed the issue with the Egyptian Foreign Minister on 28 February.

European Constitution

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Welsh translation of the European Constitution will be published. [220336]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has agreed to translate the EU Constitutional Treaty into Welsh on a "without prejudice" basis. No decision has yet been made on the date of publication.

Honours

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the awarding of an honorary knighthood to the American former head of IBM. [220565]

Mr. Straw: Mr. Louis Gerstner, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of IBM, and an American citizen, was made an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in September 2001. He received the award in recognition of his services and commitment to e-commerce and education in the United Kingdom.

Iraq

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many women were elected to the Iraqi National Assembly; which political parties or ethnic groups they represent; how many women have been appointed to posts in the Iraqi Government; and which posts they occupy. [220077]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* Figures obtained so far from the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq indicate that at least 86 women were elected to Iraq's Transitional National Assembly (TNA). This represents 31 per cent. of the total TNA seats and falls within the requirements of the Transitional Administrative Law, which calls for at least 25 per cent. representation of women in the TNA. The

elected women include Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, Sunni Turcomans, Christians (including Assyrian), Sunni Kurds and Shia (Fayli) Kurds.

The TNA is in the process of forming the Iraqi Transitional Government and has not yet announced ministerial appointments.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many women have been elected to local government in Iraq; and what percentage of total elected representatives this represents. [220078]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq has not yet announced final figures of how many women elected to provincial councils in Iraq. However, results obtained so far show that women elected in the southern provinces include Basra (13), Dhi Qar (8), Maysan (10) and Muthanna (10), a total of 41 women equating to around 30 Per cent. In Kirkuk, around 25 per cent. of those elected are women.

Israel

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning the withdrawal of forces from Jericho. [218726]

Mr. Rammell: We have not made specific representations to the Israeli Government concerning the withdrawal of forces from Jericho. We welcome the announcement following the Sharm el Sheikh summit on 8 February that Israel will transfer control of a number of West Bank cities to Palestinian Authority control. We call upon both sides to continue to make progress on commitments made at Sharm el Sheikh.

Lebanon

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the US Administration concerning the assassination of Rafik Hariri. [218628]

Mr. Rammell: Although my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not discussed the death of Mr. Hariri directly with the US Secretary of State, our Embassy in Washington, and officials in London, have had high level contact with the US Administration on the issue. My noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean visited Lebanon on 24–25 February, and inter alia, met members of Mr. Hariri's family to express the condolences of the United Kingdom. We will continue to work closely with the US Administration and others as the UN investigation into Mr. Hariri's assassination progresses.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the *(a)* Israeli, *(b)* Syrian and *(c)* Lebanese Government regarding the assassination of Rafik Hariri. [218629]

Mr. Rammell: Our embassies in Tel Aviv, Damascus and Beirut have been in contact with their host Governments on this issue. My noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean raised our concerns about the death of Mr. Hariri with Lebanese Foreign Minister Hammoud during her visit to Lebanon on 24–25 February. She also met members of Mr. Hariri's family to express the condolences of the United Kingdom.

North Korea

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on North Korea. [218575]

Mr. Rammell: Her Majesty's Government is deeply concerned by the announcement that North Korea has suspended its participation in 6 Party Talks (6PT). The world is looking for early progress in the discussions. We deplore North Korea's refusal to negotiate on the issue, the resolution of which would bring so much benefit to the people of that country. We call on the government of North Korea to review its decision, to reconfirm its commitment to the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula, and to re-engage in discussions with the other participants of the 6PT process to achieve their objective peacefully through negotiation. We also continue to be gravely concerned about the human rights situation in North Korea and raise this regularly with the North Korean authorities at Ministerial and official level.

Official Secrets Act

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many civil servants were suspended or sacked from employment by his Department under suspicion of breaching the Official Secrets Act 1989 in each year since 2001. [220240]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* None.

Palestinian Authority

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many women have been appointed to posts within the Palestinian Authority; and what their responsibilities are. [220076]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* There are two women in the new Palestinian Authority cabinet, which was announced on 24 February. Zahira Kamal is Minister for Women's Affairs, and held the same position in the previous cabinet. Hind Khoury is a newly-appointed Minister without portfolio.

Public Services Agreements

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce people trafficking affecting the UK; [219569]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote security and good governance of the UK's overseas territories; [219586]

(3) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to improve value for money across the full range of FCO, BBC World Service and British Council activities by achieving year-on-year efficiency gains of 2.5 per cent. will be met; [219614]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve perceptions of the UK; [219615]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the UK's influence overseas; [219616]

(6) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to progress the UK policy priorities in the EU, including economic liberalisation and Common Agricultural Policy reform; [219617]

(7) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to develop a modern and reformed EU; [219618]

(8) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to *(a)* secure agreement to a significant reduction in trade barriers and *(b)* improve trading opportunities for the UK and developing countries by 2005 will be met; [219619]

(9) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to deliver increased prosperity and a better quality of life in the UK and worldwide through effective economic and political governance globally; [219620]

(10) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to enhance the competitiveness of companies in the UK through overseas sales and investments; [219621]

(11) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to demonstrate a reduction in the number of people whose lives are affected by violent conflict; [219622]

(12) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the potential sources for future conflict; [219623]

(13) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to develop enhanced European defence capabilities' [219624]

(14) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to develop an effective EU crisis management capacity; [219625]

(15) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to construct an enlarged and modernised NATO; [219626]

(16) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the risk of nuclear confrontation; [219627]

(17) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce tension in the Balkans; [219628]

(18) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce tension in the Middle East; [219629]

(19) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce tension in South Asia; [219630]

(20) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to regulate effectively entry to, and settlement in, the UK in the interests of sustainable growth and social inclusion; [219631]

(21) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to provide effective and efficient consular and entry clearance services; [219632]

(22) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to enhance the security of UK and global energy supplies; [219633]

(23) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to deliver effective programmes to promote democracy, good governance and human rights; [219634]

(24) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote sustainable development; [219635]

(25) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote peaceful political, economic and social reform in Islamic countries and communities; [219636]

(26) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase understanding and engagement with Islamic countries and communities; [219637]

(27) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to maintain the UK as the prime location in the EU for foreign direct investment; [219638]

(28) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to deliver a measurable improvement in the business performance of UK Trade and Investment's international trade customers by 2008; [219639]

(29) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to play a leading role in the development of the European Security Agenda; [219640]

(30) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to deliver improved effectiveness of UK and international support for conflict prevention by addressing long-term structural causes of conflict, managing regional and national tension and violence, and supporting post-conflict reconstruction, where the UK can make a significant contribution, in particular Africa, Asia, Balkans and the Middle East, by 2008 will be met; [219641]

(31) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to contribute to an international system based on the rule of law, which is better able to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts; [219642]

(32) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to protect the UK from international crime; [219643]

(33) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce international crime affecting the UK; [219644]

(34) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to contribute to the reduction of opium production in Afghanistan, with poppy cultivation reduced by 70 per cent. within five years and elimination within 10 years; [219645]

(35) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce drug trafficking affecting the UK; [219646]

(36) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to protect the UK from drug trafficking; [219647]

(37) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to protect the UK from illegal immigration; [219648]

(38) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the risk from international terrorism; [219649]

(39) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the supply of, and demand for, weapons of mass destruction worldwide. [219650]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) publishes an assessment of progress towards its Public Service Agreement targets twice a year. The most recently published assessment can be found in the Department's Autumn Performance Report 2004 available on the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk, copies of which are also available in the Library of the House. The next assessment of progress will be contained in the FCO's Departmental Report which we expect to publish by the end of April 2005. This will also be made available in the Library of the House and on the FCO website.

Student Visas

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many student visa applications there were in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004 from (i) China, (ii) India, (iii) Pakistan and (iv) Bangladesh; and how many of each were refused. [220760]

Mr. Mullin: The information on student visa applications, which were received and refused for the specified areas during the stated periods, is as follows:

Student visa applications

	April 2001 to March 2002		*April 2002 to March 2003*		*April 2003 to March 2004*	
	Received	*Refused*	*Received*	*Refused*	*Received*	*Refused*
China	29,338	7,986	34,477	9,095	35,508	11,554
India	10,813	2,683	20,569	7,952	26,552	11,333
Pakistan	7,366	3,137	7,232	1,655	22,686	9,454
Bangladesh	2,682	1,289	5,035	2,447	5,334	3,155

Figures for April 2004-March 2005 are not yet available. When they are, they can be found, along with further entry clearance statistics, on the UKvisas website at www.ukvisas.gov.uk —"Entry Clearance: Facts and Figures".

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what UKvisas' *(a)* policy is and *(b)* guidelines are in relation to student visa applications from China; what plans his Department has to extend the policy to applications from other countries; and if he will make a statement. [220761]

Mr. Mullin: All applications for entry to the UK as students are considered under the immigration rules. The requirements for entry are therefore the same, irrespective of where the application is made. Local conditions, including the prevalence of forged documentation, mean that different procedures may apply in respect of the application process. However, differences in local processes serve only to facilitate the consideration of the application in accordance with the immigration rules.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the expected total cost of the student visa scheme was in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004; and what the estimated amount of revenue expected to be accrued from the new student visa charges is for 2005. [220762]

Mr. Mullin: The overseas entry clearance operation is required to function on a full cost recovery basis and is therefore non-profitable. The student visa fee is calculated to ensure that it covers the cost of the work involved in processing the application. The charge for a student visa application is currently £36 irrespective of factors such as the duration of the course, where the student applied for entry clearance overseas or where they intend to study in the UK. The fee was last raised in 2002 and the level of visa fees is currently under review.

As UKvisas operates on a cost recovery rather than a profit basis, there is no estimate for revenue accrued for 2005.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many applications for student visas there were in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004 from overseas students intending to study at (i) universities and (ii) other institutions. [220763]

Mr. Mullin: The number of applications for student visas from overseas students intending to study in the UK, over the last three financial years, is as follows:

	Number
2001–02	151,524
2002–03	181,905
2003–04	225,239

UKvisas does not break these figures down to the type of educational establishment where the applicant wishes to pursue a course of study.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of whether UKvisas' guidelines

for the issuing of student visas are in line with those set out in British Council guidance; and if he will make a statement. [220764]

Mr. Mullin: UKvisas' guidance leaflets for all categories of visa applicant are based on the immigration rules and the most up to date student leaflet is available on UKvisas' website, www.ukvisas.gov.uk.

The relevant British Council guidance is entitled "First Steps" and is based on the information provided in the UKvisas student information leaflet and the students paragraph of the immigration rules. It includes detailed guidance and information on student related rather than immigration related matters.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the most common grounds for the refusal of student visa applications were in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004. [220765]

Mr. Mullin: UKvisas holds statistics on the numbers of refusals of student visa applications at entry clearance posts worldwide, as each refusal relates to paragraph 57 of the immigration rules. The recording of refusal data is not further subdivided into reasons for refusal.

An application by a student will be refused if they have failed to meet the requirements of the immigration rules for a person seeking to enter the UK for studies. Among the common reasons for the refusal of an application is the failure of the applicant to show an intention or an ability to undertake a proposed course of study. In addition, students who fall for refusal will often have failed to show that they can meet the cost of the proposed course or that they can be adequately maintained and accommodated in the UK without recourse to public funds.

Swaziland

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the UK has taken to promote democratic governance in Swaziland. [218179]

Mr. Mullin: The UK Government have worked with the Government of Swaziland over many years to promote democracy and good governance. Since March 2003, as acting local Presidency of the EU, our High Commissioner in Mbabane has also engaged in a formal political dialogue with the Government of Swaziland, as mandated by Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement. Meetings are held three times a year with senior members of the Swazi Government to encourage further efforts to implement democratic reforms, to promote adherence to UN human rights accords, to restore the rule of law and to move the constitutional process forward. I discussed progress in the constitution and rule of law with the Prime Minister of Swaziland on 3 February during his visit to the UK.

The Government have also provided practical assistance in areas such as capacity building for NGOs, supporting a civic education programme on the draft constitution, and support for new women MP's in the Swazi National Assembly at the start of their tenure.

Uganda

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the transparency of the process towards multi-party democracy in Uganda. [218264]

Mr. Mullin: A fair multi-party system needs to be established sufficiently in advance of the 2006 elections. We are concerned by delays in implementing the government's roadmap on transition published last July, and the short time remaining to debate such a wide-ranging and complicated Constitutional Amendment Bill. We have urged the Government of Uganda to ensure that the process is constitutional, respects press freedom, the rule of law and institutions of governance, and is free from physical intimidation or manipulation.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the ability of the Ugandan Forum for Democratic Change to operate freely. [218283]

Mr. Mullin: Early activities of the Forum for Democratic Change suffered some physical restrictions and violence, although there have not been recent recurrences. We have stressed to the Ugandan government that registered parties must be allowed to operate freely at district level in accordance with the law and have received assurances that they will be.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment has been made of the registration of voters in the advance of Zimbabwe's parliamentary elections; [218977]

(2) what assessment has been made of Zimbabwe's adherence to the South African Development Community protocols for free and fair elections. [218979]

Mr. Mullin: We will make a full assessment of the conduct of the election once they have taken place taking into account our own observations as well as those of the various election observer missions.

However, we are not convinced that Zimbabwe has taken the steps required to ensure a free and fair election. As I said in the House on 1 March, we are concerned about reports of serious irregularities in the electoral roll. We continue to urge the Government of Zimbabwe to honour in full its commitment to the South African Development Community (SADC) electoral principles. We also urge the SADC to ensure that its guidelines are adhered to. The elections in Zimbabwe will be a test of the credibility of the SADC as well as of the Zimbabwean Government.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 9 March 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Child Poverty

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of ending child poverty by 2020, and halving it by 2010; and if he will make a statement. [220884]

Mr. Miliband: The Government set out the steps that Departments across Government are taking to achieve the targets of ending child poverty by 2020 and halving it by 2010 in the Child Poverty Review, published alongside the 2004 Spending Review and available at http://www.hmtreasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/associated_documents/spending_sr04_childpoverty.cfm

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq

Q11. Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations he has received requesting publication of the advice he was given by the Attorney-General in respect of the legality of the Iraq war. [220732]

The Prime Minister: I have received representations regarding the publication of the Attorney-General's advice on the legality of the Iraq war in the form of parliamentary questions, letters and Freedom of Information requests to my office.

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister whether he sought advice on what standard he should apply in determining on 14 March 2003 that Iraq was in material breach of UN Security Council Resolution 1441. [212324]

The Prime Minister: As Lord Butler noted in his report, in coming to the view that Iraq was in further material breach under Operative paragraph 4 of UNSCR 1441:

> "the Prime Minister took account both of the overall intelligence picture and of information from a wide range of other sources, including especially UNMOVIC information." (paragraph 385, HC 898)

I also refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Gainsborough (Mr. Leigh) during my evidence to the Liaison Committee on 8 February 2005.

Arctic Convoy Veterans

Q12. Mr. Allen: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions his officials have had with the Ministry of Defence regarding recognition for the Arctic Convoy veterans. [220733]

The Prime Minister: There has been an ongoing consultation with the Ministry of Defence on the recognition of the Arctic Convoy veterans. I held a reception at Downing street on Monday evening for Arctic Convoy veterans and announced that their service is to be recognised by the institution of a new official Emblem, to be worn as a recognised addition to medals.

Freedom of Information

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* documents and *(b)* other written material he has released to date in response to Freedom of Information requests; and what categories of information requested his Office has refused to release. [220638]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. Requests for information are considered on a case by case basis in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. There are no categories of information which the Cabinet Office has refused to release.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 21 February 2005, Official Report, column 37W, by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office to the hon. Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis).

Global Political Challenges

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of what the most pressing global political challenges are. [220372]

The Prime Minister: In 2005, the most pressing challenges are dealing with the threat from international terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. This year presents an opportunity to make significant progress towards a lasting peace settlement in the Middle East. Last week's London meeting on Supporting the Palestinian Authority was an important step forward. We need to build on the successful elections in Iraq and Afghanistan to secure a peaceful future for the people of both countries. We will also use our twin presidencies of the G8 and EU to tackle climate change and address the challenge of development in Africa.

Syria

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what undertakings he gave to President Assad of Syria in December 2002 about future co-operation between the Government and Syria; and what subsequent discussions he has had on *(a)* alleged Syrian involvement in Iraq, *(b)* the presence of Syrian forces in the Lebanon and *(c)* relations between Syria and Israel. [220880]

The Prime Minister: I made no undertakings to President Assad about future co-operation between the British and Syrian Governments, and have had no subsequent discussions on the issues raised.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HIV/AIDS

8. **Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with ministers in India and Africa on targeting aid more effectively towards areas suffering from high levels of HIV/AIDS. [220744]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have recently discussed HIV/AIDS with Ministers in India, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda and Mozambique to help target aid for greatest impact. Following my meeting with the Indian Health Minister in October, we agreed to increase UK support to two highly vulnerable states.

We will have further discussions later today with a number of ministers from countries with high rates of HIV/AIDS.

UN Aid Target

9. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the timetable for the UK to meet the UN target for aid of 0.7 per cent. of gross domestic product. [220745]

Hilary Benn: I held discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer during the last Spending Review in which it was agreed that total UK official development assistance (oda) will increase from £4 billion this year to almost £6.5 billion by 2007–08, and oda as a proportion of national income will increase from 0.34 per cent. in 2003 to 0.47 per cent. in 2007. The Government wishes to maintain those rates of growth in the overseas aid ratio which on this timetable would rise beyond 0.5 per cent. after 2008 and to 0.7 per cent. by 2013.

New Partnership for African Development

10. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the New Partnership for African Development. [220746]

Hilary Benn: The African Union—New Partnership for Africa's Development (AU-NEPAD), promotes African-led development and mutual accountability with donors. We support the AU-NEPAD politically through our commitments to the G8 Africa Action Plan and Africa Partners' Forum and financially through the UNDP Trust Fund, to which we have contributed £500,000 to date.

One of its key aspects is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which reviews country performance in economic, political and corporate governance, and socio-economic development. Peer reviews are currently taking place in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Mauritius to which DFID has so far contributed over £400,000. DFID is ready to support the central costs of the APRM through the APRM Trust Fund when it is up and running.

St. Helena

11. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures he is taking to boost the economy of the island of St. Helena. [220747]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Measures are on-going, and will feature in talks between the St. Helena Government and a visiting DFID mission this week. Recent steps include a wide-ranging fiscal review, expanding the St. Helena Development Agency and a scheme to attract St. Helenians from overseas back to key island jobs. We are currently considering how best to provide for the island's future access needs. Decisions on this, in consultation with the St. Helena Government, will be announced as soon as it is possible to do so.

Palestinian Territories

12. **Mr. Simon:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance the Department is providing to encourage economic growth in the Palestinian territories. [220748]

Hilary Benn: In order to create an internal environment more attractive to private investors the UK is working closely with international partners to provide support to invigorate the Palestinian Authority's (PA) programmes of governance reforms. Specific UK assistance includes support for the PA's budget, a wide-ranging programme of public administration and civil service reform, and support for the civil police. But these developments, in order to be effective, must go hand in hand with the Government of Israel easing the restrictions on the movement of Palestinian people and goods.

Fairtrade

13. **David Cairns:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to promote Fairtrade awareness. [220749]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK Government has been a major supporter of Fairtrade. Fairtrade sales in the UK are growing each year, reaching £140 million in 2004. By buying Fairtrade products such as coffee, tea, fruit and chocolate shoppers are helping farmers and other producers to earn a decent living and obtain good healthcare and education. Between 2002 and 2005 DFID gave £300,000 to the Fairtrade Foundation to help develop its product range. DFID have just announced a further £750,000 over three years. DFID also gives £164,000 to the Foundation through its Development Awareness programme to raise awareness in the UK of Fairtrade.

Zimbabwe

14. **Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on aid to Zimbabwe. [220750]

Hilary Benn: In view of the poor governance in Zimbabwe and the intransigence of her Government towards constructive dialogue with the international community, most donors, including the UK, have suspended conventional development programmes and now focus on humanitarian and HIV/AIDS programmes. In 2003–04 DFID spent £34 million on such programmes and expect to spend £25 million in the current financial year. The main areas of our support include HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and mitigation and direct support to some 1.5 million of the poorest households in the country, in the form of food,

seeds and fertilisers. Funds are channelled through NGOs and United Nations agencies, not through the Government of Zimbabwe.

Vaccinations (Developing World)

15. **Mr. McWalter:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's work with others to promote vaccination in the developing world. [220751]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID works with the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) and the Vaccine Fund, and has contributed £35 million. DFID provides support to UNICEF and WHO contributing £64 million and £50.2 million respectively in 2003–04. We promote immunisation to the poorest through direct support to country health programmes.

UK is working alongside the French and Swedish Governments to raise $4 billion through an International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) and is seeking support of other OECD Governments. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State pledged $1.8 billion over 15 years to the IFFIm. DFID works with research and development organisations (such as the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) and Malaria Vaccine Initiative (MVI)) to promote new vaccines.

Afghanistan

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his Department has funded *(a)* alternative employment for workers in the poppy industry and *(b)* the purchase of poppy crops in Afghanistan since 1997. [220783]

Hilary Benn: As a counterbalance to the elimination of the illicit opium economy in Afghanistan, opportunities to pursue alternative licit livelihoods for existing and potential poppy growers must be developed. DFID works through the National Priority Programmes of the Afghan Government and with a range of NGOs to provide both agricultural and non-agricultural inputs and technical support to give farmers alternative livelihood opportunities in poor rural areas.

DFID funds targeted alternative livelihood programmes in Badakhshan and Eastern Hazarajat. In Badakhshan, DFID is also funding a "Cash for Work" programme in order to generate increased minimum wage employment through labour-intensive public works. This is designed to provide up to 500,000 person days of employment for those previously generating income from growing poppy crops. We are in discussion with the Government of Afghanistan and others to identify opportunities to provide similar support in other key poppy growing provinces.

DFID has not, as part of its programme, purchased any poppy crops in Afghanistan.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development to which countries he is giving resources devoted to the prevention of avian influenza. [220881]

Hilary Benn: As part of a DFID/World Bank funded programme, the UK Health Protection Agency (HPA) is providing technical support to the Chinese authorities on a range of health risks including avian flu.

No specific support to deal with avian flu is being provided to countries in South East Asia. DFID is in close contact with the World Health Organisation in affected countries and country offices are considering specific support for expanded public education and surveillance activities on a country-by-country basis. To date, only Cambodia has submitted a request for DFID support and this is under consideration.

DFID officials are to meet staff of the HPA next week to discuss potential gaps in the international response.

Guyana

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a further statement on UK assistance to Guyana following the floods on 26 December 2004, with specific regard to *(a)* food relief, *(b)* replacing accommodation and *(c)* restarting public services. [220699]

Mr. Gareth Thomas *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* As reported in my statement of 10 February 2005, DFID has provided £287,000 to the immediate flood response in Guyana. Since that statement we have provided an additional £30,000 in materials. Through the UK's contribution to the European Commission (EC), we have provided £185,000 out of the €1.7 million provided by the EC as immediate relief.

The UK has tried to ensure that our support goes to areas not otherwise covered by other members of the international community. The World Food Programme and the Red Cross met immediate food needs, and were funded by others from the international community.

The UN, through the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), is currently undertaking an assessment of the impact of the floods on Guyana's economy and on people's livelihoods. These assessments have been tried and tested in many regional disasters. The assessment will indicate longer term food security needs, as well as reconstruction needs. To date there has not been an identified need to replace accommodation. The priority has been to clean flood affected accommodation, as well as schools and health centres, to make all such places useable again. The Government's cleaning programme is being supported by the UN.

Some schools are still unable to operate as normal. Those affected were used as shelters for displaced people, and they are currently waiting to be reached by the Government cleaning programme. Of the public utilities only the provision of piped water was affected. Pumping stations and distribution networks were severely affected in many areas. This service is now getting back to normal. The management improvements at "Guyana Water Incorporated" provided through the water reform programme ensured an effective response to the flood situation. This programme was funded by DFID and others to improve the supply of potable water. There are sufficient resources in place, and sufficient capacity, to undertake the necessary ongoing

repairs. Oxfam have been working very closely with the water utility to ensure the supply of potable water during and after the crisis.

The Guyanese Drainage and Irrigation Board, supported by UN sourced experts, have identified a set of emergency works to be undertaken on the water management system damaged by the floods. This work is urgent as there are fears that this system was compromised by the floods, and might fail in the main May/June rains. DFID are now in the process of finalising assistance to support implementation of these emergency restoration works. In conjunction with United Nations Development Programme we are funding the cost of a Dutch expert to assist the Government of Guyana in overseeing the emergency rehabilitation of the water management system.

Jammu Kashmir

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what discussions he has had with the Jammu Kashmir Government concerning what financial or material assistance is needed following the recent severe weather there; [219762]

(2) what assistance his Department has offered to the Jammu Kashmir Government following the recent severe weather there. [219764]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: We have not received, nor do we expect to receive, a request from the Government of India (GoI) for assistance in responding to the recent severe weather in Jammu and Kashmir. All external assistance to India is co-ordinated by the GoI. The GoI has considerable experience and capacity in responding to natural disasters, and adheres to a clear policy not to request external humanitarian assistance in such circumstances.

Malawi

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid Malawi will be given by his Department in 2005; and how much was given in 2004. [220345]

Hilary Benn: In the financial year 2005–06, DFID plans to provide £60 million of aid to Malawi through its bilateral country programme. The equivalent figure for the financial year 2004–05 is expected to be £55 million. In addition, Malawi will benefit from aid from multilateral and international organisations including the European Union, the World Bank and the United Nations, which are in part financed by DFID, but for which figures are not yet available.

Middle East

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the proposed Middle East donors conference in June; and whether he plans to establish an international fund under the aegis of the UN to finance the cost of resettlement and compensation for Palestinian refugees, as proposed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Resolution 1156 [1998]. [220354]

Hilary Benn: At the March 1 London Meeting on Supporting the Palestinian Authority (PA), the international community committed to holding a Consultative Group of international donors by the end of June. The UK looks forward to participating fully and pledging further support to the PA. As the prospects increase for a return to the Roadmap and a move towards final status negotiations, the international community will need to look afresh at plans to meet the costs of resettlement and compensation for refugees. A review of Resolution 1156 may be a good starting point.

Overseas Aid

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he takes to ensure that all aid from the UK, including that distributed via multilateral donors, is fully aligned with the priorities of recipient countries. [220772]

Hilary Benn: International commitments made at Monterrey (2002), Rome (2003) and the recent High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Paris require both bilateral and multilateral donors to use their assistance in support of countries' own priorities. DFID's country programmes are governed by Country Assistance Plans, which are agreed with partners and demonstrate how DFID will support their own poverty reduction plans. On 2 March, I published a new policy paper "Partnerships for Poverty Reduction: Rethinking Conditionality", which emphasises our commitment to partner country leadership in setting their developing policies, and states that we will not seek to influence policy choices by use of aid conditions. DFID works closely with multilateral agencies, at both headquarters and country level, to ensure their procedures and practice promote alignment.

TREASURY

Census

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the number of individuals in Southend who did not complete 2001 Census returns; [220586]

(2) how many prosecutions there have been of individuals in Southend for non-completion of the 2001 Census. [220587]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Amess, dated 9 March 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions on non-completion of the 2001 Census in Southend. (220586 & 220587)

In answer to your first question; in Southend, 10,230 persons were added to the Census in order to account for the individuals who did not complete 2001 Census returns.

With regard to your second question, no individuals in Southend have been prosecuted for non-completion of the 2001 Census. The total number of prosecutions for non-completion of the 2001 Census in England and Wales was 39.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the statutory penalties are for refusing to complete a decennial population census form for England and Wales; and how many successful prosecutions there were for that offence in connection with the censuses for *(a)* 1981, *(b)* 1991 and *(c)* 2001; [220592]

(2) what the statutory penalties are for unlawfully disclosing personal information from closed decennial population censuses for England and Wales; and how many successful prosecutions there have been for that offence since 1990. [220593]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Taylor, dated 9 March 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent questions asking (i) what the statutory penalties are for refusing to complete a decennial population census form for England and Wales; and how many successful prosecutions there were for that offence in connection with the censuses for *(a)* 1981, *(b)* 1991 and *(c)* 2001 and (ii) what the statutory penalties are for unlawfully disclosing personal information from closed decennial population censuses for England and Wales, and how many successful prosecutions there have been for that offence since 1990. (220592, 220593)

The penalty for failing to complete a census form is prescribed by Section 8(1) of the Census Act 1920 which states that on summary conviction a person shall be liable for a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

The maximum fine of level 3 on the standard scale under the Criminal Justice Act 1982 was £1,000 at the time of the 2001 Census.

The numbers of successful prosecutions for failing to complete a census form in England and Wales were 692 in 1981, 342 in 1991 and 38 in 2001.

The statutory penalty for unlawfully disclosing personal census information is prescribed by Section 8 (5) of the Census Act 1920 as amended by the Census (Confidentiality) Act 1991 which states that *(a)* on summary conviction a person shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both; *(b)* on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.

Since 1990 there has been one prosecution for unlawful disclosure of personal census information.

Centenarians

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people aged 100 years and over live in the UK. [220496]

Mr. Timms: Based on the latest estimates prepared for the interim 2003-based national population projections, there were approximately 8,400 people aged 100 years and over living in the United Kingdom in the middle of 2003.

Emigration

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of people who emigrated from the UK in each year since 1990; what percentage of those people he estimates were between the ages of 18 and 30; and if he will make a statement. [220670]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 9 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question regarding the number of people emigrating from the United Kingdom since 1990, and the percentage of these who were aged between 18 and 30. (220670)

Estimates of emigration from the UK are shown in the attached table. The figures are based on the most comprehensive estimate of migration produced by the Office for National Statistics, *Total International Migration* (TIM).

TIM estimates are based on data from a number of sources. Some of the source data are grouped into the following broad age groups: under 15; 15–24; 25–44; 45–59/64; and 60/65 and over. As a result, we are only able to provide TIM estimates of emigration for the aforementioned age groups. Furthermore, TIM estimates produced using the current methodology are only available from 1991 onwards.

Total International Migration (TIM)[1] estimates of emigration for all ages and for specific age groups—Time series 1991 to 2002—United Kingdom

Thousand

	All ages		*15–24*		*25–44*		*15–44*	
	Outflow	*Percentage[2]*	*Outflow*	*Percentage[2]*	*Outflow*	*Percentage[2]*	*Outflow*	*Percentage[2]*
1991	285.0	100.0	76.1	26.7	131.5	46.1	207.5	72.8
1992	281.1	100.0	75.7	26.9	133.5	47.5	209.2	74.4
1993	266.3	100.0	67.5	25.3	127.3	47.8	194.8	73.1
1994	237.6	100.0	62.4	26.3	116.6	49.1	179.1	75.4
1995	236.5	100.0	69.1	29.2	106.5	45.0	175.6	74.2
1996	263.7	100.0	62.8	23.8	139.5	52.9	202.4	76.7
1997	279.2	100.0	85.7	30.7	138.3	49.5	224.0	80.2
1998	251.5	100.0	69.8	27.8	130.3	51.8	200.1	79.6
1999	290.8	100.0	87.1	30.0	143.1	49.2	230.2	79.1
2000	320.7	100.0	83.6	26.1	174.9	54.5	258.5	80.6
2001	307.7	100.0	83.8	27.2	154.6	50.2	238.3	77.4
2002	359.4	100.0	91.9	25.6	186.4	51.9	278.3	77.4

[1] Total International Migration (TIM) estimates for 1991–2002 are based mainly on data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS). These include adjustments for (1) those whose intended length of stay changes so that their migrant status changes; (2) asylum seekers and their dependants not identified by the IPS; and (3) flows between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

[2] The percentage column expresses the TIM emigration estimate for the specified age range as a proportion of the TIM emigration estimate for all ages.

Source:

ONS, Home Office, Irish Central Statistics Office

Inland Revenue

Mr. Key: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* telephone calls, *(b)* e-mails, *(c)* letters and *(d)* personal visits were recorded on an average working day at the Inland Revenue office in Alexandra House, Salisbury in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by subject; and if he will make a statement. [219777]

Dawn Primarolo: 1,100 telephone calls were received by Inland Revenue in Alexander House, Salisbury, in January 2005 (approx 55 calls per working day).

There is no facility for e-mails to be received from customers at this location.

3,440 letters from customers were received in Dorset Area, in which Salisbury office is included, in January 2005 (approx 172 per working day). It is not possible to provide a breakdown by subject.

There were 10,305 personal callers (approx 48 per working day) at the Inquiry Centre for the 12 months to 31 December 2004 as follows:

Salisbury IREC callers 12 months to 31 December 2004

Category	*Number*
Calculation help/request	8
Change of circumstances	23
CIS inquiry	154
CIS hand in	8
CIS identity check	218
Complaint	6
Corporation tax	4
Employers pack help	2
End of year inquiries	411
Form/letter help	2,021
General advice	4,995
Hand in return	730
New scheme inquiry	15
NIC inquiries	132
Other	156
Payments in	232
Payments out	246
Progress chasing	197
Referral to OGD	1
Referral to specialist	14
Repayment	231
Return application completion help	146
Return/application completion check	82
Schedule D	1
TC advice prior to initial claim	32
TC change of circumstance	28
TC Other	69
TC payment request	66
TC question about award	48
TC renewals	29
Grand total	10,305

Licensing Act

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 724W, on the Licensing Act, if he will list the grounds on which a justice's licence may be revoked by licensing justices; and if he will make a statement. [220513]

Mr. Caborn: I have been asked to reply.

Under the Licensing Act 1964 any person or the police may ask the licensing justices to revoke a licence at any time. The licensing justices may revoke a justices' licence at any licensing sessions (other than at sessions at which an application for renewal of the licence falls). The power is exercisable on any ground on which the justices might refuse to renew a justices' licence, namely that the licensee is disqualified under the Act or is not a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on official Ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214957]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available. Expenditure on these items is not accounted for separately.

Personal Debt

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of individuals in each region of the UK that were more than £10,000 in debt in each month since January 1990; and if he will make a statement. [220677]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 9 March 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the number of individuals in each region of the UK that were more than £10,000 in debt. (220677)

The information requested is not available.

The only information available is national data on debt per person. Annual data from 1997 was recently given in a reply to a Parliamentary Question from Dr Vincent Cable MP (214789, Hansard of 7 February 2005, Column 1241W).

Public Spending

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* the gross domestic product (GDP), *(b)* his estimate of the output gap, *(c)* total public spending, *(d)* public spending per capita and *(e)* public spending as a proportion of regional GDP were for each English region, in each of the last five years. [220075]

Mr. Boateng: The information is as follows:

(a) Gross value added (GVA), a measure closely related to GDP (which is not available on a regional basis), for each English region for the calendar years 1999 to 2003 is published on the ONS website (www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_economy/regionalGVA.pdf).

(b) The output gap is currently only available on a national basis so regional figures do not exist.

(c) Total public spending by region that can be identified as benefiting a particular region for 1998–99 to 2002–03 is published in table 8.1 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) 2004 (Cm6201). Public spending can be split into that which

can be identified as benefiting a particular region and that which is for the benefit of the UK as a whole, for example defence spending. Therefore, the figures in PESA 2004 do not represent total England public spending, which is not available by region.

(d) Total identifiable public spending by region, for the same years, on a per capita basis is shown in table 8.2 of PESA 2004 (Cm6201).

(e) Public spending as a proportion of GVA (GDP) is not available as GVA is produced on a calendar year basis whereas identifiable public spending is produced according to financial years.

Staff Transfers

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax policy staff were transferred from Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise to the Treasury in each of the last three years; and what their *(a)* general areas of work, *(b)* grades and *(c)* work programmes were in each case. [220380]

Dawn Primarolo: Fifteen staff in 2002–03, and 13 in 2003–04, came to HM Treasury on loan or secondment from the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise, entering a variety of Treasury teams, primarily those related to tax or Ministerial support.

During 2004–05, following the O'Donnell review of the Revenue Departments, HM Treasury has taken lead responsibility and accountability for tax policy development, with support from Revenue and Customs who lead on policy maintenance. So far in 2004–05, 81 staff have come in on loan from Revenue and Customs to the Treasury's Budget and Public Finances Directorate as a result of this change, to ensure the right balance of skills and expertise within the new tax teams. Details of numbers and grades are set out in the table as follows:

HM Treasury inward loans and secondments

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*[1]2004–05*
Senior civil service			
Revenue	—	1	7
Customs	—	—	1
Grades 6 and 7 (Treasury range E)			
Revenue	5	3	23
Customs	1	2	7
SEO/HEO (Treasury range D)			
Revenue	3	1	20
Customs	4	6	23
EO (Treasury range C)			
Revenue	1	—	—
Customs	—	—	—
AO (Treasury range B)			
Revenue	1	—	—
Customs	—	—	—
Total	15	13	81

[1] new tax teams

Student Loans

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the annual cost of making student loan repayments for graduates tax-deductible. [220919]

Mr. Timms: No such estimate has been made.

Tax Credits (Overpayment)

Mr. Chope: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to which Department of the Inland Revenue hon. Members should write in respect of representations relating to the desirability of remitting overpayments of tax credit caused by incorrect award notices. [220870]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* For constituents in Great Britain, hon. Members should write to the Overpayments Team, Tax Credit Office, Preston, PR1 OSB. For constituents in Northern Ireland, hon. Members should write to the Overpayments Team, Tax Credit Office, Dorchester House, 52–58 Great Victoria Street, Belfast BT2 7WF.

The Inland Revenue's approach to tax credits overpayments is explained in their Code of Practice 26, "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?". The Department also provides form TC846, "Request to reconsider recovery of tax credits", which claimants can use to explain why they think they should not be expected to pay back their overpayment. Both the Code of Practice and the form are available on the Department's website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine TB

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the findings from the collection of evidence from road traffic accidents affecting badgers in relation to the study of bovine TB. [219781]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) advises that the findings of the Road Traffic Accident (RTA) study should not be disclosed at present to avoid either encouraging illegal action against badgers or deterring participation in the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT). However, information on the location of badgers where TB is diagnosed is released to divisional veterinary managers to inform the measures they take with respect to disease control in cattle in the vicinity.

The ISG has been analysing the data from the RTA study in conjunction with data from badgers culled in the RBCT and will soon be advising Defra on the results and their interpretation.

Carbon Allowances

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the UK National Allocation Plan for allocating carbon allowances to be approved by the European Commission. [219890]

Mr. Morley: We recognise that UK operators wish to begin full participation in the scheme as soon as possible. The Government are continuing their dialogue with the Commission with a view to finding a solution which addresses the concerns of both sides and which will enable allocation as soon as possible.

Cormorants

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the breeding population of cormorants *(a)* in England and *(b)* on inland waters in England. [214689]

Mr. Bradshaw: The latest estimate of breeding cormorants in the UK and Ireland is provided by the Seabird 2000 survey. These data indicate that there are 3,145 breeding pairs of cormorants in England (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man). This includes the majority of the estimated 1,646 breeding pairs of cormorants at inland colonies in the UK.

UK coastal colonies are dispersed more widely, with many birds breeding in Wales and Scotland. However, many of the coastal breeding birds from all parts of the UK, and their progeny, move onto inland fisheries in England and Wales in the winter and these, together with significant immigration of wintering birds from the continent, give rise to elevated numbers inland during winter. The winter cormorant population in the UK has increased four fold in the last 25 years.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will place in the Library the correspondence she has had with the EU Commission regarding the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme. [219889]

Mr. Morley: The Government do not intend to publish correspondence we have had with the European Commission on the UK National Allocation Plan, as discussions with the Commission on the total number of allowances to be allocated are continuing, with a view to finding a solution which addresses the concerns of both sides as soon as possible.

EU Subsidies

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the level of common agricultural policy production subsidies in the EU, including those retained under the national envelope system; and what assessment she has made of the impact that they have on the agricultural markets of developing nations. [217418]

Alun Michael: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development produce an estimate of the level of subsidy provided to agricultural producers in OECD countries, the Producer Support Estimate (PSE). The latest estimate, in "Agricultural Policies in OECD Countries: At a Glance, 2004", puts the EU's PSE at €108 billion or approximately 37 per cent. of output. This estimate covers all direct payments to producers under the common agricultural policy (and national schemes) including those under agri-environment measures. It also covers gross transfers to producers as a result of market price support.

Defra has not made an assessment of the impact of the CAP on developing countries' agricultural markets. However there are a number of published studies which consider the effects of developed countries' agricultural policy on developing countries. One such estimate is presented in the World Bank report "Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries, 2002". This puts the annual benefits to developing countries (in 2015) from liberalisation of agriculture and food policies in high income countries at $99 billion (when dynamic productivity gains are included). It is important to note that developing countries are not all affected in the same way: for example the effect depends on whether the country is a net exporter or net importer of highly protected agricultural products. In addition, the magnitude of an estimate will depend, in part, on the modelling methodology used to generate it.

GM Foods

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received since May 2003 in response to the challenge by the US in the World Trade Organisation to the EU's precautionary approach to GM foods and farming; what steps the Government is taking in response to the challenge; and if she will make a statement. [220262]

Mr. Morley: In May 2003, the USA, Argentina and Canada filed a complaint with the World Trade Organisation against the procedures regulating the import and marketing of GMOs in the European Union. The focus of the complaints is that the EU has allegedly not been operating its own approvals system for GM products since 1998. It is alleged that this is more trade restrictive than is required to achieve the desired level of public health protection, that it is not based on proper scientific criteria, and that it unfairly discriminates between GMO and non-GMO products. The case is made against the European Commission, not individual member states, but it specifically cites Austria, France, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy and Greece.

The Department has received correspondence from stakeholders and the public in relation to this WTO case, in the main supporting the EU regulatory position. The UK Government has also raised this issue in meetings with the US administration.

The UK Government has expressed its disappointment that this action has been taken by the USA and we are working with our EU partners to defend the case and find a solution. As with any WTO dispute we will be bound by the ruling, which will be reached after due consideration of the evidence. The UK agrees with the European Commission that existing EU legislation on GMOs is compatible with trade rules and that significant progress has recently been made in dealing with applications under the legislation for placing GM products on the market.

GM Maize

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the recent approval given by the European Commission for the marketing of two GM maize varieties. [220820]

Mr. Morley: There has been no recent approval given by the EU for the marketing of GM maize. The last approval under the Deliberate Release Directive was issued in October last year for Monsanto's GM maize NK603.

Greenhouse Gases

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action is being taken to limit the increase of greenhouse gases other than carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. [220647]

Mr. Morley: The Government set out its policy on reducing emissions of the six greenhouse gases covered under the Kyoto Protocol in its publication "Climate Change: The UK Programme" (CM 4913) in 2000. This publication contains a set of flexible measures covering a range of different sectors—including transport, agriculture, business and households.

Details of the reductions in greenhouse gas levels achieved so far, the main measures already in place and future options under consideration to achieve further reductions in greenhouse gas levels are contained in the 2004 "Review of the UK Climate Change Programme Consultation Paper" (PB 10372). A revised Climate Change Programme will be published later this year.

Horses

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will estimate the cost of setting up a border inspection post for the entry of horses to the UK by sea; [218711]

(2) whether there is a border inspection post for the entry of horses by sea into the UK; and if she will make a statement. [218716]

Alun Michael: There are no border inspection posts at seaports approved to inspect horses imported from countries outside the European Union.

Port operators, carriers or agents are free to provide such facilities based on commercial need: facilities are not provided by Government. Defra does not have access to figures relating to the costs of setting up a border inspection post for imports of live horses.

National Bee Unit

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 933W, on agriculture, on what basis the decision was made that 20 per cent. of the budget of the National Bee Unit should be reduced from 2008; and what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the proposed reduction on the UK beekeeping industry. [220455]

Alun Michael: I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 944W, which cited the Department's Activity Baseline Review as the basis for the decision to reduce expenditure with the National Bee Unit from 2008. The review considered all of the Department's activities and the resources allocated to them.

As we have always made clear, the changes we propose depend on satisfactory progress with our evaluation of the shook swarm technique for the control of European foul brood. We are in continuing discussions with the beekeeping associations about encouraging the wider use of this technique and managing the risks involved.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the official residences for which her Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the occupants of each make towards running costs; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment was in 2003–04. [213560]

Alun Michael: The Department is responsible for one official residence, an apartment at Admiralty House, London, which is occupied by the Secretary of State.

Since Admiralty House is Government owned, running costs are paid by the Department to the Cabinet Office. Current annual running costs of £195,000 are paid in respect of rent and a service charge, which covers costs for utilities (including electricity and gas) security, facilities management and general maintenance. The Secretary of State does not contribute directly towards these costs but does pay a related personal 'tax' charge. The telephone charges are included within the Department's general telephone expenditure.

Since the Department was created in June 2001, we have not been advised of any capital or refurbishment expenditure. Any such expenditure is the responsibility of the Cabinet Office who would re-charge the Department through the service charge.

The Department incurs no expenditure on flowers and plants, wine and entertaining or food.

There are no domestic or maintenance staff employed by the Department.

Rigby House Farm Waste Tip

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what powers are available to her Department to close Rigby House Farm waste tip on the grounds of *(a)* emission of smells and *(b)* rodent problems; and what powers (i) her Department and (ii) the Environment Agency has to require the operators to compensate people living in the area for nuisance caused by the tip. [219757]

Mr. Morley: Rigby House Farm landfill site currently operates under a waste management licence issued by the Environment Agency under the provisions of part II of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (the 1990 Act).

Section 38 of the 1990 Act provides the Environment Agency with the power to suspend a licence or revoke a licence in part, or in its entirety. This power is exercisable where it appears to the agency that the continuation of the activities authorised by the licence would cause pollution of the environment, or harm to human health, or would be seriously detrimental to the amenities of the locality. There are no powers under the 1990 Act to compensate people living in the area for any nuisance caused.

Sewerage

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with *(a)* water companies and *(b)* Water UK on the potential for greater use being made of reed beds to try to overcome sewerage problems; and if she will make a statement. [220696]

Mr. Morley: Defra supports the appropriate use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) such as reed beds, but recognises that, at present, barriers to the implementation, adoption and maintenance of SUDS exist. In order to address these problems, Defra is a member of the "The National SUDS Working Group" (NSWG), of which representatives of water companies and Water UK are also members. Regular meetings of this group are held facilitating discussion between all parties interested in the implementation of SUDS. In July 2004 the NSWG published an Interim Code of Practice (ICOP) for SUDS. The aim of the ICOP is to provide a strategic approach to the allocation of responsibilities for the maintenance of sustainable drainage systems.

The new strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management that Defra has just finished consulting on, looks at ways of better coordinating the various responsibilities for urban drainage, including SUDS. A technical annex to this consultation explores in more depth, the specific options and proposals that have been made to government by stakeholders (such as water companies and Water UK) to encourage and facilitate implementation of more sustainable surface water drainage systems in the future.

Further information can be found at:

http://www.ciria.org/suds/icop.htm

www.defra.gov.uk/environ/fcd/policy/strategy.htm

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environ/fcd/policy/strategy/suds.htm

Single Farm Payments

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has in respect of single farm payments for those who had historic commoners' rights on the basis of the number of animals grazed over recent years, with particular reference to those who are classed as commoners, but who have chosen not to graze animals for a considerable period of time. [219819]

Alun Michael: The Single Payment Scheme (SPS) is open to applications from farmers who meet the scheme conditions. A farmer is someone who carries out an 'agricultural activity' as defined in the EC legislation. A commoner who is a farmer, may seek to establish SPS entitlements on a notional share of the eligible area of the common where he or she has rights to graze. On most commons in England, the notional share will be calculated in proportion to the commoner's right to graze the land, as registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965. It will be up to an individual to decide whether or not he or she will apply for the scheme. All applications will be included in the normal inspection arrangements, including checks to determine whether the applicant is a farmer.

Full details concerning the operation of the scheme on common land were published in our February update available on our website.

Warm Front

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many heating installations have been carried out in each constituency in England under the Warm Front Scheme in each of the last three years. [218686]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* Between April 2002 and January 2005 approximately 174,000 heating installations have been carried out in England under the Warm Front Scheme.

A table showing a breakdown of the number of heating installations in each financial year, by constituency, will be made available in the Library of the House.

Waste Incineration Directive

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what installation and plant will be *(a)* exempted and *(b)* derogated from the requirements of the waste incineration directive regulations; and if she will make a statement. [219537]

Mr. Morley: Articles 3(4) and 3(5) of the waste incineration directive provide definition respectively of the "incineration plant" and "co-incineration plant" covered by that directive. However, Article 2(2) of that directive excludes from the directive's scope (i) plants treating only certain wastes listed there, and (ii) experimental plants.

Article 6(4) of the directive enables competent authorities to set, for plant subject to the directive's requirements, operating conditions different to those set out in Articles 6(1), 6(2) and 6(3) provided the directive's requirements are met. These provisions are relatively complex, but are explained in draft Guidance on Directive 2000/76/EC on the Incineration of Waste prepared by the Department and the Welsh Assembly Government and available on the Defra website. This publication also incorporates the text of the directive itself.

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what category of installations and plant that burn waste will not be covered by the waste incineration directive when it comes into force. [219538]

Mr. Morley: Article 2(2) of the waste incineration directive excludes from that directive's scope:

(a) plants treating only the following wastes:

(i) vegetable waste from agriculture and forestry;

(ii) vegetable waste from the food processing industry, if the heat generated is recovered;

(iii) fibrous vegetable waste from virgin pulp production and from production of paper from pulp, if it is co-incinerated at the place of production and the heat generated is recovered;

(iv) wood waste with the exception of wood waste which may contain halogenated organic compounds or heavy metals as a result of treatment with wood-preservatives or coating, and which includes in particular such wood waste originating from construction and demolition waste;

(v) cork waste;

(vi) radioactive waste;

(vii) animal carcasses as regulated by Council Directive 90/667/EEC without prejudice to its future amendments;

(viii) waste resulting from the exploration for, and the exploitation of, oil and gas resources from off-shore installations and incinerated on board the installation;

(b) experimental plants used for research, development and testing in order to improve the incineration process and which treat less than 50 tonnes of waste per year.

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether incineration by *(a)* asphalting companies, *(b)* cement manufacturers, *(c)* chemical firms, *(d)* merchant incinerators, *(e)* power generators and *(f)* steel industries will be subject to regulation under the waste incineration directive. [219539]

Mr. Morley: If these activities incorporate (i) plant dedicated to the thermal treatment of wastes, with or without recovery of the combustion heat generated, or (ii) plant which uses wastes as a regular or additional fuel or in which waste is thermally treated for the purpose of disposal, that plant will be subject to the requirements of the waste incineration directive unless any of the exclusions in Article 2(2) of that directive applies. The text of the directive is incorporated in draft Guidance on Directive 2000/76/EC on the Incineration of Waste prepared by my Department and the Welsh Assembly Government and available on the Defra website.

Waste Recycling

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list for each of the Merseyside local authorities the proportion of household waste re-cycled in the last three years for which figures are available. [220540]

Mr. Morley: The proportion (percentage)[1] of household waste sent for recycling or composting for each of the Merseyside local authorities in the last three years is presented in the following table:

LA name	*LA type*	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*
Warrington borough council	Unitary	12	13	13
Halton borough council	Unitary	14	17	18
Wirral metropolitan borough council	Collection	6	7	7
St. Helens metropolitan borough council	Collection	5	6	11
Sefton metropolitan borough council	Collection	8	10	12
Liverpool city council/ metropolitan borough council	Collection	2	2	4
Knowsley metropolitan borough council	Collection	5	6	8
Merseyside waste disposal authority	Disposal	7	8	10

[1] All figures are rounded

Source:
Best Value Performance Indicator Data (BVPI 82a and b)

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

2012 Olympics

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what public funding has been allocated to facilitating the visit of the International Olympic Committee evaluation team to London in February. [216080]

Tessa Jowell: The bid company London 2012 oversaw all the arrangements for the Evaluation Commission's visit to London in February. The majority of the London 2012's funding comes from my Department and the London Development Agency, with a substantial element coming from private sponsorship and fundraising activities. I understand from London 2012 that £530,000 of costs are directly attributable to the visit. This figure is largely associated with the production cost of the three days of presentations, plus hiring hotel venue space and providing technical support. A further £150,000 was spent on preparations ahead of the visit.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the total cost of *(a)* promoting and *(b)* hosting the 2012 Olympics in London. [216003]

Tessa Jowell: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The bid company London 2012 is responsible for the majority of the promotional work for the Bid. The budget for Marketing and Communications within London 2012's budget is £7.45 million. The Government and the London Development Agency also jointly fund and manage a budget of £10 million to finance activities that support the Bid.

(b) The cost of hosting the 2012 Olympics is £1.5 billion, which covers the operational and organisational costs of staging the Games for the period from 2005 until 2014. This will be met almost entirely from broadcast rights, sponsorship and ticket sales.

The costs were reported to Parliament in the usual way, and were reported in the Culture, Media and Sport report "A London Olympic Bid for 2012", which was published on 23 January 2003.

British Art Market

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's estimate is of

the cost to the British art market of the European Union's Directive 2001/84/EC, Artist's Resale Right Directive, if *(a)* royalty collection is made compulsory and *(b)* the royalty rate is set at five per cent. [217663]

Ms Hewitt: I have been asked to reply.

(a) Based on figures provided by the art market it is estimated that the cost of transactions would be reduced from approximately £38 per artwork if the right is managed by individual artists to approximately £28 per artwork if the right is administered by a single collecting agency. The Patent Office has asked in its present consultation for views on whether collective management of resale royalties should be made compulsory.

(b) The directive provides an option for increasing the royalty rate paid on the first €50,000 of the sales price from 4 per cent. to 5 per cent. The UK is not currently proposing to use this option and therefore no estimate of costs based on this rate has been made.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's estimate is of the proportion of art sales that may be diverted from the United Kingdom following implementation of European Union Directive 2001/84/EC, Artist's Resale Right Directive. [217665]

Ms Hewitt: I have been asked to reply.

A number of factors influence the choice of location of a sale, including the location at which the highest price will be achieved and seller's fees. It seems likely that for many sales the cost of relocating would exceed any saving on royalty and would prevent diversion. In addition, based on figures provided by the art market for the 2001–02 season, the total value of the market was £4,227 million and of this £442 million (approximately 10 per cent.) worth of these sales would attract a royalty payment if the right was applied to works by living and deceased artists. If the right was applied only to works by living artists £64.8 million (less than 2 per cent.) worth of the total value of sales would attract a royalty payment. The Patent Office has asked interested parties during the present consultation for any information which would help complete the partial impact assessment, and will be commissioning further economic analysis during the consultation process.

Lottery Funding

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Heritage Lottery funding was awarded in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in 2004–05; and how many projects were awarded funding. [220184]

Mr. Caborn: The total amount of Heritage Lottery funding that was awarded in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in 2004–05 was £35,765,038 and the number of projects was 117.

Heritage Lottery Fund—London April 2004 to February 2005

Local authority	Number of projects	Amount awarded (£)
Barnet	2	87,200
Bexley	1	153,000
Camden	10	497,499
City of London	3	1,100,000
Croydon	3	100,900
Ealing	4	198,220
Enfield	4	150,800
Greenwich	4	13,163,600
Hackney	4	295,700
Hammersmith and Fulham	5	2,664,805
Haringey	2	59,200
Harrow	2	19,600
Havering	1	39,000
Hillingdon	1	247,500
Hounslow	3	380,000
Islington	10	589,621
Kensington and Chelsea	3	5,086,023
Lambeth	9	1,567,500
Lewisham	7	87,200
Newham	3	144,100
Redbridge	2	50,000
Richmond upon Thames	7	1,850,300
Southwark	7	254,200
Sutton	1	24,900
Tower Hamlets	8	3,671,870
Waltham Forest	1	25,000
Wandsworth	2	685,000
Westminster	13	2,572,300
Total	117	35,765,038

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what priorities she has set for lottery funding. [220835]

Estelle Morris: Priorities for lottery funding are as set out in lottery legislation and policy directions. These include the need to ensure that all parts of the UK have access to lottery funding. Each distributor has been given appropriate directions which they are required to publish in their annual reports and accounts (copies are available in the Library of the House).

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps to amend the criteria for lottery awards to ensure that poorer areas receive a higher level of award. [220836]

Estelle Morris: Individual lottery distributors set their own criteria on awards independently of Government, taking into account national lottery legislation and policy and financial directions to them. These policy directions require them to ensure that all parts of the UK have access to lottery funding. The arts, sports and heritage distributors have also been directed to take account of the scope for reducing economic and social deprivation at the same time as ensuring benefits for the arts, sport and heritage.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase and broaden the impact of culture and sport to *(a)* enrich individual lives, *(b)* strengthen communities and *(c)* improve the places where people live, now and for future generations. [219970]

Estelle Morris: The Public Service Agreement target that underpins the Department's communities Strategic Priority is 'to increase significantly the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by new users aged 20 and above from priority groups'.

Information on the Department's performance against this Public Service Agreement target was published on 22 December 2004 in the DCMS autumn Performance Report (Cm 6435). Copies of the report are available in the House Library.

Regional Offices

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which *(a)* non-departmental public bodies and *(b)* Executive agencies within the remit of her Department have regional offices based on the Government offices for the regions' regional structure; and when the regional offices were established in each case. [219902]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS non-departmental public bodies which have regional offices based on the Government offices for the regions and the years in which those offices were established are:

Sport England (1996)

Arts Council England (2002)

English Heritage (1999)

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (2001–04)

Big Lottery Fund (1995)[1]

Heritage Lottery Fund (2002–03)

The Department does not have any Executive agencies with regional offices.

[1] The Big Lottery Fund has been the operating name of the administratively merged New Opportunities Fund and Community Fund since June 2004. The Community Fund was the operating name of the National Lottery Charities Board which established regional offices in 1995.

The UK Film Council does not have regional offices though it does invest in a network of partner agencies called Regional Screen Agencies which were established between 2002 and 2004. These are independent companies with their own boards and management structures entirely independent of the UK Film Council. They derive only part of their income from UK Film Council investment (in some cases less than half) and their remits are broader than that of the UK Film Council, including for example engagement with computer games and/or radio as well as film.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what regional *(a)* bodies, *(b)* institutions, *(c)* taskforces, *(d)* panels, *(e)* offices and *(f)* organisations the Government have established since May 1997 which are the responsibility of her Department. [219912]

Mr. Caborn: The only regional bodies for which DCMS is responsible which the Government have established since May 1997 are the Regional Cultural Consortiums for the eight regions outside Greater London.

The Department is not responsible for any other regional institutions, taskforces, panels, offices or organisations that the Government have established since May 1997.

UK Sport

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many candidates applied for the post of Chair of UK Sport; how many were interviewed; and what criteria were used to select the appointee. [220560]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* 47 applications were received for the post of Chair of UK Sport and 10 candidates were interviewed. The selection panel assessed candidates against the criteria given in the role specification, which stated:

"UK Sport is looking for someone with a passion for success at high performance sport, who can establish a position of leadership in the search for that success at national level;"

and that the successful candidate would:

Have experience of business, financial and resource management.

Be able to win the respect of, negotiate with, and influence senior members of the Government and other key external stakeholders.

Have a proven track record of building and growing partnerships together with partnership working at the highest level.

Be able to promote the organisation and possess highly developed communication and representational skills and be skilled at chairing meetings.

Have strong interpersonal relations skills and be able to demonstrate a track record of leading and motivating people and building effective teams.

Be able to demonstrate strategic thinking, creativity and political awareness.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who interviewed the candidates for Chair of UK Sport; and what role she played in the appointment. [220561]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* Candidates were interviewed by Nicola Roche, Director of Sport at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; Professor Eric Saunders, Chair of the Sports Council for Northern Ireland; Nigel Walker, a former international athlete and Head of Sport at BBC Wales; and David Chesterton CB, an independent assessor as required by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

I was involved at three key stages. I approved the role specification and project plan; I approved the shortlist for interview; and I made a decision on whom to recommend to the Prime Minister for appointment from those candidates considered by the selection panel to be 'above the line'.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Chair of UK Sport is allowed to hold other public appointments; and what rules govern her conduct. [220562]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* There is no barrier to prevent individuals from holding more than one public appointment. An individual is also permitted to act as an adviser to Government Departments while holding a public appointment, provided there is no conflict of interest. The Chair's conduct in office is governed by the Cabinet Office publication Guidance on Codes of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies and by UK Sport's own publication Chair: Competency Framework.

DEFENCE

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218587]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has a comprehensive range of policies to support civilian employees with serious long-term illnesses, including cancer, these include:

Confidential advice from a member of the Occupational Welfare Service;

Time off for medical appointments and treatment;

Reasonable adjustments to hours of work and the nature of their duties;

Early involvement and support from our Occupational Health experts;

Sick absence at six months at full pay, six months at half pay, and sick pay at pension rate;

Gradual rehabilitation including reduced hours and duties;

A comprehensive suite of Work/Life policies;

Additional sick absence provision to cover absences not related to the original illness;

Support of applications for medical retirement and access to early payments under the Civil Service Compensation Scheme;

Line managers and colleagues are encouraged to keep in touch with those who are unwell.

We will also look sympathetically on any request received on an individual basis.

Forces Recruitment (Scotland)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people have been recruited by Scottish Infantry regiments in each of the last 10 years from *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* the rest of the UK and *(c)* outside the UK. [220169]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is shown in the table:

Nationality (at birth)

	Scottish	*British (excluding Scottish)*	*Other*	*Unspecified*	*Total*
1994	—	—	—	600	600
1995	—	—	—	420	420
1996	240	55	[1]—	185	480
1997	405	95	[1]—	—	505
1998	430	70	10	—	510
1999	550	85	15	—	650
2000	465	85	80	—	630
2001	375	95	40	—	510
2002	335	75	40	—	455
2003	290	85	30	—	400
2004	375	135	40	—	550
Total	3,460	780	265	1,200	5,705

[1] non-zero value, less than 5.

Note:

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.

Figures do not include Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS), Gurkhas or mobilised reservists. The information relates to the flows of UK Trained Regular Army personnel in the Scottish Regiments, regardless of whether they serve away from the main body of the Regiment.

Nationality data are not available before 1996 so totals are given for 1994 and 1995 with part data available for 1996.

Soldiers joining the infantry are not allocated to a particular regiment until completion of training at the Infantry Training Centre (Catterick). Therefore the table includes those soldiers who joined the Scottish Regiments on completion of training.

Officers join their Arm/Service at the beginning of the third term of their military training at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and therefore the table shows those who joined the Scottish Regiments on completion of training.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many domiciled Scots have joined the *(a)* Army, *(b)* RAF and *(c)* Royal Navy in each of the last 10 years. [220170]

Mr. Caplin: Data on the number of "domiciled" Scots for the three Services are not available centrally.

Military Abuse (Iraq)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what pension rights the three men recently convicted of abuse of Iraqi civilians will have; and if he will make a statement. [219795]

Mr. Caplin: The Armed Forces Pension Scheme has a provision to reduce the award of pension benefits in exceptional cases of severe misconduct. However, in common with other contracted out occupational pension schemes within the public sector, the Scheme will be obliged to award pensions at least equivalent to the minimum amount they would be entitled to if they had contributed to, and subsequently received benefits under the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme.

Personal data such as an individual's pension entitlement is a matter between employer and employee.

Parachutists

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* trained strength and *(b)* establishment is of each of the parachute regiments. [219050]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is shown in the table.

Strength and establishment of the Three Battalions of the Parachute Regiment as at 1 January 2005

Battalion	*Strength*	*Establishments*
1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment	570	580
2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment	540	580
3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment	530	580

Notes:
1. The figures quoted are as at 1 January 2005 and are for UK Regular Trained Army Officers and Soldiers only and therefore exclude TA, Mobilised Reserves, Full-Time Reserve Service, Gurkhas and Home Service Battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment.
2. The Establishment figures include only the infantry posts and exclude attached personnel of other Arms and Services such as chefs, clerks etc.
3. The strength figures do not include officers and soldiers in the Parachute Regiment serving outside the battalion, or personnel from other cap badges attached to the battalion. The officer element excludes personnel with the rank of colonel and above.
4. We cannot be precise about the strength in each battalion as the means by which these data are collected does not allow for separate attribution. The split is derived from an estimate based on the strength by Unit Identity Number.
5. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

RAF

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the male to female ratio is in the Royal Air Force. [212361]

Mr. Caplin: At 1 January 2005, the ratio of male to female personnel was 7.3:1, as 12 per cent. of the total strength was female.

Figures on strength by gender are published monthly in Tri-Service Publication (TSP) 1 "Strength, Intake and Outflow of UK Regular Forces".

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many new recruits to the Royal Air Force there have been per year on average over the past five years. [212362]

Mr. Caplin: The intake from civil life to the regular RAF for the past five years is as follows:

	Recruits
2000	3,730
2001	3,790
2002	4,040
2003	4,440
2004	2,770
Annual average	3,750

Notes:
1. Figures show all intake to UK Regular Forces including re-enlistments and rejoined Reservists.
2. Figures are for UK Regular Forces (including both trained and untrained personnel) and therefore exclude Full-Time Reserve Service personnel and mobilised Reservists.
3. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Royal Air Force's recruitment targets were met in the financial year 2003–04. [212366]

Mr. Caplin: No. The table shows that against the set targets, 93 per cent. of officers and non-commissioned aircrew and 89 per cent. of other ranks were recruited and entered training.

	Target	*Numbers entering training*
Officers and non-commissioned aircrew	564	524
Other ranks	4,025	3,581

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for recruitment to the Royal Air Force. [212380]

Mr. Caplin: Recruiting will continue to ensure the future Royal Air Force has the correct balance of skills and experience. However, the Service is reducing its recruitment targets by some 4,000 (to around 6,000 in total) over the next three financial years as part of the RAF manpower drawdown, announced by my right hon. Friend, the Minister for the Armed Forces on 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 103WS, in order to minimise redundancies.

RAF Menwith Hill

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the policing arrangements are at RAF Menwith Hill; how many people have been arrested there; and what discussions the local police have had with demonstrators on peaceful protest. [220211]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) exercise full constabulary powers, in an armed and unarmed capacity, at RAF Menwith Hill. MDP also contribute to the effective safety and security of the station, its residents, employees, and passing members of the public, by carrying out external patrols and joint Counter Terrorist Unit armed patrols with North Yorkshire police, to prevent unauthorised entry and interference with the station and its mission, reducing the potential for unlawful activity.

In the last three years (March to February) the MDP have made the following arrests:

2002–03 10 arrests involving 7 people

2003–04 3 arrests involving 2 people

2004–05 29 arrests involving 5 people

Larger organised demonstrations involve communication between the police, the demonstration organisers and other interested parties in the community; with North Yorkshire police taking the lead outside the establishment. Close liaison with the organisers is maintained and meetings based on intelligence led strategies are held to ensure effective co-operation and enable peaceful protest.

MDP liaise with the organisers of the smaller more regular demonstrations, when those demonstrations take place. A supervisory officer in charge of the police officers present at the demonstration, conducts a briefing to protesters, detailing the intentions of the police to allow a lawful and safe demonstration, while ensuring that others in the area are permitted to go about their lawful activities without interference. The briefing also advises that where unlawful activity takes place appropriate police action will be taken. Any concerns raised by the protesters are, wherever possible examined and resolved.

Service Accommodation

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many additional hirings from private sector landlords his Department expects to take on in the first year of his policy to house Armed Forces personnel of the same sex living together in partnerships in service accommodation. [218021]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 24 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 806W.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Attorney-General (Iraq)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether Lord Irvine was involved in *(a)* framing, *(b)* drafting and *(c)* drawing up the parliamentary answer given by the Attorney-General on 17 March 2003 on Iraq. [220626]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, to the hon. Gentleman for Stone (Mr. Cash), on 1 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

EU Constitution

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he expects to announce what public monies will be made available to assist promotion of the forthcoming referendum vote on the EU constitution; and whether expenditure will be granted to both sides of the debate. [220654]

Mr. Leslie: Under the terms of the European Union Bill the Electoral Commission is given powers to encourage voting at the referendum. It will be for the Electoral Commission in due course to present an estimate for the cost of that activity to the Speaker's Committee.

The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 provides for the Electoral Commission to designate one permitted participant to represent those campaigning for each outcome of the question. Where the Electoral Commission have made such designations, each designated organisation will be eligible for the following forms of assistance:

a grant of up to £600,000 determined by the Electoral Commission;

the sending of referendum addresses free of charge;

the use of public rooms free of charge for holding public meetings;

referendum campaign broadcasts.

The same level of financial and non-cash assistance will be available to each designated organisation.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will undertake research to assess what the implications would be of the introduction of a minimum turn-out threshold for the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [220715]

Mr. Leslie: The Government have no plans to undertake research on this issue.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Further Education

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has commissioned into the differences of performance levels between further education colleges in the North and in the South noted in the Ofsted reports, Why colleges succeed, and Why colleges fail, published in November 2004; and if she will make a statement. [218483]

Dr. Howells: My Department has not commissioned any further research into the differing performance levels of further education colleges in the North and those in the South beyond the analysis provided in the recent Ofsted reports. The Government's strategy is designed to raise standards across the sector and to address poor performance wherever it is found. The strategy includes leadership and workforce development, improved approaches to learning and teaching, and recruitment of lecturers in shortage areas. These were areas pointed out by Ofsted in their report.

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has commissioned into the relationship between the quality of individual schools and further education colleges and the level of diversity in local education provision for 16 to 19-year-olds; and if she will make a statement. [218484]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department for Education and Skills has not commissioned any research specifically on this issue. The Department uses Ofsted inspection reports for individual colleges and schools, and we also look at data from 14–19 Area Inspections when we review policy. The Department also collects statistical data relating to levels of attainment and participation and value added at 16–19 in individual areas.

Ofsted

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills by what processes Ofsted interprets and utilises performance data for the purposes of inspection judgments; and if she will make a statement. [218485]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: That is a matter for Ofsted. HM inspector, David Bell, will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

Sixth Forms

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she plans to issue further guidance on the relationship between the provisions in the five-year strategy on new school sixth forms and the Strategic Area Review process; and if she will make a statement. [218486]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: We set out in our five-year strategy our plans to allow more schools to engage in post-16 provision. The LSC will consult on guidance for competitions for new 16–19 provision and on the new joint 16–19 capital budget. This will be twinned with

Departmental guidance on how these policies fit in with the aims for 14–19, and the StAR process. We will be consulting on all three sets of guidance shortly.

Teachers (Leicester)

Mr. Gill: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many full-time equivalent teachers there were in *(a)* secondary schools and *(b)* primary schools in Leicester local education authority in 2004. [220782]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In January 2004 there were 1,340 full-time equivalent regular teachers in maintained primary schools and a further 1,200 teachers in maintained secondary schools in Leicester local education authority.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

King's Own Scottish Borderers

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Advocate-General if she will make a statement on the writ served on her by the Edinburgh branch of the King's Own Scottish Borderers concerning the amalgamation of the regiment. [219806]

The Advocate-General: This action was formally directed against me in accordance with section 1 of the Crown Suits (Scotland) Act 1857. As section 2 of that Act makes clear, responsibility for defending the action lies with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. I am advised that the action is being defended on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defence.

SCOTLAND

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what policies his Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218671]

Mrs. McGuire: Scotland Office staff are on loan from either the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Office adheres to the policies of each Department regarding ill health matters.

The Office is fully committed to employing, supporting and retaining all disabled staff, including those with cancer. This includes making any reasonable adjustments necessary in the workplace, such as the opportunity to return on a part-time medical basis for up to three months and to work a flexible pattern, either permanently or for a shorter period.

Following a return to work, the Office has discretion to authorise up to a further 60 days sick absence at full pay for future absences where entitlement to sick pay has been exhausted. Staff may also apply for a career break to allow them a longer period away from the office.

Staff may, if they wish, receive assistance and guidance from the Occupational Health Service or Counselling and Welfare Services in each Department. In addition, staff on loan from the Executive may use its Employee Assistance Programme which is staffed by qualified counsellors.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many removal notices for failed asylum seekers have been issued in each year since 1997. [220288]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of removal notices issued to failed asylum seekers is not available.

Information on the number of principal asylum applicants against whom enforcement action was initiated in each year for which data are available is shown in the table.

Principal asylum applicants against whom enforcement action was initiated—1997 to 2004[1, 2]

	Principal asylum applicants
1997	13,760
1998	14,730
1999	—
2000	43,465
2001	67,150
2002	46,200
2003[3]	—
2004[4]	—

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 5.

[2] Illegal entrants detected and persons issued with a notice of intention to deport, recommended for deportation by a court or proceeded against under Section 10.

[3] Data were not of sufficient quality for publication in 2003, however it is estimated that 18,130 principal asylum applicants had enforcement action initiated against them in this year. Due to poor data quality this is not an official statistic.

[4] Data for 2004 are not yet available. These will be published in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin "Control of Immigration Statistics: United Kingdom, 2004" in summer 2005.

Statistics on the number of asylum applicants removed from the UK are available from the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers have been removed in each year since 1997. [220289]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of failed asylum seekers who have been removed from the UK in each year since 1997 is shown in the following table.

Removals, voluntary departures[1]*, assisted returns, of asylum applicants, 1997 to 2004*

	1997	*1998*	*1999*[2]	*2000*[2]	*2001*[2]	*2002*	*2003*[3]	*2004*[3]
							Number of persons	
Principal asylum applicants removed	7,160	6,990	7,665	8,980	9,285	10,740	13,005	12,430
Dependants removed[4]	—	—	—	—	1,495	3,170	4,890	290
Total removed[4]	—	—	—	—	10,780	13,910	17,895	14,715

[1] Includes enforced removals, persons departing 'voluntarily' following enforcement action being initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration.

[2] Figures may include a small number of dependents leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes.
[3] Provisional figures.
[4] Data on dependants removed not available before April 2001.
Note:
Figures rounded to the nearest 5, and may not sum due to rounding.

Statistics on the number of asylum applicants removed from the UK are available from the Home Office website at w\AAA/.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken since March 2004 to increase the rate of removal of failed asylum seekers. [220290]

Mr. Browne: The Government has introduced a series of initiatives since March 2004 to increase the rate of removals of failed asylum seekers. These include: signing new, improved memoranda of understanding with other countries, strengthened legislation, greater use of reporting centres to maintain contact with asylum seekers at all stages of the asylum process, faster processing of asylum claims, increased detention space, and increasing the number of voluntary returns. We will continue to review our strategy and pursue new initiatives in order to improve the removal process, our aim being to accomplish a monthly rate of removals that exceeds the number of unfounded applications.

Correspondence

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter dated 31 January from Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice Bureau regarding Mr Andrey Lazaro. [220400]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* The Department replied to the Citizens Advice Bureau on 4 March.

Custody Officers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the recommendations of the Runciman Royal Commission on Criminal Justice in relation to custody officers; and if he will make a statement. [210410]

Ms Blears: The Final Government Response published in June 1996, to the Report of the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, accepted recommendations 43–52 of the Report that dealt with, among other things, the role of the custody officer and the use of civilians under the control of the custody officer.

The Report recommended that the latter should be explored further as the opportunity offers. That opportunity has been taken through the Workforce Modernisation Programme introduced following enactment of the Police Reform Act 2002. The Thematic Report on Workforce Modernisation published in July 2004 by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary recognised the benefits forces were achieving in this area. The Report proposed that police staff could perform the role of custody officer provided appropriate training and co-ordination was in place. That is why we are looking to carry out a pilot programme in a number of force areas for staff custody officers. This will look at processes around selection, training and practical application at the police station.

Deportations

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were deported from the UK in 2004. [220281]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of people who were deported from the UK is published on an annual basis in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin, "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom".

64,390 persons were removed from the UK in 2003. This includes people who departed voluntarily after enforcement action had been initiated, and those who departed under Assisted Voluntary Return programmes run by the International Organization for Migration. Provisional management information estimates that 480 of these people were removed as a result of deportation action.

Information on the total number of persons removed (and of those how many were deported) in 2004 will be published in the 2004 edition of this publication. This will be available in August from the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Detention Rates (Young Men)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the Audit Commission's findings relating to detention rates of young black and young white men. [219542]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office and the Youth Justice Board have studied the Audit Commission's report Youth Justice 2004. The Government responded to the Commission's main recommendations on 16 December.

The Youth Justice Board is putting in place a new performance indicator for Youth Offending Teams (Yots) from April 2005. Yots have been required to develop action plans by April 2005 to achieve equal treatment at the local level for comparable offences by different ethnic groups, including engaging sentencers in reviewing data.

Domestic Violence

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on links between drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. [216333]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 21 February 2005]:* We recognise that there are clear links between alcohol use and domestic violence. Studies have shown that there are strong correlations between perpetrators of domestic violence and alcohol use. The British Crime Survey indicated that 32 per cent. of incidents of intimate partner violence were committed when the

perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol (Mirlees-Black, 1999). However, it must be stated very strongly that alcohol is a trigger for domestic violence and not a cause.

In relation to drug use and domestic violence, research from other countries has highlighted that there are clear links. In the UK, research into the links between substance abuse and domestic violence was commissioned and then undertaken by the School of Health and Social Studies at the University of Warwick. The research is now complete and we expect the findings to be published in April.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on the (i) system for comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of the Dublin Convention (Eurodac) and (ii) jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and in matters of paternal responsibility for children of both spouses and on the jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (Brussels I and II) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218262]

Mr. Browne: The Committee established by Article 23 of the Eurodac Regulation 2725/2000 has not met, and there are no immediate plans for it to do so. Meetings of a Eurodac User Group took place in Brussels on 5 September 2003,17 February 2004 and 5 and 6 October 2004 to discuss operational and technical issues. Home Office officials represented the UK at these meetings.

There have been no meetings of either of the Committees relating to the Regulation on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (Brussels I) or the Regulation on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matrimonial matters and in matters of parental responsibility for children of both spouses (Brussels II) in the period requested.

Fresh Talent Initiative

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to devolve responsibility for the aspects of immigration policy relating to the Fresh Talent initiative to the Scottish Parliament; and if he will make a statement. [219772]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* No. The Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme will be delivered by my Department, through a change to the Immigration Rules, and administered by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. The Scottish Executive will monitor the impact of the scheme, which will be reviewed.

Identity Theft

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been the victim of identity theft in the latest three years for which figures are available. [220263]

Mr. Browne: It is not a criminal offence for a person simply to use another identity. However, false identities are often used to facilitate other offences such as deception and money laundering.

The police do not generally record incidents of identity theft because prosecutions are recorded for the offences facilitated by false identities.

However, the 240 members of CIFAS, the UK's Fraud Prevention Service for the private sector (mainly financial services companies), identified 74,000 cases of identity and impersonation fraud in 2002, 101,000 in 2003 and 124,000 in 2004.

Illegal Immigrants (Albanians)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Albanian Government on illegal immigrants from that country who have entered the United Kingdom in each of the last three years. [219759]

Mr. Browne: Illegal immigration has been discussed at meetings between Home Office and Albanian Ministers on several occasions over the last three years.

My hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Caroline Flint), the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office met the Minister of Public Order, Igli Toska, in May 2004 to discuss organised immigration crime including human trafficking, and the Minster of Foreign Affairs Kastriot Islami in February 2004.

Immigrant Testing

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in the introduction of language and knowledge tests for immigrants. [216800]

Mr. Browne: Regulations on the level of English language required for naturalisation purposes were introduced on 28 July 2004. I hope to make a statement shortly on the introduction of the requirement that applicants should know something of life in the UK.

Irish Republic (Extraditions)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many extradition requests from the United Kingdom Government to the Government of the Irish Republic have resulted in the extradition of the person or persons concerned in the last 10 years for which records are available; what representations have been made to the Government of the Irish Republic in respect of non-executed requests; and if he will list those requests not yet executed. [212058]

Caroline Flint: Prior to 1 January 2004, extradition between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland was carried out under a backing of warrants system. This was carried out on a police-to-police basis,

under the close supervision and assistance of the Crown Prosecution Service with, in cases where the person was an accused rather than a convicted person, the involvement of the UK and Irish Law Officers. The Home Office had minimal involvement in the process and statistics were not kept centrally.

From 1 January 2004, the extradition process between the UK and Ireland has taken place under the Framework Decision on the European Arrest Warrant (EAW). So far, no one has been returned to the UK from Ireland under this process.

Her Majesty's Government will not list unexecuted requests, as for good and obvious reasons, we cannot confirm or deny the existence of any arrest warrant before an arrest is made. It follows therefore that information on representations, if any, also cannot be disclosed.

A similar question was answered on 28 June 2000, *Official Report*, columns 495–96W, and can be found as follows for ease of reference:

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons sought by the *(a)* RUC and *(b)* other UK police forces were extradited from the Irish Republic to the UK in (i) each of the previous three years and (ii) the current year. [125543]

Mr. Mandelson: The table provides details of the numbers of persons sought by the RUC and other UK police forces who have been extradited from the Irish Republic to the UK in the last three years and current year. The figures include both terrorist and non-terrorist cases. It should be noted that the figures for England and Wales are not necessarily complete, as the information is not collated centrally.

Given the complex nature of extradition proceedings, it is not possible to compare directly the number of extradition requests with the number of individuals extradited in any given year. With appeal proceedings the process may take a number of years to be completed.

	Applications made	*Extradited*
Great Britain		
1997	22	10
1998	29	16
1999	17	11
2000	4	1
Northern Ireland		
1997	8	3
1998	6	6
1999	6	3
2000	1	1

At the time the CPS manually reviewed their records to answer the question. The CPS no longer has the resources to review their records between June 2000 and December 2003.

Jamaican Prisoners

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions his Department has had with the Government of Jamaica about repatriating Jamaican nationals serving prison sentences in the United Kingdom. [220472]

Paul Goggins: The Government fully support the humanitarian principles underpinning prisoner transfer agreements and is keen to conclude such an agreement with Jamaica. However, in May 2004, the Jamaican Government reiterated its position that it did not wish to pursue prisoner transfers with the United Kingdom or any other country. The Government have had no further contact with the Jamaican authorities on this issue.

Migrant Workers

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of visas issued to migrant workers relate to *(a)* agricultural employment, *(b)* catering and *(c)* the care system. [219955]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

UKvisas does not keep a record of visas issued in the categories requested by the hon. Member.

For the financial year 2003–04, visas issued to work permits as a percentage of total applications received for entry clearance to the UK was 2.29 per cent., au pairs 0.19 per cent. and working holiday makers 2.67 per cent.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Department keeps records of the companies who offer work to migrant workers. [219956]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office holds records of all employers who make work permit applications to employ workers from outside the European Economic Area. Records are also held of farmers and growers who employ people under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme. In addition, information is available about the employers who have recruited nationals from the new EU accession states from 1 May 2004 under the Worker Registration Scheme. Students from overseas and those entering the UK under the Working Holidaymaker Scheme may also take employment, subject to restrictions, but no records are held of the employers involved.

National Probation Service

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the budget change for the National Probation Service will be for 2005–06, broken down by area. [218437]

Paul Goggins: The percentage increases for the 42 local probation boards are shown in the following table. In addition, the Home Office has provided £13 million, equivalent to 2.3 per cent., to fund the increase in the cost of the Probation Estate in 2005–06. The Home Office has also set aside a reserve fund of up to £25 million, equivalent to 4.5 per cent., to fund the increase in local employer pension contribution rates following the tri-ennial actuarial review of pension funds.

Local probation boards—Increase in main resource grant

	Percentage increase in main resource grant
South West	10.2
Avon and Somerset	7.7
Devon and Cornwall	12.3
Dorset	7.8
Gloucestershire	7.8
Wiltshire	16.0

Local probation boards—Increase in main resource grant

	Percentage increase in main resource grant
Eastern	11.6
Bedfordshire	12.5
Cambridgeshire	16.5
Essex	7.7
Hertfordshire	10.8
Norfolk	15.2
Suffolk	11.2
North West	9.6
Cheshire	7.8
Cumbria	12.3
Lancashire	8.2
Greater Manchester	9.9
Merseyside	10.6
East Midlands	12.6
Derbyshire	12.0
Leicestershire	14.2
Lincolnshire	12.4
Northamptonshire	12.9
Nottinghamshire	11.8
North East	10.6
Durham	10.8
Teesside	12.5
Northumbria	9.7
South East	9.5
Hampshire	12.2
Kent	7.8
Surrey	7.8
Sussex	11.0
Thames Valley	8.0
Yorkshire and Humber	9.0
Humberside	11.6
North Yorkshire	11.8
South Yorkshire	8.3
West Yorkshire	7.7
West Midlands	13.4
Staffordshire	11.9
Warwickshire	11.4
West Mercia	12.0
West Midlands	14.5
London	11.1
Wales	11.3
Dyfed-Powys	15.8
Gwent	13.6
North Wales	11.0
South Wales	8.8
Total	10.8

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207650]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information contained in annex A, is the list of purchases for the year 2003–04 and is those purchases of Newspapers and periodicals made through the two central contracts with Jones-Yarrell & Swets. This does not include any purchases made locally or by non-departmental public bodies (NDPB's) as this data could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The following are the total costs for the specified years through the Jones-Yarrell & Swets UK contracts for the Home Office and agencies, these costs could be broken down only to the required level at disproportionate cost:

	£
1997–98[1]	—
1998–99	161,108
1999–2000	187,685
2000–01	151,865
2001–02	138,527
2002–03	132,632
2003–04	155,058

[1] The costs for 1997–1998 are unavailable.

This does not include expenditure by NDPB's or items purchased locally. This information is not held centrally and collection of this data could be achieved only at disproportionate cost.

Annex A

The list of newspapers and periodicals purchased through Jones-Yarrell for this financial year is:

List of Newspapers

Financial Times
Times
Telegraph
Guardian
Independent
Mail
Express
Mirror
Sun
Star
Sunday Times
Observer
Sunday Telegraph
Chronicle
Independent on Sunday
Mail on Sunday
Sunday Express
News of the World
Sunday People
Sunday Mirror
Daily Sunday Star
Evening Standard News Extra
Evening Standard Final
Croydon Advertiser

List of Periodicals

Jewish Chronicle
New Statesman
PR Week
Radio Times
Economist
Press Gazette
Voice Weekly
Spectator
Private Eye
Auto Express
New Nation
MJ
Local Government
Caribbean Times
Eastern Eye
Computer Weekly

Community Care
Big Issue
What Car
QAG Railway Guide
Campaign
Marketing
Marketing Week
Police Review
Tribune

An accurate list for previous years could be achieved only at disproportionate cost.

The titles subscribed to by the Home Office and Agencies, using the Swets UK contract are available in the Library.

Police Custody

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many mentally ill people have died in police custody since 2001 in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland and *(c)* the North East. [215874]

Ms Blears: Information collated by the Home Office on deaths during or following police contact in England and Wales does not specify the mental condition of the person.

We are aware of those people who have been detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act and who have died during or following police contact. The number of deaths in this category in England and Wales since 2001 by force area is as follows:

Force area	*Total*
2000–01	
None	0
2001–02	
Staffordshire	
Lancashire	2
2002–03	
West Midlands	1
2003–04	
Dorset	
Metropolitan police	
Essex	
Cleveland	4

Both the Scottish Executive and the Northern Ireland Office advise that figures are not held centrally to enable the breakdown into the requested category.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to improve training of police officers to enable them to deal more effectively with mentally ill people. [215875]

Ms Blears: Justice and Offenders Service, Health, Education and Development (JOSHED) was established in December 2003 to develop cross-agency National Occupational Standards and accredited training on health awareness issues, including mental health awareness. A scoping study was commissioned by the group in January 2004 to identify common training needs across the criminal justice and correctional services agencies, including the police. It identified and made recommendations for the improvement of training which are under consideration by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

The "Strategy for Improving Performance in Race and Diversity 2004–09" aims to improve police performance in race and diversity, including dealing more effectively with mentally ill people. As part of the Strategy, which was launched in November 2004 and developed jointly between the Home Office, ACPO and the Association of Police Authorities (APA), learning materials about the interaction between police officers and mentally ill people are being prepared for police officers and staff. ACPO is also undertaking a review of the National Learning Requirement for mental health awareness training in the light of a report on 'Mental Health and Social Exclusion' published by the Social Exclusion Unit in June 2004.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many appeals there have been against the recent re-valuations of business properties, broken down by local authority area. [220664]

Mr. Raynsford: None. The new rating lists take effect from 1 April 2005 and ratepayers will be able to appeal against their new rateable value from that date.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the outturn Band D council tax precepts are for 2005–06 for each fire authority in England and Wales. [219853]

Mr. Raynsford: Information on Band D council taxes for fire authorities 2005–06 is currently being collected by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Figures will be published on 23 March as part of the statistical release on council taxes for 2005–06.

Once it has been set as part of the budget-setting process, an authority's council tax for a particular financial year remains unchanged at outturn, unless an alternative, and lower, figure is set as a result of the authority setting a substitute budget. The results of any such calculations for 2005–06 that take place before its budget return for 2006–07 is submitted would be reported as part of the previous year's information collected on the 2006–07 return.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average Band D council tax in England was in 2004–05; and what percentage of national annual average earnings this represented. [220689]

Mr. Raynsford: The average Band D council tax in England in 2004–05 is £1,167, including amounts funded from council tax benefit.

This represents 5.1 per cent. of the mean gross annual pay in England in 2004, which was £22,893, according to the 2004 Office for National Statistics Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

It should be noted, however, that the figures are not directly comparable, because there are many properties for which the council tax is payable by more than one wage-earner.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what Band D council tax equivalent figure his Department uses in respect of each new property in *(a)* Aylesbury Vale district, *(b)* Chiltern district, *(c)* Wycombe district and *(d)* Milton Keynes unitary authority to be set against the formula spending share when calculating grant distribution; and if he will make a statement. [220912]

Mr. Raynsford: The figures are £181.93 for Aylesbury Vale district council, Chiltern district council, and Wycombe district council: and £967.38 for Milton Keynes unitary authority. The figures are different because Aylesbury Vale district, Chiltern district and Wycombe district councils only provide district-level services whereas Milton Keynes unitary authority provides both district and county level services.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much *(a)* was made available in 2004–05 and *(b)* will be made available in 2005–06 to (i) local authorities in south-east England, (ii) Aylesbury Vale district council, (iii) Chiltern district council, (iv) Wycombe district council and (v) Milton Keynes unitary authority through disabled facilities grant. [220913]

Yvette Cooper: The Government pay a specified capital grant to local authorities each year which covers 60 per cent. of total local authority expenditure on disabled facilities grants (DFG). This is subject to an annual allocation limit for each authority announced prior to the beginning of the relevant financial year.

The allocation of Government grant for DFG for years 2004–05 and 2005–06 to (i) local authorities in south-east England, (ii) Aylesbury Vale district council, (iii) Chiltern district council, (iv) Wycombe district council and (v) Milton Keynes unitary authority are tabled as follows:

£000

Region/authority	2004–05	2005–06
Total for the south-east	17,211	17,070
Aylesbury Vale district council	286	286
Chiltern district council	135	132
Wycombe district council	270	270
Milton Keynes unitary authority	300	300

Electrical Regulations

Chris Grayling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of training places available for electricians wishing to obtain qualifications under the part P electrical regulations. [221225]

Phil Hope: Training places for those wishing to obtain the qualifications necessary for registration with a part P authorised competent person scheme are provided mainly by technical colleges in England and Wales and in some cases by the operators of the competent person schemes.

Officials met representatives of the training providers to advise them that there was likely to be a significant increase in those wishing to attend the relevant courses and most providers have increased the number of places available.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of whether local authorities will need to employ additional staff to monitor part P electrical regulations. [221228]

Phil Hope: It is for each local authority in England and Wales to decide where it needs to employ additional resources to carry out its building control functions in relation to part P of the Building Regulations. Local authorities are likely to make such decisions on the basis of the number of additional submissions of building notices or full plans.

Homelessness

Mr. Gill: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of the population of Leicester were homeless in each year since 1997. [220780]

Yvette Cooper: Information about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is collected quarterly and is in respect of households rather than people. The number of households accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need and the number of households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation as at 31 March of each year in Leicester, since 1997, is tabled. Also shown is the number of acceptances and in temporary accommodation as a percentage of all households in Leicester.

After being accepted as homeless, a household will be placed in some form of accommodation. They may be placed in temporary accommodation, until a settled solution becomes available, or they may be given a settled solution straight away depending on the accommodation available to the local authority. As an alternative to temporary accommodation an authority may arrange for a household to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Leicester unitary council

	Mid-year household estimates[5] (thousand)	Acceptances[1, 2]		Households in temporary accommodation[2, 3] (as at 31 March)		Rough sleepers[4]
		Total	As a percentage of all households	Total	As a percentage of all households	Total (number of persons)
1997	114	[6]266	0.2	[7]—	[7]—	20
1998	114	[6]551	0.5	380	0.3	9
1999	114	669	0.6	[7]—	[7]—	10
2000	114	680	0.6	8	0	7

Leicester unitary council

	Mid-year household estimates[5] (thousand)	Acceptances[1, 2] Total	Acceptances[1, 2] As a percentage of all households	Households in temporary accommodation[2, 3] (as at 31 March) Total	Households in temporary accommodation[2, 3] (as at 31 March) As a percentage of all households	Rough sleepers[4] Total (number of persons)
2001	112	901	0.8	240	0.2	5
2002	113	1,090	1	[7]—	[7]—	6
2003	114	684	0.6	76	0.1	3

[1] Households eligible under homelessness legislation and found to be unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category. Figures provided are for the financial year (i.e. April to March).
[2] The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister PIE homelessness returns (quarterly).
[3] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting re-allocation of a settled home following acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by the authority.
[4] The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (annual).
[5] Estimated as at 30 of June each year. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
[6] Data received for three quarters only. Annual figure includes ODPM estimates for the missing quarter.
[7] Indicates that data were not reported by Leicester on the PIE return.

Information is also collected, since 1998, on the number of people who sleep rough, that is, those who are literally roofless on a single night. The above table shows number of persons sleeping rough in Leicester district, on a single night.

Quarterly Statistical Releases on statutory homelessness published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister include information on decisions, and households in temporary accommodation, at local authority level in an associated Supplementary Table. The latest Release of, 13 December, and previous editions are available both in the Library of the House and via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Housing

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which sites have been transferred from the Department of Health to his Department for affordable housing for key workers. [220666]

Keith Hill: No sites have transferred to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or English Partnerships to date. It is expected that the first vacant sites will transfer shortly. A list of those sites transferring will be made available at that time. The future use of each site will be determined by reference to local planning policies and strategies and in consultation with the relevant local authorities. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects many of the sites to be suitable for the provision of affordable housing.

Local Government Finance/Services

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects the Lyons Review into the balance of funding to report. [219858]

Mr. Raynsford: The Lyons Inquiry into local government funding is due to report to my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the end of 2005.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what research his Department *(a)* has (i) conducted and (ii) commissioned and *(b)* plans to commission into the costs of providing services in rural areas; [220672]

(2) what assessment he *(a)* has made and *(b)* plans to make of the impact of population dispersal in a local authority area on the cost of providing local government services; and if he will make a statement; [220673]

(3) what assessment he *(a)* has made and *(b)* plans to make of the impact of settlement patterns in a local authority area on the cost of providing local government services; and if he will make a statement; [220674]

(4) what plans his Department has for improving the funding of public services in rural areas; and if he will make a statement. [220690]

Mr. Raynsford: I announced on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 912, that the Local Government Finance formula freeze had come to an end, and that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would aim to introduce revised funding formulae in 2006–07. In general in 2006–07, our priority is to review and replace funding formula which no longer reflect the pattern of service provision on the ground, or which are calculated using very out of date data.

Several funding formulae currently contain a sparsity top-up which is calculated using information from the 1991 Census. This top-up recognises the higher costs of service delivery that are likely to occur in sparsely populated areas.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not currently planning to undertake any research into the extra costs of providing services in rural areas. However as part of the current formula review the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will re-assess how best to take account of sparsity in these funding formulae. This work will need to consider which data best reflect differences in the cost of providing services in rural areas, be it data on population density, settlement patterns or population dispersal.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money the Government have given to neighbourhood renewal programmes in each year since 1997; and which neighbourhoods have been included in such programmes. [219362]

Yvette Cooper: The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) was set up in April 2001. The funding for neighbourhood renewal programmes in each year since the establishment of the NRU is tabled as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	304
2002–03	546
2003–04	756
2004–05 (Forecast spend)	817

Most NRU funding is targeted at the 88 most deprived local authority areas in England which are listed. In addition 18 areas also listed separately receive funding for Neighbourhood Management partnerships and Norwich received funding for its new deal for communities partnership.

List of eligible areas for NRU funding

Allerdale
Ashfield
Barking and Dagenham
Barnsley
Barrow-in-Furness
Birmingham
Blackburn with Darwen
Blackpool
Bolsover
Bolton
Bradford
Brent
Brighton and Hove
Bristol, City of
Burnley
Camden
Coventry
Croydon
Derby
Derwentside
Doncaster
Dudley
Ealing
Easington
Enfield
Gateshead
Great Yarmouth
Greenwich
Hackney
Halton
Hammersmith and Fulham
Haringey
Hartlepool
Hastings
Hyndburn
Islington
Kensington and Chelsea
Kerrier
Kingston-upon-Hull
Kirklees
Knowsley
Lambeth
Leeds
Leicester
Lewisham
Lincoln
Liverpool
Luton
Manchester
Mansfield
Middlesbrough
Newcastle upon Tyne
Newham
North Tyneside
Nottingham
Oldham
Pendle
Penwith
Plymouth
Portsmouth
Preston
Redcar and Cleveland
Rochdale
Rotherham
Salford
Sandwell
Sedgefield
Sefton
Sheffield
Southampton
South Tyneside
Southwark
St. Helens
Stockon-on-Tees
Stoke-on-Trent
Sunderland
Tameside
Tower Hamlets
Wakefield
Walsall
Waltham Forest
Wandsworth
Wansbeck
Wear Valley
Westminster
Wigan
Wirral
Wolverhampton

Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders

Bassetlaw
Staveley
Fenland
Basildon
Blyth Valley
Chester
Lancaster
Isle of Wight
Shepway
North Devon
Bournemouth
Gloucester
Wyre Forest
East Staffordshire

Calderdale
North Lincolnshire
Solihull
Newcastle Under Lyme

NHS Estate Transfers

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* sites and *(b)* assets transferred to (i) his Department and (ii) English Partnerships by NHS estates as land surplus to the NHS in each of the last five years. [220381]

Keith Hill: No sites have yet been transferred from the NHS estates to either the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or English Partnerships. My right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Health announced in April 2004 that a portfolio of around 100 surplus NHS sites would be transferred to help deliver the objectives of the sustainable communities plan. It is expected that the first of these will be transferred to English Partnerships shortly. A list of those sites transferring will be made availabie at that time.

Rural Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received regarding the costs of providing services in rural areas; and if he will make a statement. [220675]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received 233 representations on the 2005–06 financial settlement. Of these, five representations were made in support of a review of either the sparsity indicator currently used in funding formulae; or of the needs of sparsely populated areas.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213661]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created in May 2002. One staff survey has been conducted since that date, in January 2003. The amount paid to consultants to undertake this survey was £51,820 excluding VAT.

The staff survey collects data about staff demographics and attitudes which informs the development of corporate strategies. Through regular staff surveys, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also able to measure progress against the delivery of corporate objectives and benchmark itself against similar organisations.

Travellers

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost to public funds of providing legal advice, assistance and support in relation to planning applications and appeals in respect of Traveller encampments in North Essex has been in each year since 1997. [216261]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

The Legal Services Commission (LSC) provides funding for a national helpline for Gypsies and Travellers at a cost of around £50,000 a year. It is not possible to say how much of this money was spent in relation to North Essex.

In addition, legal help, which provides for basic advice and assistance, is available subject to satisfying the statutory tests of the applicant's means and the merits of the case. The LSC does not hold data on how much legal help is awarded to Gypsies and Travellers.

Legal representation at planning applications and appeals is generally outside the scope of legal aid. However, since April 2000, funding can be made available in exceptional cases under section 6(8)*(b)* of the Access to Justice Act 1999, when the relevant criteria are satisfied, for example, where the case concerns the applicant's home. This protects the applicant's fundamental rights and ensures a fair hearing. It is not possible to give a precise figure for total costs, but since April 2000, a maximum of £45,000 plus VAT (excluding legal help costs) has been spent on planning applications in relation to Gypsy and Traveller encampments. None of these applications related to planning applications or appeals in North Essex.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what policies her Department has in place for supporting employees with cancer. [218588]

Ms Hewitt: My Department's external counselling service is available to all DTI HQ staff (and their family members) through EAR Accor Services. Their Employee Assistance Programme offers both a Counselling and an Information service.

If Accor is contacted by an employee with cancer, they will undertake an initial assessment and if appropriate, arrange face to face counselling session. They can also provide information and literature on cancer through specialist organisations such as Cancer Bacup as well as information on benefits, home support, and hospital discharge plans among others which is tailored to the individual employee.

My Department's Equal Opportunities Policy seeks to ensure there is no discrimination against people who have declared progressive conditions such as cancer which could reduce physical capacity. Staff may also receive help and advice on adjustments from the Departmental Disabled Persons Officer as well as the Department's Medical Adviser, to provide appropriate support for that employee in the workplace.

Child Poverty

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020 and *(b)* halving it by 2010; and if she will make a statement. [219347]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 2 March 2005]*: Making work pay and supporting parents in balancing their work and family responsibilities helps enable parents to participate in the labour market, which in turn is critical to tackling child poverty.

Since October 2004, the minimum wage (adult rate), in conjunction with the working families tax credit and other benefits have provided a guaranteed minimum income of at least £252 a week for families with one child and one earner in full-time work (35 hours per week). On 25 February we announced that the minimum wage will be increased to £5.05 from October 2005.

In 2003 we introduced a new right for parents to request a flexible working pattern. In the first year 800,000 requests were either wholly or partly accepted. In addition to this new entitlement, we extended maternity leave so most mothers can choose to take up to one year. We also introduced new rights to two weeks' paid paternity leave and introduced paid adoption leave.

On 28 February my Department published a consultation document, "Work and Families: Choice and Flexibility". Through the consultation we are seeking views on the details of commitments and proposals set out in the 2004 pre-Budget report which build on the our successful package of family friendly working rights. These include extending Statutory Maternity Pay, Maternity Allowance and Statutory Adoption Pay to nine months from April 2007 towards a goal of a year's paid leave by the end of the next Parliament, introducing a right for mothers to transfer a proportion of their maternity leave and pay to fathers, and looking at options for extending the right to request flexible working to carers of adults and to parents of older children. These measures would give families more choice about how to balance their work and caring responsibilities, supporting parents who may otherwise have been forced to drop out of the labour market to stay in work.

Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Libraries of the House and are available on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/workandfamilies.

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213814]

Ms Hewitt: None.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201692]

Ms Hewitt: My Department has conducted campaign advertising on the national minimum wage in the following newspapers with a substantial Muslim readership:

The Nation
Bangla Mirror
Bangla Express
Janomot
Notun Din
Surma
Eastern Eye.

My Department also advertised in several ethnic language publications that have a smaller Muslim readership. These are:

Des Pardes
Gujurat Samachar
Punjab Times.

Departmental Consultants

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much expenditure her Department has incurred in each year since 2002 on employing external consultants to deal with the press and public relations of her Department; and if she will make a statement. [199904]

Ms Hewitt: Most of my Department's press and public relations activity is undertaken by its own professional communications staff. However, in instances where additional resources or niche skills are required, programme budget holders are from time to time authorised to engage external press and public relations consultants to undertake work in relation to specific ring-fenced and time-limited projects. Details of such expenditure are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much her Department has spent in each year since 2000 providing printed information for the public. [217456]

Ms Hewitt: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee of experts on the transit of natural gas through grids met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214300]

Ms Hewitt: The conciliation body established by Article 3(4) of Directive 91/296/EEC of 31 May 1991 on the transit of natural gas through grids never met. Directive 91/296/EEC was repealed by the 2003 Gas Directive—2003/55/EC—with effect from 1 July 2004.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the EC-Canada Joint Committee on scientific and technological co-operation met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215905]

Ms Hewitt: The EU Canada Steering Committee met in Brussels on 9 March 2004 during the Irish Presidency. Meetings are convened by the Commission and the member states are not invited; therefore no UK officials attended.

EU Legislation

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of all the *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary legislation sponsored by her Department in the 2003–04 parliamentary session was consequent on EU legislation. [213225]

Ms Hewitt: During the 2003–04 session my Department sponsored the following five Bills:

Civil Partnership

Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise)

Employment Relations

Energy

Patents

Two—Employment Relations and Energy—contained elements implementing requirements arising from EU Directives or Regulations.

Of the 133 Statutory Instruments introduced by my Department in the 2003–04 Session, 25 contained elements implementing requirements arising from EU Directives or Regulations.

Iraq

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the British companies being assisted by her Department who have won contracts in Iraq. [216104]

Ms Hewitt: My Department has provided information and assistance to a number of British companies who have won contracts in Iraq. However, British companies are not required to report details to the Government of contracts they have won or work they are doing in Iraq. Nor is there a central organisation that collects and publishes such information. There is therefore no definitive list of such firms.

Miners' Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints about claims handling companies were made to her Department in 2004; and how many of these were referred to the Law Society. [208878]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department receives a substantial level of correspondence regarding the administration of the coal health schemes. However, we do not keep a breakdown of the subject matters covered and are not therefore able to provide details of how many complaints have been received.

The Law Society is not responsible for the overseeing of claims handlers.

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent on official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214946]

Ms Hewitt: The Departments' accounting systems cannot provide information broken down to the level of detail requested. Information on spend at this level of detail could be obtainable only at disproportionate cost.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to question reference 213225, tabled for answer on 31 January. [221140]

Ms Hewitt: I have answered the question today.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to question reference 214200, tabled on 1 February. [221141]

Nigel Griffiths: I answered the question on 21 February.

Small Firms

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when her Department intends to adjudicate on the application lodged on 19 January by Green Amp Ltd. concerning compliance approval under the Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme. [212347]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The Small Business Service received a Small Firm Loan Guarantee application from Green Amp Ltd.'s bank on 1 March 2005. It was processed within the usual time scale of five working days.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210536]

Ms Hewitt: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All meetings held by special advisers and all speeches given by special advisers are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that successful competitions have been completed for the management of at least 50 per cent. of UK nuclear sites by the end of 2008 will be met; [220020]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to demonstrate progress by 2006 on raising the rate of UK productivity growth over the economic cycle; [220032]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote ethnic diversity in the workplace; [220026]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to narrow the productivity gap with the US, France and Germany; [220034]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the UK's competitiveness; [220033]

(6) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote co-operative employment relations; [220025]

(7) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to establish a safe, innovative and dynamic market for nuclear clean-up; [220022]

(8) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to deliver annual 2 per cent. efficiency gains in nuclear clean up from 2006–07 will be met; [220021]

(9) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote greater choice and commitment in the workplace; [220024]

(10) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the civil nuclear liability by 10 per cent. by 2010 will be met; [220023]

(11) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the international performance of the UK's science and engineering base; [220035]

(12) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to maintain energy security; [220044]

(13) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that the UK ranks in the top three most competitive energy markets in the EU and G7 in each year will be met in 2005; [220042]

(14) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to bring the UK levels of consumer protection up to the level of the best by 2006 will be met; [220041]

(15) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to achieve fuel poverty objectives; [220045]

(16) whether the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that the UK ranks in the top three most competitive energy markets in the EU and G7 in each year was met in 2004; [220043]

(17) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to bring the UK levels of consumer empowerment up to the level of the best by 2006 will be met; [220040]

(18) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the exploitation of the UK science base; [220037]

(19) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the overall innovation performance of the UK economy; [220036]

(20) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to bring the UK levels of competition up to the level of the best by 2006 will be met; [220039]

(21) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to place empowered consumers at the heart of an effective competition regime; [220038]

(22) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the environment; [220046]

(23) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the sustainable use of natural resources; [220047]

(24) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of people considering going into business; [220053]

(25) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase enterprise in disadvantaged communities; [220055]

(26) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the overall productivity of small firms; [220054]

(27) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the persistent gap in growth rates between the English regions over the long-term; [220057]

(28) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to make sustainable improvements in the economic performance of all English regions by 2008; [220056]

(29) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to build an enterprise society in which small firms thrive; [220052]

(30) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 12.5 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010 will be met; [220049]

(31) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the use of energy saving technologies; [220048]

(32) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to *(a)* secure agreement to a significant reduction in trade barriers and *(b)* improve trading opportunities for the UK and developing countries by 2005 will be met; [220051]

(33) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target of moving towards a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010; [220050]

(34) what recent progress has been made towards achieving the Public Service Agreement target to create an extensive and competitive broadband market; [220059]

(35) whether the Public Service Agreement target to achieve value for money improvements of 2.5 per cent. a year across her Department was met in 2004; [220065]

(36) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to maintain the reliability of energy supplies; [220067]

(37) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote fair, competitive markets; [220066]

(38) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to maintain the UK as the prime location in the EU for foreign direct investment; [220069]

(39) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to eliminate fuel poverty in vulnerable households in England by 2010 will be met; [220068]

(40) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to achieve value for money improvements of 2.5 per cent. a year across her Department will be met in 2005; [220064]

(41) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the employment rate by 2006 will be met; [220061]

(42) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to bring about measurable improvements in gender equality by 2006 will be met; [220060]

(43) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to deliver a measurable improvement in the business performance of UK Trade and Investment's international trade customers by 2008; [220063]

(44) what recent assessment she has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce significantly the difference between the overall employment rate and the employment rate of ethnic minorities by 2006 will be met; [220062]

(45) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to maintain a flexible labour market. [220070]

Ms Hewitt: The Department reports on progress towards its Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets in its Departmental Reports and Autumn Performance Reports. The most recent of these assessments is contained in the Autumn Performance Report 2004 (Cm 6422 www.dti.gov.uk/pdfs/DTI_Autumn_Performance_Report_2004.pdf) which was laid before Parliament on 7 December 2004. This report gives the most recent assessment of progress towards all of the Department's PSA targets from the 2002 and earlier Spending Review.

The Department's first assessment of progress towards its PSA targets from the 2004 Spending Review will be in the Autumn Performance Report 2005.

VAT Registrations

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses were *(a)* registered and *(b)* de-registered for VAT in each year since 2001 in each (i) constituency and (ii) region. [210135]

Nigel Griffiths: DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations and de-registrations are not available at constituency level, however local authority level data are available and are published on the Small Business Service website, VAT registrations and de-registrations for the UK regions and countries are shown as follows for 2001 to 2003. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

Barclays have also revised the methodology for calculating the number of start-ups and have not published revised start or closure figures for the regions before 2003. Barclays bank's start-up data for each region and Wales for 2003 and for the first half of 2004 are given as follows.

Region	*2003*	*First half 2004*
East	47,500	28,600
East Midlands	34,700	21,300
London	84,300	57,200
North East	15,100	9,800
North West	57,400	34,200
South East	76,300	46,300
South West	52,400	30,600
West Midlands	38,000	23,200
Yorkshire and the Humber	37,700	23,300
Wales	21,500	13,700

Source:
Barclays Small Business Banking: Business Survey 2003–04

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations and de-registrations are not available at constituency level, however local authority level data are available and are published on the Small Business Service website. VAT registrations and de-registrations for the UK regions and countries are shown as follows for 2001 to 2003. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

	Registrations		
	2001	*2002*	*2003*
East	16,475	17,700	18,615
East Midlands	11,150	11,920	12,760
London	33,380	33,340	36,590
North East	4,090	4,310	4,640
North West	16,270	17,260	18,840
South East	27,045	28,430	30,345
South West	14,295	15,295	16,175
West Midlands	13,930	14,405	15,630
Yorkshire and the Humber	11,590	12,265	13,695
England	148,220	154,925	167,290
Northern Ireland	3,440	3,465	3,775
Scotland	10,850	11,010	11,915
Wales	5,935	6,305	6,910

	De-registrations		
	2001	*2002*	*2003*
East	15,005	15,615	17,005
East Midlands	9,715	10,360	11,135
London	30,760	33,215	34,565
North East	4,035	4,035	4,010
North West	15,125	16,390	16,575
South East	23,320	25,535	27,785
South West	12,830	13,865	14,840
West Midlands	12,365	13,175	14,540
Yorkshire and the Humber	11,000	11,790	11,650
England	134,160	143,980	152,100
Northern Ireland	2,940	2,870	3,950
Scotland	10,415	10,635	11,380

	De-registrations		
Wales	5,325	6,435	6,925

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service, available from: www.sbs.gov.uk/analytical/statistics/vatstats.php

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many VAT registrations there have been in Hartlepool in each year since 1997. [210616]

Nigel Griffiths: DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations for Hartlepool unitary authority are shown as follows for the period 1997 to 2003. Data on VAT registrations are also available in the Library of the House. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

VAT registrations 1997–2003—Hartlepool

	Number
1997	110
1998	130
1999	110
2000	110
2001	115
2002	105
2003	135

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service, available from: www.sbs.gov.uk/analytical/statistics/vatstats.php

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

TRANSPORT

Agency Staff

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people are employed by *(a)* the Driver Standards Agency, *(b)* Driver Vehicle Licensing Authority, *(c)* Vehicle Certification Authority and *(d)* Vehicle and Operator Service Agency; what the running costs of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body. [203826]

Mr. Jamieson: The information is as follows.

DVLA

1. At 1 April, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) employed 6,250 staff on a full-time equivalent basis.

2. The most recent published accounts for the DVLA are for the 2003–04 financial year, in which the operating costs of the agency were £381.2 million.

3. As part of its realisation of efficiency gains, the DVLA has plans to reduce the number of staff employed by at least 500 by 2007–08.

DSA

1. At 1 April 2004, the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) employed 2,263 staff on a full-time equivalent basis.

2. The most recent published accounts for DSA are for the 2003–04 financial year, in which the running costs of the agency were £113.8 million.

3. Demand for driving tests has continued to increase significantly leading to a major recruitment and training exercise for driving examiners and supporting call centre, deployment and customer service staff. The DSA plans to increase staff by around 350 by 2005–06. Of these over 230 will be driving examiners.

VCA

1. At 1 April 2004, the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) employed 110 staff on a full-time equivalent basis.

2. The most recent published accounts for VCA are for the 2003–04 financial year, in which the running costs of the agency were £7.5 million.

3. There are currently no plans to change the number of staff employed by the VCA.

VOSA

1. At 1 April 2004, the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) employed 2,650 staff on a full-time equivalent basis.

2. The most recent published accounts for VOSA are for the 2003–04 financial year, in which the operating costs of the agency were £127 million.

3. There are currently no plans to change the number of staff employed by VOSA.

Ongoing review

We keep all four agencies under review, in accordance with Government guidelines, to ensure that their function is still required and that they continue to provide the most effective means of carrying out those functions.

Airport Security

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the Home Office, *(b)* the Security Services, *(c)* the National Criminal Intelligence Service, *(d)* the National Crime Squad, *(e)* the Immigration Service, *(f)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and *(g)* the Association of Chief Police Officers, regarding the level of security at UK airports. [220370]

Charlotte Atkins: Department for Transport Ministers and Officials keep the threat to civil aviation in the UK, and the security measures in place at UK airports, under constant review in conjunction with the organisations listed and the aviation industry. In addition to regular bilateral discussions on specific issues, these bodies are represented on relevant cross-departmental ministerial and Cabinet Office committees; the National Aviation Security Committee (NASC) and its various sub-committees; and the Multi-Agency Threat and Risk Assessment (MATRA) groups that have been established at all UK airports.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical evidence

relating as closely as possible to Coventry, South constituency, the effects on Coventry, South of changes to his Department's policy since 1997. [220369]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Coventry, South constituency benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road casualties in Great Britain fell from 32 7,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–67 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to West Midlands metropolitan authorities since 1997 is shown in the following table[1]. It has been for West Midlands metropolitan authorities to determine how that allocation is spent, in line with its local transport plan and its priorities.

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocation were made in 1996.

£ million

West Midlands metropolitan authorities nature of funding	1998–99	1999	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Capital maintenance	7.557	11.516	13.331	22.361	26.246	21.942	24.723
Integrated block	19.857	21.491	22.300	46.600	49.380	51.000	55.012
Major schemes	21.987	10.700	6.902	4.805	13.875	13.325	24.4
Targeted bus grants[1]	0.090	0.090	0.500	0.960	1.260	0.850	0.140
Total	49.491	43.797	43.033	74.726	90.761	87.117	104.275

[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus Challenge funding.

In addition, the Coventry, South constituency is benefiting from major improvements to strategic infrastructure. For example in December 2004 the Government fully approved the Quality Coventry Bus Network and has agreed to contribute £28 million to the costs of the scheme, which will make a real difference to current bus users as well as encouraging greater bus use in the city.

The Highways Agency has a programme of work that includes the M40 junction 15 (Longbridge Roundabout) scheme. This work is due to commence in 2006–07. The objective of this scheme is to relieve congestion in the Coventry, South constituency area.

The Coventry, South constituency has benefited from the £7 billion investment in the West Coast Railway Line. Also £4.2 million has been spent on railway related park and ride schemes.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk

Geraint Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Croydon, Central, the effects of the Department's policies and actions on Croydon, Central constituency since 1997. [220387]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Croydon, Central constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road casualties in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

Responsibility for a number of transport functions has been devolved to the Greater London Assembly and Transport for London. For example, the Mayor sets a transport strategy and provides capital funding to London boroughs to implement parts of it. Since 1997, the Croydon, Central constituency has benefited from the investment being made in new rail rolling stock, the completion of the Croydon Tramlink and will benefit from the Coulsdon Relief Road, now under construction.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Emissions

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the most recent data are for levels of emissions, expressed *(a)* per person/km and *(b)* per vehicle/km, of (i) carbon monoxide, (ii) benzene, (iii) methane, (iv) other volatile organic compounds, (v) 1.3 butadiene and (vi) particulates from (A) cars and (B) powered two-wheeled vehicles in the UK. [220868]

Mr. Jamieson: The data for 2002, the last full year for which the data are available, are given in the following table. These have been derived by taking the estimated total fleet emissions of each pollutant in tonnes per year for each vehicle class and dividing by the total passenger-kilometres and vehicle-kilometres respectively.

	Grammes per passenger km		Grammes per vehicle km	
	Cars and taxis	Powered two-wheeled vehicles	Cars and taxis	Powered two-wheeled vehicles
Carbon monoxide	2.57	16.27	4.02	17.58
Benzene	0.0062	0.0451	0.0097	0.0488
Methane	0.012	0.136	0.019	0.147
Other volatile organic compounds	0.248	2.222	0.387	2.403
1.3 butadiene	0.0024	0.0289	0.0037	0.0313
Particulates	0.012	0.098	0.019	0.106

Source:
Defra/Netcen and DfT Transport Statistics.

Highway Schemes

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which highway schemes provisionally approved by his Department in the Local Transport Capital Settlements announced in *(a)* December 2000, *(b)* December 2001, *(c)* December 2002 and *(d)* December 2003 have received final approval; and what capital allocation has been provided in respect of each. [212303]

Charlotte Atkins: The following table sets out major highway schemes provisionally approved between December 2000 and December 2003. These scheme have now had final approval The table also includes capital allocation that has been provided in respect of each.

LTP highway scheme	Allocation (£ million)
Barnsley Coalfields Link Road Phases 2 and 3	6.206
Sheffield Northern Inner Relief Road Stages 2 and 3	55.989
East Leeds Link	9.500
Leeds Inner Relief Road Stage 7	50.358
South Bradford Integrated Transport Scheme	11.364
Carlisle Northern Development Route	[1]78.812
A57 Cadishead Way (Brinell Drive to City Boundary)	19.905
Salford Manchester Inner Relief Road (Regent Road to Gore Street)	34.314
Scotswood Road	13.200
Sunderland Southern Radial Route	21.348
A689 Sedgefield to Wynyard Improvement	9.349
A1687 Chilton Bypass	8.364
Nar Ouse Regeneration Route	7.752
South Lowestoft Relief Road	29.621
West Thurrock Regeneration Ring Road	5.07
A13/A127-A1159 Corridors	14.5
A228 Main Road to Ropers Lane Phase 1	11.860
Northfield Relief Road	15.282
Cradley Heath Bypass	6.769
Barford Bypass	9.050
Biddulph Inner Bypass	8.851
Rugeley Eastern Bypass Stage 2	17.810
Barnstaple Western Bypass	37.954
Semington to Melksham	10.82
Plymouth Northern Corridor	11.250
Partney Bypass	6.305
Rearsby Bypass	7.003
Mansfield and Ashfield Regeneration Route	28.083

[1] PFI

London Underground

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much central Government funding was provided to London Underground in each financial year between 1997–98 and 2004–05 *(a)* at current prices and *(b)* at constant prices, separately identifying amounts provided for the Jubilee Line Extension. [220698]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* The following tables set out:

(a) For the period up to July 2003, the amounts London Underground (LU) received from the London Regional Transport (LRT) grant. (Up to July 2000, when Transport for London was established, a single grant was paid to LRT to support LU, buses, river services, Croydon Tramlink, etc, and the Department's estimates do not record a separate element for LU. Between July 2000 and July 2003, the grant provided to LRT was only for LU.)

(b) For the period since July 2003, the element of GLA transport grant the Government have identified as being for London Underground. (The GLA transport grant is paid as a single block, and it is for the Mayor to determine LU's budget).

£ million (cash)

	London Regional Transport	London Underground[2]	Of which Jubilee Line extension construction
1997–98	630	544	506
1998–99	411	313	267
1999–2000	816	640	478
2000–01	315	267	—
2001–02[2]	484	460	—
2002–03	767	767	—
2003–04[3]	867	1,218	—
2004–05[4]	—	1,070	—

[1] Source: London Underground accounts for 1997–98 to 2003–04.
[2] In 2001–02, LRT spent £24 million on re-structuring and re-organising LT Group.
[3] In 2003–04, the grant for LU was paid to LRT until July 2003 with the balance of £346 million being paid as part of the GLA Transport Grant from August 2003.
[4] The element of the GLA transport grant identified by Government for London Underground.

£ million[1]

	London Regional Transport	London Underground	Of which Jubilee Line extension construction
1997–98	730.9	631.1	587.0
1998–99	463.4	352.9	301.0
1999–2000	900.7	706.4	527.6
2000–01	343.5	291.2	—
2001–02	514.9	489.4	—
2002–03	789.1	789.1	—
2003–04	867	1,218	—
2004–05	—	1,048.0	—

[1] Constant 2003–04 prices—HMT GDP Deflator

Motorcycling Strategy

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consultation the Government conducted with organisations or interests other than motorcycle users and manufacturers prior to publishing its recent motor cycling strategy; and what responses it received. [220846]

Mr. Jamieson: When developing the National Motorcycling Strategy, the Government took account of the views of the Advisory Group on Motorcycling. This Group represented motorcycling interests, motoring organisations, local government and the police.

The Strategy is a framework for motorcycling to become fully recognised as a mode of transport. It embraces a whole range of actions both for government and non-government organisations to pursue in order for this "mainstreaming" of motorcycling to be successfully achieved. Consultation with both motorcycling interests and other affected parties will take place, where necessary, as these specific actions are taken forwards.

Motorway Speed Limits

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport under whose authority temporary speed limits on motorways are imposed when roadworks are taking place; and what criteria are used to decide the level of the speed limit. [220457]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* Temporary speed limits are imposed by means of an Order made, or a Notice issued, by the Secretary of State under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended by the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991.

The criteria for deciding the level of the speed limit are set out in the Highways Agency's Interim Advice Note 57/04, a copy of which has been placed in the House Library.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons a temporary speed limit of 40 mph was in place on the M1 motorway on the northbound carriageway south of junction 5 on 24 February; for what reasons the speed limit was set at 40 mph; and if he will make a statement. [220458]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* On 24 February, a mandatory 40 mph speed limit was in place on the M1 Motorway between Junctions 4 and 5 on both the north and southbound carriageways to protect both drivers and the workforce during road works. This had been agreed with the police.

The police set an advisory 40 mph speed limit, using the signals in the central reserve, north of the works, following a minor road traffic accident in lane 3 at 1745 hours. This was for the safety of drivers and those dealing with the incident.

Pilots (Security Clearance)

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to have an appeals system in place to review the removal of pilots' security clearance. [220347]

Charlotte Atkins: I expect the new procedure to be in place in the next few weeks.

School Buses

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to provide capital funding to local authorities for school bus schemes using accessible low floor buses fitted with satellite tracking equipment to provide services to primary schools. [220599]

Charlotte Atkins: We know that well-designed school bus schemes have the potential to reduce car dependency for journeys to school and the traffic congestion that results from this.

The Department does, from time-to-time, receive applications from local authorities for the funding of school buses as a "major schemes" under the Local Transport Plan process. Each of these is considered on its merits, taking account of value for money, regional priorities and affordability. It is for the authorities to determine the precise nature of the bid based on local needs, but the Department would insist that for future schemes vehicles must be DDA compliant.

Snow Ploughs

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many snow ploughs and other snow-moving vehicles are operated by each local authority in England. [220464]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* This information is not collated centrally by the Department for Transport.

The Department strongly recommends that local authorities provide a winter service, including snow ploughing, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management "Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance" published in 2001 by the Institution of Highways and Transportation. This recommends that local highway authorities consult road users on a winter operational plan on an annual basis, and publish and implement it. This plan will inform deliberations on the numbers of specialised winter maintenance vehicles required.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce congestion on the inter-urban trunk road network below 2000 levels will be met by 2010; [219083]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce congestion in large urban areas in England below 2000 levels will be met by 2010. [219084]

Mr. Jamieson: The Commission for Integrated Transport and the Select Committee on Transport, Local Government and the Regions criticised the congestion PSA targets set in 2000 on the grounds that they did not relate to specific roads and were not meaningful to road users, since they did not capture important aspects of road users experience such as journey time reliability. In the light of these concerns the Government announced in the White Paper "The Future of Transport" (July 2004) that it was replacing the previous targets with new ones, to be published in July 2005. In the "Transport 10-Year Plan 2000: Delivering better transport—progress report" (December 2002) the Government said that congestion forecasts were higher than previously, largely due to

higher economic growth. The report went on to say that although the measures set out in the 10-Year Plan will deliver significant reductions in projected levels of congestion, these may not be sufficient to secure a return to 2000 levels.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to secure improvements in rail punctuality will be met by 2010. [219085]

Mr. McNulty: An assessment of progress for all the Department's current public service agreement targets was published in December 2004 in our "Autumn Performance Report"—copies of which were placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to improve the punctuality and reliability of rail services to at least 85 per cent. by 2006 will be met. [219087]

Mr. McNulty: This new public service agreement (PSA) target comes into effect in April 2005.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to increase rail use in Great Britain by 50 per cent. from 2000 levels will be met by 2010. [219088]

Mr. McNulty: An assessment of progress for all the Department's current public service agreement targets was published in December 2004 in our "Annual Performance Report"—copies of which were placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 40 per cent. compared with the average for 1994 to 1998 will be met by 2010. [219091]

Mr. Jamieson: We are making good progress. Provisional data for the third quarter of 2004 (to end September 2004) has been published and shows continuing overall progress and trends with killed and seriously injured casualties showing a 26 per cent. reduction against the 1994–98 baseline.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the number of children killed or seriously injured in road accidents by 50 per cent. compared with the average for 1994 to 1998 will be met by 2010. [219092]

Mr. Jamieson: Provisional data for the second quarter of 2004 (to end June 2004) shows that we are making excellent progress. By the end of June 2004, child deaths or serious injuries were down 40 per cent. from their baseline; over three-quarters of the way towards our 50 per cent. target.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to reduce the significantly higher incidence within disadvantaged communities of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents. [219093]

Mr. Jamieson: The target is to secure a greater reduction in the overall number of road casualties in the 88 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Areas in England designated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, than for England as a whole, comparing the figure for 2005 with the baseline for 1999 to 2001. Latest data for 2003 show there has been a greater reduction, since the baseline, in the number of road accident casualties in disadvantaged districts than in England as a whole (10.6 per cent. reduction in deprived districts compared with 9.0 per cent. nationwide).

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target to improve air quality by meeting the National Air Quality strategy objectives for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1,3-butadiene. [219094]

Mr. Jamieson: Preliminary results show that, last year, we met the four Air Quality Strategy objectives in the public service agreement target for carbon monoxide, benzene, 1.3-butadiene and lead. Objectives for particles and sulphur dioxide, due to be met last year, have not yet been achieved in every part of the country.

Modelling shows that more work will be needed if we are to meet future objectives for nitrogen dioxide and particles in all parts of the country. We are reviewing the Air Quality Strategy and the Climate Change Programme to see what more can be done to make faster progress. At the same time, we are taking forward initiatives announced in the Future of Transport White Paper. These include working with our European partners to develop tighter standards for both vehicles and fuels, and ensuring that local authorities' Air Quality Action Plans are integrated into their Local Transport Plans in areas where transport has a significant impact on local air quality.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 12.5 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010 will be met. [219095]

Mr. Jamieson: Recent assessments are that the Government will meet their target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent. on base year levels by 2010. Indeed, they expect to do considerably better. The UK is currently on track to achieve a 21 per cent. reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2010, thereby achieving more the target by 17 MtC.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent progress has been made towards achieving the public service agreement target of moving towards a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010. [219096]

Mr. Jamieson: Recent progress on policies and other programmes to reduce emissions from carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the transport sector

and other sectors was published in "Review of the UK Climate Change Programme: consultation paper" on 8 December 2004.

Examples of measures which have led to reductions in carbon emissions from the transport sector include the Government's support for low carbon vehicles and fuels through fiscal and other incentives and support for research, development and demonstration programmes such as the New Vehicle Technology Fund. Policy measures in the transport sector alone are forecast to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by some 4.4 million tonnes of carbon a year by 2010.

The Government expect that, as a result of their policies, carbon dioxide emissions will fall. In 2003, they are estimated to have been about 7 per cent. below 1990 levels. By 2010, they are forecast to be 14 per cent. below 1990 levels based on current projections. This figure includes only the estimated emission reductions gained from measures that are firm and funded. It does not include, for example, measures that may happen but are not yet finalised, such as a possible further round of voluntary agreements on average new car fuel efficiency between the European Commission and the automotive industry after the current agreements expire in 2008.

Thameslink

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will make a decision on whether to reopen the inquiry into Thameslink 2000; and if he will make a statement. [220523]

Mr. McNulty: The Planning Inspectorate announced in letters sent to interested parties on 6 January 2005 that the inquiry into the Thameslink 2000 scheme is to be re-opened. The re-opened inquiry will consider all the applications relating to the scheme that are now before the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Transport for determination. I understand that no date has yet been fixed for the inquiry to re-open, but that this is unlikely to be until late summer. I will ensure that my hon. Friend is notified once a date has been settled.

Traffic Wardens

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the present position is concerning the new code of conduct for traffic wardens; at what intervals he plans to revise the code; what provisions are in place to allow members of the public to make representations concerning the code; if he will re-publish the code each time it is revised; and if he will make a statement. [218966]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 2 March 2005]:* We are working on the statutory guidance for local authorities, in connection with their enforcement of traffic contraventions, as authorised by the Traffic Management Act 2004. This will include public consultation on the provisions of the guidance.

Trip Survey

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average *(a)* number and *(b)* distance of trips as calculated by the National Travel Survey was by (i) car driver, (ii) car passenger, (iii) bus, (iv) walking and (v) other modes of transport broken down by (A) commuting, (B) business, (C) education, (D) escort education, (E) shopping and (F) other reasons, broken down by (1) sex and (2) those (v) under 17-years, *(w)* 17 to 29 years, (x) 30 to 49 years, *(y)* 50 to 59 years and *(z)* over 60-years in the latest three-year period for which survey results are available. [218209]

Charlotte Atkins: The information for 2002–03 has been placed in the Libraries of the House. The two year aggregate for 2002–03 provides a larger sample size than the previous three year aggregates because of an increase in sample size from 2002.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Poverty

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children in each London borough have been reported to be living in poverty in each year since 1995. [212378]

Mr. Pond: Our first step towards eradicating child poverty as set out in our current Public Service Agreement target is to reduce the number of children in low-income households by a quarter by 2004–05. This is measured using the proportion of children in relative low income households. Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03". Data are not available below the regional level and are only available as proportions at the regional level. It should be noted that the reporting of year-on-year changes in the regional low-income rates are not reliable. 'Measuring child poverty', published in December 2003, outlines the Government's measure of UK child poverty for the long term. The measure will consist of three tiers; absolute low income, relative low income and material deprivation and low income combined. The Government will set a target as part of the 2006 SR06 Spending Review to halve by 2010–11 the numbers of children suffering a combination of material deprivation and relative low income. Data will not be available below the regional level.

"Households below average income 1997–98 to 2002–03" and "Measuring Child Poverty" are available in the Library.

Child Support Agency

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what provision is available to support a claimant whilst a re-evaluation of Child Support Agency payments is taking place. [218606]

Mr. Pond: Within the Child Support legislation, there is no provision available to a claimant while a re-evaluation of Child Support payments is being made.

Non-resident parents are responsible for continuing regular payments while their liability is being re-calculated. If the non resident parent does not pay whilst their liability is being re-calculated, any moneys not paid will be added to the arrears balance.

Council Tax Benefit

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* people, *(b)* pensioners and *(c)* people aged 65 years or over in England receive 100 per cent. council tax benefit. [219880]

Mr. Pond: The available information is in the table.

Council tax benefit beneficiaries with full benefit, by age, in England: May 2003

	[1]Council tax benefit beneficiaries
All	3,629,000
60 and over	1,623,000
65 and over	1,319,000

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Notes:

The figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation.

2. Beneficiaries are all claimants and partners in the relevant category.

3. Council tax benefit cases exclude any second adult rebate cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 2003.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how much of his Department's annual expenditure was spent on *(a)* pensioners, *(b)* the sick and disabled, *(c)* the unemployed, *(d)* lone parents and *(e)* other types of claimants in (i) 1997 and (ii) the latest year for which figures are available; [219396]

(2) what percentage of total benefit expenditure went to those whose primary income was from *(a)* pensions, *(b)* sick and disabled persons' benefits, *(c)* unemployment benefits, *(d)* lone parent benefits and *(e)* benefits in (i) 1997 and (ii) the latest period for which figures are available. [219534]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The available information is in the table. It is not possible to allocate expenditure according to whether the benefit income represented the recipient's primary source of income, so expenditure has been assigned according to the principal benefits received.

	Benefit expenditure[1]			
	Cash terms	*Real terms 2004–05 prices*	*Percentage of benefit expenditure*	*Percentage of gross domestic product*
1997–98				
Pensioner benefits	43,426	51,391	46.5	5.3
Sick and disabled benefits	23,868	28,246	25.6	2.9
Unemployment benefits	5,927	7,014	6.3	0.7
Lone parent benefits	8,247	9,760	8.8	1.0
All other benefits	11,874	14,051	12.7	1.4
Total benefits	93,342	110,464	100.0	11.3
2003–04				
Pensioner benefits	60,354	61,644	57.2	5.4
Sick and disabled benefits	29,751	30,387	28.2	2.7
Unemployment benefits	3,781	3,862	3.6	0.3
Lone parent benefits	7,998	8,169	7.6	0.7
All other benefits	3,676	3,754	3.5	0.3
Total benefits	105,559	107,816	100.0	9.5

[1] All figures have been rounded to the nearest £ million.

Notes:

1. Figures may not sum due to rounding

2. Expenditure figures quoted for 1997–98 are outturn and those quoted for 2003–04 are estimated outturn.

3. The following benefits are split between more than one client group:

Bereavement benefits; incapacity benefit; severe disablement allowance; income support; housing benefit; council tax benefit; family credit.

4. Pensioner benefits include retirement pension (contributory and non contributory), bereavement benefits, Christmas bonus (contributory), incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, winter fuel payment, over 70s payment, over 80s payment, over 75 TV licence, pensions compensation board, income support, pension credit, housing benefit and council tax benefit.

5. Sick and disabled benefits include attendance allowance, disability living allowance, industrial injuries benefits, invalid care allowance/ carer's allowance, motability/specialised vehicles fund, vaccine damage payments, war disablement pensions, incapacity benefit, statutory sick pay, severe disablement allowance, disability working allowance, income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit.

6. Unemployment benefits include unemployment benefit/jobseeker's allowance (contributory and income based), housing benefit and council tax benefit.

7. Lone parent benefits include family credit, income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit.

8. All others benefits include child benefit, guardian's allowance, child's special allowance, bereavement benefits, maternity allowance, statutory maternity pay, non contributory Christmas bonus, new deal allowances and credits, job grant, war widows pensions, earnings top up, social fund, family credit, income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit.

9. Comparisons between years are affected by transfers of responsibilities between Departments, in particular family credit being replaced by working families tax credit in 1999, war pensions transferring to the Veterans Agency in 2002 and child benefit being transferred to the Inland Revenue in 2003.

Source:

DWP expenditure tables (1 and 7) published on the internet at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp. All figures are consistent with the pre-Budget report (2 December 2004).

Job Centres

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost has been of refurbishing jobcentres at *(a)* Blandford, *(b)* Bridport, *(c)* Christchurch, *(d)* Poole and *(e)* Wareham in the last three years. [212300]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Christopher Chope, dated 9 March 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the cost of refurbishing the Jobcentres in Blandford, Bridport, Christchurch, Poole and Wareham in the last three years. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

During this time, Blandford, Bridport, Christchurch and Wareham were refurbished to meet the corporate Jobcentre Plus vision. As Poole was relocated to a new site, new build costs were incurred.

Information on costs incurred is in the table.

£

Jobcentre plus office	*Cost*
Blandford	287,000
Bridport	300,000
Christchurch	320,000
Poole	343,000
Wareham	242,000

Notes:
1. Information is for the period October 2002 to July 2004 when costs were incurred.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus South West Regional Office

I hope this information is helpful.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many work-focused benefit interviews were carried out at jobcentres in *(a)* Blandford, *(b)* Bridport, *(c)* Christchurch, *(d)* Poole and *(e)* Wareham in the last month for which figures are available. [212301]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Christopher Chope, dated 9 March 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the number of work-focused benefit interviews carried out at Jobcentres in Blandford, Bridport, Christchurch, Poole and Wareham in the last month for which figures are available. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The information is in the table.

Jobcentre plus office	*Number of interviews*
Blandford	90
Bridport	100
Christchurch	140
Poole	540
Wareham	90

Notes:
1. Figures are for January 2005.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Customer Management System

I hope this information is helpful.

Jobseekers

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what restrictions his Department places on the jobs which may be offered to jobseekers which raise issues of conscience for those taking them up. [219713]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Tim Boswell, dated 9 March 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding the restrictions this Department places on jobs which may be offered to jobseekers which raise issues of conscience for those taking them up. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus

It is our policy to accept vacancies across a wide range of occupations, on the understanding that they are fully compliant with UK employment legislation and civil law. We do not seek to restrict the advertising of vacancies where the work involved may raise an issue of conscience, but where the employment is lawful.

Under the Employment and Training Act 1973 we have to provide a service to both employers and to people seeking employment. We must, therefore, have strong reasons for refusing an employer access to our services.

Some vacancies advertised by Jobcentre Plus include statements which, due to the nature of work or the employer's circumstances, jobseekers are not obliged to apply for. These include vacancies in the adult entertainment, sex and related industries and/or involving nudity, and vacancies from employers where industrial action is taking place.

Whilst the payment of Jobseekers Allowance is intended to provide a safety net of a minimum level of income for those between jobs, unemployment must not be voluntary. Sanctions therefore underpin the benefit system.

Safeguards in the Jobseeker's Allowance regulations mean that individuals who display good cause for refusing employment would not be sanctioned and lose benefit. Jobseeker's Allowance regulations specify that a person is considered to have good cause where, amongst other reasons, they have a sincerely held religious or conscientious objection.

I hope this information is helpful.

Maternity Provision

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans the Government has to increase the rate of *(a)* statutory maternity pay and *(b)* maternity allowance. [219801]

Mr. Pond: The standard rate of Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance will be increased from £102.80 to £106 a week from April 2005 as part of the annual uprating process.

The Government's aim is to give all children the best start in life and to give parents more choice about how to balance their work and family life. As part of this the Government have undertaken to extend the payment period of Statutory Maternity Pay and Maternity Allowance from 26 weeks to 39 weeks from April 2007.

The Government recognise that whether parents can afford to take time off is crucial to their decisions about how much leave from work they can take. Therefore we

are asking in our consultation document "Work and Families, Choice and Flexibility", issued by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on 28 February, what the guiding principles should be for setting the level of flat rate payments.

New Deal for Disabled People

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department has taken to inform employers about the new deal for disabled people; and how it assesses the success of measures to publicise the programme to employers. [219871]

Jane Kennedy: As part of its range of new deal promotional materials, the Department provides a leaflet for employers about the new deal for disabled people (NDDP), which is used by Jobcentre Plus in working locally with employers. It includes case studies of and for employers and can also be used by NDDP Job Brokers as a marketing tool. The NDDP News Magazine, which is published on a quarterly basis and has a circulation of 10,000 to 15,000, also includes positive features on employers' experiences of employing people who have found a job through NDDP and is frequently requested by Job Brokers for use in their promotional activities.

The main emphasis in promoting NDDP to employers lies with individual Job Brokers. Job Broker services vary and are focused on customers' requirements and the needs of the local labour market. Their marketing activities are also tailored to need, and are most likely to be primarily directed towards potential customers. Job Brokers can work directly with an employer but will only do so with the agreement of the customer concerned.

A key indicator of success is in the programme's achievement of job entries. Up to September 2004, over 46,000 people had gained a job through NDDP since the programme began in 2001. The Department has in place a comprehensive research programme for NDDP, designed to establish the experiences and views of the range of stakeholders, including Job Brokers, customers and employers, among others. This does not directly assess the success of Job Brokers' measures to publicise the programme, but emerging findings show that employers are broadly aware of the new deal and, although less so of NDDP specifically, they are aware of Job Broker organisations in their area, where Job Brokers often advertise under their own name for their NDDP service.

Social Security Advisory Committee

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library copies of past advice on tax that he has received from the Social Security Advisory Committee. [219558]

Mr. Pond: The Social Security Advisory Committee do not give advice on tax to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Diabetes (Public Service Recruits)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures have been put in place by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to medically assess people with diabetes who apply to become paramedics. [220533]

Angela Smith: All applicants to join the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Services Trust who have been successful at interview must undergo a pre-employment medical check by Belfast City Hospital's Occupational Health Unit, which advises the Trust about applicants' fitness for the work.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures have been put in place by the Fire Service of Northern Ireland to medically assess people with diabetes who apply to become firefighters. [220534]

Angela Smith: All applicants who apply to join the Northern Ireland Fire Brigade as firefighters undergo the same medical assessment, regardless of any underlying medical condition. An occupational health doctor and nurse conduct the assessment, an accredited specialist in occupational medicine reviews the results and, if necessary, further information is requested from the applicant's general practitioner or specialist in the applicant's particular medical condition.

Alzheimer's Disease

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of *(a)* donepezil, *(b)* rivastigmine and *(c)* galantamine in treating Alzheimer's sufferers in Northern Ireland. [220460]

Angela Smith: No departmental assessment has been undertaken on the effectiveness of *(a)* donepezil *(b)* rivastigmine *(c)* galantamine in treating Alzheimer's sufferers in Northern Ireland. At present, clinicians prescribe these medicines, taking into account evidence of best practice and the clinical circumstances of the individual patient.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is currently undergoing a consultation on recommendations for the prescribing of the medicines. While NICE guidance only applies to England and Wales, following publication of the final appraisal determination on use of these medicines, the Department may consider its relevance to Northern Ireland.

Ards Borough (Planning)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the impact that the number of site meetings being requested by Ards borough council is having on the planning process in the Ards borough area. [208978]

Angela Smith: Managing and attending site meetings involves a significant proportion of a senior planning officer's time and inevitably has an effect on the time taken to process all planning applications. It appears that the meetings are often requested as a matter of

routine and the Planning Service questions the value of many of these site meetings. Furthermore, I am advised that when an opinion is revised, it is usually due to receipt of additional information or amendments to the proposal to meet the Planning Service's requirements.

Belfast Regeneration Office

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by the Belfast Regeneration Office in each year since it was set up; and how much has been spent by each team set up by the Belfast Regeneration Office in each year since its formation. [220627]

Mr. Spellar: Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO) was set up in 1998. Table 1 details the amount of money spent by BRO, through its three main funding streams, namely: Action Plan, Making Belfast Work (Area Teams); and Physical, since its formation. Table 2 provides information on that money spent by each of the four BRO Area Teams.

Table 1

	Amount (£)
1998–99	9,058,855.70
1999–2000	11,853,374.00
2000–01	11,659,640.70
2001–02	9,400,302.85
2002–03	6,380,416.67
2003–04	4,628,157.86
2004–05 (to date)	2,876,351.88

Table 2: Amount spent by Belfast regeneration office area teams since the formation of BRO in 1998

Team	*Inner West*	*Outer West*	*North*	*South*	£ *East*
1998–99	1,725,653.00	635,682.50	1,541,860.00	834,786.10	461,385.20
1999–2000	2,693,795.00	699,131.10	1,515,760.00	898,035.80	1,073,967.00
2000–01	2,814,153.00	190,457.60	1,768,866.00	1,040,845.00	635,338.50
2001–02	1,852,426.19	934,390.85	1,457,436.49	986,869.42	[1]—
2002–03	933,695.36	622,890.38	278,485.81	392,773.17	[1]—
2003–04	1,053,151.79	437,007.33	927,244.38	646,865.46	[1]—
2004–05 (to date)	607,218.57	508,231.47	412,553.94	461,464.75	[1]—

[1] BRO South Team amalgamated with BRO East Team on 2002.

Contaminated Land (Carrickfergus)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his policy is on underwriting the value of residents' property if contamination is found on lands in the Brackenridge area of Carrickfergus. [220625]

Angela Smith: Where land is found to be contaminated and this results in harm or the possibility of harm arising from the condition of that land, steps will be taken to determine the responsibility for its remediation. It is too early to say what the investigation in relation to the Brackenridge area may show, or what action, if any, may be required.

Cookstown Police Station

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria were used to determine the siting of the new police station in Cookstown, Co. Tyrone. [220623]

Mr. Pearson: The proposed new build station at Cookstown will be located adjacent to the existing PSNI station at Molesworth Street, Cookstown. The choice of this location was determined by Local Police Command at Cookstown taking into account a range of operational policing factors, including the ability to provide a centralised reporting centre for the Cookstown public, location of the station relative to commercial and residential developments, transport infrastructure considerations, security considerations and the ability to deliver community policing within the Cookstown DCU. The existing station has occupied that site for many years and the creation of the new establishment will maintain continuity.

Domestic Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to change the system of domestic rates in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [219908]

Mr. Pearson: The Government are planning to introduce a discrete capital value domestic rating system from 1 April 2007. A policy paper was published in July 2004 seeking views on this and other key reforms, including the proposal for a rate relief scheme, transitional arrangements, an independent valuation tribunal and revaluations at least every five years. Consultation concluded on 12 November 2004. A report outlining the views expressed and the Government's final policy position will be issued shortly.

Fishing

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have to reintroduce social security payments to fishermen who are unable to go to sea in Northern Ireland; how many fishermen benefited from these benefits in the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [220754]

Mr. Spellar: Social security payments are available to share fishermen who satisfy the conditions of entitlement. Fishermen who are paid employees are treated in the same way as other paid employees who claim benefits.

Share fishermen pay a special higher rate of Class 2 National Insurance contributions which gives them access to contribution-based jobseeker's allowance.

Contribution-based jobseeker's allowance has special rules which are specifically designed to provide share fishermen with the necessary financial support for those periods when they are unable to fish because of factors such as bad weather or because their boat is undergoing repairs.

Share fishermen are also eligible to claim income-based jobseeker's allowance. In common with other self employed people their average earnings will be taken into account in assessing their entitlement.

The Government have no plans to change these rules.

Separate statistics are not collected on claims to social security benefits by fishermen. Therefore, it is not possible to say how many fishermen have received benefits in the last three years.

Housing Association Accounts

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list for each financial year since 2001–02 the dates on which each housing association in Belfast was required to submit annual accounts for inspection; on what dates these accounts were received in each case; and what reason was given in each case where the delay was in excess of three months. [220212]

Mr. Spellar: Only those housing associations registered with the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland are required to submit their annual accounts for inspection by the Department.

Article 19 of the Housing (NI) Order 1992 requires a registered housing association to furnish to the Department a copy of its accounts within six months of the end of the period to which they relate. The information requested is attached in respect of the 39 associations registered with the Department.

Name of association	*Accounting period*	*Date due*	*Date received*	*Reason given*
Abbeyfield UK (NI) Ltd.	2001–02	31 March 2002	11 April 2002	
	2002–03	30 March 2003	16 October 2003	No explanation
	2003–04	30 March 2004	16 March 2004	
Abode Housing Association	2001–02	31 July 2002	27 August 2002	Association changed its financial year end from 31 January 2003 to 31 March 2003
	2002–03	30 September 2003	18 August 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	22 June 2004	
Ark Housing Association (NI) Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	Unknown	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	8 October 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	13 August 2004	
Ballynafeigh Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	5 September 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	3 July 2003	
	2004–04	30 June 2004	11 October 2004	Late receipt from auditor
Belfast Community Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	5 May 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	25 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	6 April 2004	
BIH Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	Unknown	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	1 July 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	16 August 2004	
Broadway Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	27 March 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	30 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	7 July 2004	
Choice Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	27 June 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	8 July 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	9 August 2004	
Clanmil Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	14 June 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	18 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	21 June 2004	
Clonard Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	31 July 2002	15 August 2002	
	2002–03	31 July 2003	19 August 2003	
	2003–04	31 July 2004	7 May 2004	
Connswater Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	26 June 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	25 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	1 July 2004	
Coral Crescent Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	21 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	7 July 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	27 November 2004	
Corinthian Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	29 May 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	10 March 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	25 June 2004	
Covenanter Residential Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	2 May 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	27 March 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	15 April 2004	
Craigowen Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	29 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	21 October 2003	No explanation on record
	2003–04	30 June 2004	13 August 2004	
Donacloney Housing Association Ltd	2001–02	30 June 2002	5 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	18 August 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	23 April 2004	
Dungannon and District Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	3 June 2003	No explanation on record
	2002–03	30 September 2003	7 July 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	29 September 2004	
Filor Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	7 August 2002	

Name of association	Accounting period	Date due	Date received	Reason given
	2002–03	30 June 2003	26 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	22 June 2004	
Flax Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	6 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	15 October 2003	Due to oversight
	2003–04	30 June 2004	17 May 2004	
Fold Housing Association Ltd	2001–02	30 September 2002	2 July 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	30 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	25 June 2004	
Gosford Housing Association (Armagh) Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	1 July 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	30 May 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	Unknown	
Grove Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	1 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	3 July 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	28 June 2004	
Habiniteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	27 March 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	9 April 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	11 May 2004	
Hearth Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	23 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	30 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	28 June 2004	
Larne and District Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	1 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	23 August 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	27 July 2004	
Newington Housing Association (1975) Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	3 April 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	27 March 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	30 March 2004	
Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	1 July 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	30 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	7 July 2004	
North and West Housing Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	9 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	6 October 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	12 October 2004	
Oaklee Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	3 June 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	13 October 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	24 June 2004	
Open Door Housing Association (Northern Ireland) Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	2 November 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	3 July 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	30 September 2004	
Presbyterian Housing Association (NI) Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	23 May 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	30 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	5 April 2004	
Rural Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	29 July 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	24 September 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	26 July 2004	
SHAC Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	2 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	30 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	8 July 2004	
South Ulster Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	20 June 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	25 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	1 July 2004	
St. Matthews Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 July 2002	14 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 July 2003	30 July 2003	
	2003–04	30 July 2004	12 August 2004	
Triangle Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 September 2002	12 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 September 2003	10 October 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	1 July 2004	
Ulidia Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	31 July 2002	15 May 2002	Association changed its financial year end from 31 January 2004 to 31 March 2004
	2002–03	31 July 2003	5 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 September 2004	25 August 2004	
Wesley Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	2 August 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	30 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	30 June 2004	
Woodvale and Shankill Housing Association Ltd.	2001–02	30 June 2002	31 July 2002	
	2002–03	30 June 2003	10 June 2003	
	2003–04	30 June 2004	12 August 2004	

Medical Negligence

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* disabilities resulted from medical negligence in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [220693]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Provisional IRA

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent estimate is of the total value of proceeds received by the Provisional IRA from robberies in the Province since 1998. [219666]

Mr. Pearson: The Independent Monitoring Commission's fourth report provided a clear assessment of the Provisional IRA's involvement in several major robberies in Northern Ireland recently. Estimates of the value of proceeds received by PIRA from robberies since 1998 however is available only from intelligence sources and it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent estimate is of the scale of intellectual property crime in the Province by the Provisional IRA concerning *(a)* pirate DVDs, CDs and software, *(b)* counterfeit branded goods, *(c)* washing powder, toiletries, perfumes and clothing and *(d)* veterinary drugs and medicines. [219671]

Mr. Pearson: The Organised Crime Task Force has carried out detailed analysis of the scale of paramilitary involvement in counterfeiting and piracy and its assessment is that paramilitary gangs carry out 80 per cent. of organised intellectual property crime in Northern Ireland, with loyalist and republican gangs equally heavily involved. The Independent Monitoring Commission's report of 4 November 2004 also highlights paramilitary involvement in this form of criminality.

In 2004 the Police Service of Northern Ireland seized over £6 million of counterfeit goods across Northern Ireland. I pay tribute to the PSNI for their on-going efforts to combat organised criminals who seek to line their pockets from the sale of illicit goods. In addition, since 2003 joint operations between the PSNI and An Garda Síochána have resulted in seizures worth €12 million.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of connections between the Provisional IRA and criminal syndicates in *(a)* the British Isles and *(b)* Eastern Europe; and what estimate he has made of the scale of financial benefit the organisation has received from such activities. [219672]

Mr. Pearson: This year's Organised Crime Task Force Threat Assessment, launched in May 2004, clearly indicated that 85 Northern Ireland based organised crime gangs have international links.

The Independent Monitoring Commission's report of November 2004 also highlighted the links between organised criminals in Northern Ireland and criminal syndicates in Asia, North America, Africa and European countries.

Our assessment is that the Provisional IRA is engaged in serious and organised crime including large-scale smuggling and counterfeiting operations.

An estimate of the scale of financial benefit to PIRA from such links and activities is a matter of intelligence and it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent assessment is of the scale of ownership and influence over pubs, clubs and hotels by the Provisional IRA in the Province. [219675]

Mr. Pearson: Information concerning PIRA's ownership and influence over pubs, clubs and hotels in Northern Ireland is available only from intelligence sources and it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent assessment is of the scale of investment in property and business by the Provisional IRA in the Province. [219676]

Mr. Pearson: Information concerning the scale of investment in property and business in Northern Ireland by the Provisional IRA is available only from intelligence sources and it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent assessment is of the scale of mortgage application fraud by the Provisional IRA in the Province. [219677]

Mr. Pearson: Information concerning the scale of mortgage application fraud by the Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland is available only from intelligence sources and it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment.

Social Workers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of individuals commencing work as social workers in each of the last five years in Northern Ireland graduated with *(a)* social work and *(b)* other degrees. [220659]

Angela Smith: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The degree in social work, which replaced the Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) as the professional social work qualification, had its first intake of students in Northern Ireland in September 2004. There are, therefore no social workers in the Northern Ireland social work work force holding this qualification as yet.

(b) Information on other degrees held by social workers is not collected centrally as this is not a requirement for employment as a social worker.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many social workers within the Province have completed degree courses; and how many individuals commence training in social work in the Province in each of the last five years. [220661]

Angela Smith: The Degree in Social Work, which recently replaced the Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) as the professional social work qualification, had its first intake of students in Northern Ireland in September 2004. There are, therefore, no social workers in the Northern Ireland social work workforce holding this qualification as yet.

No information is held centrally on other degrees held by social workers. This is not a requirement for employment as a social worker.

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council has advised that over the last five years the numbers of new students commencing training for social work in Northern Ireland are as shown in the following tables.

Diploma in Social Work (DipSW): Student intake

Academic year	*Postgraduate route*[1]	*Undergraduate route*[2]	*Non-graduate route*[3]	*Employment based route*[4]	*Total*
2000–01	87	25	40	78	230
2001–02	87	24	36	125	272
2002–03	88	29	31	99	247
2003–04 (Final intake)	82	29	40	115	266

[1] Postgraduate route leading to the award of DipSW (and a Master's Degree).
[2] Undergraduate route leading to the award of DipSW (and a Bachelor's Degree).
[3] Non-graduate route leading to the award of DipSW (and a Diploma in Higher Education).
[4] These are students seconded from employment, including from 2001, new trainee schemes.

Degree in Social Work: Student intake

	Academic year 2004–05 (First intake)
Relevant Graduate Route[1]	102
Undergraduate Route	172
Total[2]	274

[1] Those students who have a previous relevant degree can complete the degree in 2 years.
[2] Total includes students employed as Regional Social Work Degree Trainees by HSS Trusts and Voluntary Sector employers.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Abdelbaset Megrahi

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Libyan Government regarding the transfer of Mr. Abdelbaset Megrahi from Barlinnie Prison to Greenock Prison. [212317]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote to the Libyan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Rahman Shalgam, on 14 January informing him of our intention to transfer Mr. Al Megrahi from HM Prison Barlinnie to HM Prison Greenock. This decision was taken by the Scottish Prison Service on humanitarian grounds. United Nations monitors agreed that Mr. Al Megrahi's continued solitary confinement at Barlinnie was harmful to his health and well-being. Mr. Al Megrahi was transferred to Greenock on 24 February. Libyan consular officials saw Mr. Al Megrahi on the same day. We understand a follow-up visit will be made shortly.

Africa (Departmental Groups)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what funding has been allocated to support his Department's Africa research team in each of the last 10 years; and how many members of staff were employed in it in each year. [219414]

Mr. Straw: Records are only available for the last nine financial years including the current year. Allocations for and numbers of staff in the Africa Research Group for these periods were as follows:

	Number of staff	*Total running costs (£)*
1996–97	8	24,409.88
1997–98	8	19,576.77
1998–99	8	31,528.98
1999–2000	8	35,751.57
2000–01	9	79,197.63
2001–02	9	58,640.25
2002–03	9	65,556.48
2003–04	9	52,057.32
2004–05	9	21,604.87

Financial information for the current year is incomplete at this stage.

Running costs exclude salaries and related costs but include official travel, office equipment and stationery, library expenditure, IT maintenance and official entertainment. Travel costs for research visits were the largest element in each year. The increase from 2000–01 reflected the arrival of additional analytical staff to cover French speaking West Africa (in the context of Franco-British co-operation on Africa). Additional funding was allocated in 2000 for IT upgrades and a major look ahead seminar "Africa 2020".

Brazil

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to the Government of Brazil regarding *(a)* extrajudicial killings of Brazilian street children and *(b)* commercial sexual exploitation of Brazilian children. [219720]

Mr. Rammell: We have made clear to the Government of Brazil, bilaterally and with our European Union partners, the importance we attach to human rights, including those of children. We closely monitor developments on this issue and, in particular, on bringing those responsible for the murders of street children to justice.

The chronic and well-documented situation faced by street children in Brazil is a matter for concern and forms a regular part of our human rights dialogue with the Brazilian Government. The UK supports a number of practical projects in Brazil including human rights training for the Brazilian police and prison services; a small arms project in the slum areas of Rio de Janeiro, and work in Rio on giving people alternatives to involvement in violent and organised crime. While not exclusively focused on street children, these projects are relevant to many of the problems they face.

Burma

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to the Government of Burma regarding *(a)* persecution of the Chin people and *(b)* the destruction of crosses and churches in Chin state. [219719]

Mr. Alexander: I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November 2004 and pressed for political reform, full respect for human rights and the need for all groups in Burma, including ethnic groups, to play a full part in national reconciliation.

Discrimination and persecution on the basis of religious or ethnic background has been condemned in successive highly critical UK co-sponsored UN Resolutions on Burma, most recently at the UN General Assembly on 23 December 2004. The EU statement issued before the National Convention to draw up a new constitution reconvened on 17 February emphasised the need for the regime to enter into a constructive dialogue with ethnic groups to achieve lasting national reconciliation.

Our ambassador in Rangoon has drawn to the attention of the Burmese Foreign Minister the serious concerns expressed by hon. Members and peers of both houses about the question of religious freedom in Burma.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Burma regarding the detention and treatment of NLD member U Soe Han; [220215]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Burma regarding the detention and treatment of NLD member U Saw Naing Naing. [220216]

Mr. Alexander: We have not made representations about these particular cases.

I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November and called for the release of all political prisoners in Burma. My statement on 30 November also called for the release of all political prisoners. A copy of the statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth website: www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

We hold the Burmese regime responsible for the health of all political prisoners in Burma.

Cambodia

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Cambodian Government regarding *(a)* the forced repatriation of Montagnard refugees in Cambodia to Vietnam and *(b)* the payment of bribes by the Vietnamese authorities to Cambodian officials to conduct such repatriations. [219723]

Mr. Alexander: We regularly raise with the Cambodian authorities the importance of fulfilling their obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its related 1967 Protocol. We also continue to reiterate to the Cambodian authorities the need for close co-operation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Our embassies in Phnom Penh and Hanoi have been in regular contact with the Cambodian and Vietnamese Governments, the local UNHCR representatives, and resident EU partners about this issue. The issue has also been discussed at official level in Brussels.

We welcome the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on resolving the Montagnards presence in Cambodia by the Cambodian and Vietnamese Governments and the UNHCR on 25 January.

We believe such a tripartite agreement is the best way of resolving this issue.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government abroad have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and (A) Angola, (B) Zambia, (C) Tanzania, (D) Burundi, (E) Uganda, (F) Sudan, (G) Central African Republic and (H) the People's Republic of the Congo regarding the (1) possibility, (2) viability and (3) desirability of the implementation of Joint Border Verification Mechanisms between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and each of the above mentioned countries along the model of the Joint Border Verification Mechanism between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda for the amelioration and stabilisation of the (x) security and *(y)* humanitarian situation of the border regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and if he will make a statement. [220291]

Mr. Mullin: A Joint Verification Mechanism (JVM) is already in operation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda. We have discussed with the DRC government the possible extension of the JVM to include Burundi. We supported international efforts which brought Burundi into the Tripartite Agreement on Regional Security in the Great Lakes.

We have not discussed the further extension of the JVM but we support the Great Lakes Conference process. At its summit in Dar Es Salaam in November 2004 the heads of state of Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia made a declaration containing guarantees on security and good neighbourliness. Senior UK officials were involved at the summit, and the Department for International Development has contributed over £250,000 to the costs of the Conference so far.

Departmental Budget

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what budget was allocated to his Department's *(a)* Europe Directorate and *(b)* Public Diplomacy Unit in (i) each of the last three years and (ii) the current year. [218785]

Mr. Straw: The Europe Directorate General of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has evolved over the period in line with developments in Europe and as more countries join the EU. The budgets allocated cover operational running costs at home and overseas (i.e. in British embassies and other Missions and including locally engaged staff salaries), capital investment and programme expenditure.

In financial year 2001–02 it was responsible for the UK's engagement with the EU institutions and our bilateral relations with the other 14 EU member states. The budget allocated was £65,633,886.

In financial year 2002–03, the responsibilities remained the same. The budget allocated was £64,673,659.

In financial year 2003–04 it additionally took on responsibility for Gibraltar and our bilateral relations with Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the 10 Accession countries. The budget allocated was £113,012,445.

In the current financial year it has additionally taken on responsibility for our bilateral relations with the Western Balkan countries, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. The budget allocation is £127,473,000.

The budgets for the Public Diplomacy Group of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office over the four years ending in the current financial year have been as follows:

	£
2001–02	21,665,053
2002–03	13,960,641
2003–04	15,534,494
2004–05	15,768,100

The structure of the Group and the ambit of its work have changed during the period.

Not included in the amounts in the table are the BBC World Service and British Council grants in aid, and the programme allocation for BBC Monitoring. Also not included are the FCO's total allocations for Chevening Scholarships.

Election Observers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role the United Kingdom plays in providing international election observers. [219914]

Mr. Rammell: The UK's main contributions to election observation missions are made through the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), where we regularly provide 10 per cent. of the total number of observers; the European Union, where we are consistently the largest contributor; and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Also, hon. Members of UK parliamentary bodies regularly serve as election observers. In addition to the UK Parliament, observers are drawn from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the European Parliament.

The Government are also heavily involved in the development of election observation policy and methodology, either through the organisations above, or in discussions with other regional organisations such as the Organisation of American States and the Southern Africa Development Community.

Entry Visas

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many entry visas have been granted by the British embassy in Albania to *(a)* male and *(b)* female who were Albanian nationals in each of the last three years, broken down by category of visa; and what the average length of stay in the United Kingdom granted by the British entry certificate office in Albania (i) was in each year and (ii) has been over the last three years. [219758]Date answered

Mr. Mullin: The number of successful entry clearance applications from Albanian nationals broken down by sex and category of visa, over the last three calendar years, is as follows:

Visas issued by the British embassy in Albania to Albanian Nationals

(a) and (b)

January to December

	2002		*2003*		*2004*	
Endorsement	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
Settlement	204	97	493	199	775	231
Visitor	1,044	827	1,466	1,245	2,394	2,282
Student	51	60	87	90	89	98
Work Permit	72	29	40	15	98	44
Exempt	8	9	1	1	0	1
EEA	3	0	12	2	34	7
Total	1,382	1,022	2,099	1,552	3,390	2,663

(i) and (ii)

Visa duration	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*Total*
1 Month	154	252	620	1,026
1 Year	207	566	163	936
2 Years	20	96	607	723
3 Months	351	223	79	653
4 Years	4	0	0	4
5 Years	7	6	9	22
6 Months	1,436	2,172	4,201	7,809
Other	225	336	381	942

Note:
The modal group, in each case, shows that the average length of stay in the UK in each year and over the three years is six months.

These statistics are taken from the Central Reference System of UKvisas, the department responsible for entry clearance matters arising overseas, and are subject to change. UKvisas makes every effort to ensure that statistics from our Central Reference System are accurate.

Eritrea

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will propose

(a) sanctions and *(b)* alternative measures to be brought against the Eritrean authorities to prevent the action being taken against Christians in the country. [219722]

Mr. Mullin: We do not believe that sanctions are the right way forward. The international community would not support them, and our only direct assistance to Eritrea is humanitarian, which is not subject to conditionality. Reducing humanitarian assistance as a means of addressing religious persecution would only harm the people of Eritrea. We will continue to raise the issue of religious freedom with the Government of Eritrea, both bilaterally and in concert with our EU partners.

Estonia

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the establishment of Scotland House in Estonia; [220299]

(2) whether he has discussed the establishment of Scotland House in Estonia with the Scottish Executive; [220300]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact on Scottish-Estonian relations of the opening of Scotland House in Estonia; [220301]

(4) what assessment he has made of the services provided to Scottish businesses by Scotland House in Estonia; [220302]

(5) what assessment he has made of the potential economic benefit to Scotland and the UK of improved trade links arising from the opening of Scotland House in Estonia. [220304]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome the fact that a group of UK businesspeople have set up a business consultancy in Estonia to help develop commercial links with Scottish companies. Our embassy in Tallinn stands ready to offer them the full range of UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) services.

Neither the embassy in Tallinn nor the wider Foreign and Commonwealth Office were asked for assistance on the establishment of Scotland House and no assessment of the services provided has been carried out. However, both we and the Scottish Executive were aware of the establishment of the consultancy.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide financial and logistical support to business consortia looking to establish Scottish trade offices, similar to Scotland House in Estonia, in other European capitals. [220305]

Mr. MacShane: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) has a varying range of services available to all UK companies at UK missions in European capitals. Scottish Development International (SDI), a joint venture between the Scottish Executive and its economic development agency Scottish Enterprise, also provides additional support to Scottish companies wishing to develop their international business.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many requests for assistance were received by the British embassy in Estonia from Scottish businesses looking to invest in or trade with Estonia in the last year for which information is available; how many requests for information relating to investment in or trading with Scotland have been received by the UK embassy in Tallinn from Estonian businesses; and how many staff in the UK embassy in Tallinn are engaged solely or mainly in the development of trading links between *(a)* Scotland and Estonia and *(b)* the UK and Estonia. [220306]

Mr. Mullin: In the year to 3 March 2005, the UK embassy in Tallinn received 85 queries from Scottish businesses looking to invest in or trade with Estonia. In the same time period, no queries have been received from Estonian companies specifically interested in trading with or investing in Scotland. The UK embassy in Tallinn has four members of staff engaged solely or mainly in the development of trading links between the UK, including Scotland and Estonia.

Freedom of Information Requests

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* documents and *(b)* other information released to date by his Department following Freedom of Information Act requests; and what categories of information requested his Department has refused to release. [220639]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not hold centrally a list of all information released or categories of information refused. All disclosures of wider public interest are published on the FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk). The FCO's central monitoring system records requests and statistics for disclosures, partial disclosures or refusals. Full details of disclosures and refusals are kept in individual case files opened for each request.

All FCO information is potentially disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and will be released if it is in the public interest to do so.

India

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports have been received from the British high commission in India regarding the effects in Jammu and Kashmir of the recent severe weather. [219763]

Mr. Alexander: The British high commission in New Delhi has been monitoring the situation in Jammu and Kashmir following the recent heavy snowfalls. On 28 February, the Government of India reported that 278 people had died as a result of the severe weather. Our high commissioner has written to the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir to express our condolences at this loss of life.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on which dates during December 2003 the UK special representative in Iraq was acting Coalition Provisional Authority administrator. [212313]

Mr. Rammell: Whenever ambassador Bremer, Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Administrator, was absent from Iraq, his US deputy took charge and made decisions on his behalf. In May 2003, the UK Government appointed a UK Special Representative for Iraq to work alongside ambassador Bremer, but as an independent presence with no formal role within the CPA's hierarchy and with no formal legal decision-making power. However, from 23 to 30 December 2003, when both ambassador Bremer and his deputy were absent from Iraq, the UK Special Representative looked after CPA affairs. There were neither policy decisions made about Iraq, nor orders signed during this period.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his written ministerial statement of 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 13WS, on British Detainees (Iraq), what the *(a)* name, *(b)* age and *(c)* date of arrest is of the British national held at the Shaibah detention centre in Iraq. [218573]

Mr. Mullin: The British national held at Shaibah detention centre in Iraq was detained on 9 October 2004.

It would not be appropriate to release the details requested without the consent of the detainee.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made regarding the Kurdistan Democratic Party's blocking of the delivery of ballot boxes to Chaldo Assyrian towns and villages in northern Iraq, during the 30 January national elections; what assessment he has made of the number of electors prevented from voting; and if he will make a statement. [219721]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware of this allegation. A complaint was submitted to the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), the body responsible for investigating alleged irregularities in the 30 January elections in Iraq. The IECI is investigating all official complaints it has received. Once its investigations are completed, the IECI will write to each complainant with its findings, and will publish a report detailing all the complaints they received and its response to them.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent attacks by Kurdistan Democratic Party militiamen against Chaldo-Assyrians in northern Iraq. [219730]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware of allegations of attacks by members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party against Chaldo-Assyrians in northern Iraq. Our Consul General in Kirkuk raised the issue with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) last week. All denied that such acts have taken place. The KRG currently have a number of resettlement projects in Iraqi Kurdistan, which includes bringing Christians from places like Baghdad and Basra to settle in the safer areas of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact on the UK Muslim community of his policy in relation to Iraq. [220606]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary is aware of the concerns of some of the British Muslim community about the decision to take military action in Iraq. The Government have a continuing and extensive dialogue with a wide range of Muslim organisations in the UK on a number of issues, including Iraq.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the position of the Government is on the acceptance by the Government of Canada of the principle that the issue of the legality of the Iraq war should be brought before the International Court of Justice. [220614]

Mr. Alexander: Our understanding is that the Canadian Government have not advocated seeking a ruling from the International Court of Justice on the legality of the war in Iraq.

Northern Cyprus

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Turkish administration in Northern Cyprus on the number of people from Turkey moving to live in Northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [219513]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no discussions recently, either with Turkey or representatives of the Turkish Cypriot Community, about the number of people moving from Turkey to north Cyprus. However our senior officials maintain an open dialogue with the leadership of the Turkish Cypriots on all aspects of the situation in Cyprus.

The Government maintain their long-standing position of non-recognition of the self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus".

Occupational Health Contract

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which external consultant advised his Department on the preferred bidder for the contract for occupational health formerly held by Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital Trust. [219417]

Mr. Alexander: Mercer HR Consulting were engaged by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to help in reviewing the FCO's healthcare needs and to assist in the development of a specification for a contract to meet these needs in the most cost effective way. Evaluation of tender bids was carried out by a tender panel consisting of FCO officers and Mercer HR Consulting.

Pakistan

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to improve the visa operation in Pakistan. [220097]

Mr. Mullin: We have worked hard to improve the visa service in Pakistan since it was closed due to security concerns in May 2002. There are now 49 visa officers in Islamabad and an additional ten officers will be posted to Islamabad in April 2005. In Karachi we have

reopened the visa office with 3.5 staff and will shortly be posting a further two officers there. We have also outsourced the application procedure to Gerry's Fedex (a local joint venture with Federal Express) to remove the need for every application to be lodged at the high commission in person. We now accept visa applications from all categories except working holidaymakers and first time visitors under 25. We are in discussions with the Pakistani authorities about putting in place the necessary conditions to restore a full service as soon as possible.

People's Redemption Army

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of recent activities of the People's Redemption Army. [219548]

Mr. Mullin: The Ugandan Government have alleged that the People's Redemption Army (PRA) is an armed group which has been attempting to establish a network in north-western Uganda. We have seen no evidence of this or that the PRA represents any significant threat to Uganda's stability.

Peru

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Peruvian authorities concerning the imprisonment of the trade union activist Walter Cubas Baltazar. [219710]

Mr. Rammell: Our embassy in Lima has been regularly monitoring the case of Walter Cubas Baltazar. Mr. Baltazar has made the decision not to appeal against the sentence made by the National Terrorism Court on 29 December 2004.

Andy King: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Peruvian authorities concerning the death threats made against Christina Olazabal, the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights in the Province of Ayacucho, Peru. [219711]

Mr. Rammell: On 2 March, officials at our embassy in Lima spoke to the Peruvian authorities in Ayacucho about reports of alleged threats made against the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights in Ayacucho. The Human Rights Ombudsman in Ayacucho is aware of these reports. The Special Prosecutor has not raised this matter with the Human Rights Ombudsman in Ayacucho.

Research and Development

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department's international science network of support has made of industrial research and development in *(a)* the US, *(b)* EU accession states, *(c)* India and *(d)* China. [219872]

Mr. Alexander: The Science and Innovation Network was set up in key selected countries, including the US, China and India, to work on issues of science policy, science collaboration, wealth creation and public diplomacy. Among the EU accession countries there are officers only in Poland and the Czech Republic. The Network reports on industrial research and development, among other scientific issues, to help inform UK policy and practice on science and innovation. For example, the Network made a significant input to inform the Department for Trade and Industry's Innovation Report in December 2003. It also provides reports on request to a range of UK stakeholders. The Global Watch Online website http://www.globalwatchonline.com/countries/ciner.aspx includes reports from the Network sorted according to country and sector. This site is being updated and will be relaunched in April.

Russian Federation

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the Russian Federation's progress in moving towards a market based democracy with economic transparency; and if he will make a statement. [219502]

Mr. Rammell: Russia has made important progress along the path of economic and democratic reforms since the break-up of the Soviet Union. President Putin's first term saw an impressive programme of economic reforms launched, designed to liberalise the economy. Further progress was made on issues such as land law and tax reform, deregulation, and helping to create better conditions for small and medium sized businesses.

Russia was recognised by the EU and US as having attained market economy status in 2002. We support Russia's objective of joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and welcome the stimulus this has given to further market reforms. A bilateral agreement on WTO accession terms and conditions was concluded with the EU in May 2004.

We are, through bilateral Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development programmes, supporting Russia's process of economic reform, and we are working on programmes connected to issues such as corporate social governance and media oversight, designed to improve economic transparency.

It is clear that the handling of the Yukos affair has raised concerns in the minds of investors in Russia about the Government's commitment to transparency and the rule of law. We have raised these concerns with the Russian Government. We have also underlined the need to reaffirm commitment to open markets and democratic processes. In that respect, we welcome President Putin's recent statements in Bratislava on Russia's commitment to democracy and want to see this and the rule of law firmly entrenched in the reform process, as well as human rights protected.

Student Visas

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of changes in the numbers of student visa applications from China in recent years. [218579]

Mr. Mullin: The information requested is in the table.

Student visa applications received	As at 1 April to 31 March: 2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Guangzhou	4,829	6,554	6,193
Beijing	19,581	22,161	22,828
Shanghai	4,928	5,762	6,487
Total	29,338	34,477	35,508

The table shows the number of visa applications received from students at our visa issuing posts in China over the three most recent years has increased. Statistics for the period April 2004 to March 2005 are not yet available. When they are, they can be found, along with further entry clearance statistics, on the UKvisas website at www.ukvisas.gov.uk—"Entry Clearance: Facts and Figures".

Terrorism

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what means UK security authorities are able to monitor the activities abroad of foreign nationals who accept voluntary deportation, having been held in detention under Part 4 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; and what co-operation agreements are in place between United Kingdom security and intelligence services and those of other states to combat terrorism. [219449]

Mr. Straw: Our security and intelligence services co-operate closely with their counterparts in many countries on counter terrorism. It is not in the public interest to provide details of such cooperation in particular cases.

Tsunami

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with countries affected by the Asian tsunami regarding the sexual exploitation of children left *(a)* orphaned and *(b)* otherwise vulnerable by the disaster; and what assistance the Government have given to help combat sexual exploitation. [219718]

Mr. Rammell: The response to the tsunami is an agenda item for discussion between EU and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ministers on 9 March in Jakarta.

We take the opportunity to discuss these issues in our meetings with ASEAN counterparts. Discussions continue between UK government officials, including law enforcement officers, and the authorities of the countries affected on UK support for the protection of vulnerable children in the region. A regional law enforcement training course funded by the UK and held in February in Bangkok on dealing with sex offenders included a specific element on the response to the tsunami.

Tyrannies

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the countries classified as tyrannies by his Department; what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* other members of the UK Government have had with (i) members and (ii) representatives of the US Administration with regard to a common definition of tyranny; and if he will make a statement. [220292]

Mr. Rammell: It is not our practice to classify countries as tyrannies. There are, however, countries where poor adherence to international human rights standards, and a lack of commitment to democracy, good governance and the rule of law, cause us particular concern. The Government work to improve the human rights performance of such countries both bilaterally with the countries concerned; in partnership with others, such as the US; and multilaterally, through the EU, UN and other organisations. A full record of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) work in this area is published in our annual report on human rights, copies of which are placed in the Library of the House, and which is also available on the FCO website: www.fco.gov.uk.

Uganda

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications of the recent appointment of Sam Kutessa as Uganda's Foreign Minister. [219549]

Mr. Mullin: We have normal diplomatic relations with Uganda. Ministerial appointments are a matter for the Ugandan authorities.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Ugandan authorities regarding the kidnapping in Kenya of Mr. George Tumwesigye Owakukiroru. [219550]

Mr. Mullin: We understand that George Tumwesigye was arrested on the Uganda/Kenya border on a charge of treason. He is now being held in Kigo Prison in Kampala, and we understand that his case is due to be heard on 9 March. We are in touch with the Uganda Human Rights Commission, which is monitoring the conditions under which he is being held.

United States

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the recent visit of President Bush to the EU headquarters in Brussels. [220203]

Mr. Mullin: The timing of President Bush's visit to Europe, so early in his second term, shows the importance he attaches to the transatlantic relationship. As President Bush highlighted in his speech on 22 February,

"America and Europe face a moment of consequence and opportunity".

Leaders on both sides recognise the continued importance of the EU and US continuing to work in partnership on the challenges that face us in the 21st century.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent discussions

he has had with the Government of Zimbabwe regarding the legal case against the MDC Deputy Chief Whip, Thoko Khupe; [220224]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Zimbabwe about the responsible use of powers under the Public Order and Security Act. [220225]

Mr. Mullin: A meeting attended by Thoko Khupe was broken up by the Zimbabwean authorities. Opposition MPs and candidates are frequently arrested for holding meetings deemed to be illegal under the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). We are clear that selective application by the Government of Zimbabwe of restrictive legislation is intolerable. I made these points firmly when I met the Zimbabwean ambassador on 22 February.

HEALTH

A and E Waiting Times

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the success of implementing a four hour target for waiting time in accident and emergency departments; [220685]

(2) what plans he has to review the four hour waiting target in accident and emergency departments. [220686]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's autumn performance report, published in December 2004, sets out the latest assessment for delivery of targets agreed as part of the Department's spending review 2002 public service agreement. This report is available in the Library. Latest published figures show that, by October to December, 96.8 per cent. of patients were admitted, transferred or discharged from accident and emergency within four hours. This compares with just 78 per cent. between October and December 2002. Over 19 out of 20 patients are now in and out of A&E within four hours.

From 1 January 2005, 98 per cent. became the ongoing minimum operational standard for total time in A&E. Data on performance for the first period following this, January to March 2005, will be available in mid May.

Asthma

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will re-examine the level of NHS prescriptions charges in respect of asthma medication. [220622]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have no plans to add asthma to the existing list of medical conditions that give exemption from prescription charges. The list has been reviewed on a number of occasions, but no clear-cut case for extending it has emerged. There is no consensus on what additional conditions might be included in any revised list of medical exemptions, or how distinctions could be drawn between one condition and another.

Body Mass Index

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average body mass index in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority and *(c)* each primary care trust was in each year since 1997. [217058]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 23 March 2005]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average body mass index was in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each strategic health authority in each year since 1997. [216390]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures available from the Health Survey for England have been placed in the Library.

Botox

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps have been taken to ensure that the botox which is used for cosmetic purposes in the UK has been safety-tested; and if he will make a statement; [216114]

(2) if he will ban the *(a)* prescribing and *(b)* use of botulinum toxin for cosmetic purposes. [216464]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The uses approved for licensed botulinum products are limited to the treatment of certain kinds of muscular spasms and disabling spasticities. For those uses we are satisfied that the products meet all of the safety requirements laid down in European legislation and guidance and these together with standards for quality and efficacy are a prerequisite for the licensing of medicinal products.

If these products are being used for cosmetic purposes then they are being used outside the terms of the product licenses the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has granted. However, doctors may prescribe and use a licensed medicine for unlicensed purposes to meet the need of an individual patient, on their own responsibility, where they judge the benefit to the patient is justified.

The Chief Medical Officer established the Expert Group on the Regulation of Cosmetic Surgery to provide advice on whether the current regulation of cosmetic surgery was sufficient to ensure patient safety. The expert group published its report on 28 January 2005. It recommended that the current law relating to the prescription of botulinum toxin—which allows for its prescription by a doctor and its administration by a doctor or nurses—should be more consistently adhered to, and that facilities where botulinum toxin is injected should be licensed by the Healthcare Commission and subject to its regulations. The Government accept these recommendations, and will work with the Healthcare Commission, professional bodies and other key stakeholders to formulate an implementation programme.

Community Pharmaceutical Services

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the effect of the new contract for NHS community pharmaceutical services on primary care trusts; [220509]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effect of the new contract for NHS community pharmaceutical services on general practitioners; [220510]

(3) what assessment he has made of the effect of the new contract for NHS community pharmaceutical services on rural general practitioner surgeries; [220511]

(4) what recent progress has been made regarding control of entry regulations for primary care trusts; [220701]

(5) what recent progress has been made regarding the publication of regulations for primary care trusts involved with the new contract for NHS community pharmaceutical services; and if he will make a statement on the regulatory frameworks for the new NHS contract for community pharmaceutical services. [220702]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The new contractual framework for community pharmacy gives primary care trusts (PCTs) the opportunity to work with local pharmacists to develop a range of high quality community pharmacy services. This will make them an integral part of local primary care provision. PCTs should be able to exploit fully the opportunities in order to maximise the benefits to patients.

The framework offers considerable benefits for general practitioners (GPs) and the opportunity to work closer with community pharmacists whether in rural or non-rural areas. This includes support for self-care, the management of common ailments and helping patients get the best from their medicines. The introduction of repeat dispensing in every pharmacy will mean that patients will be able to get a prescription from their GP to be dispensed in instalments by their pharmacy for up to a year without patients having to make repeat visits to the surgery for their prescriptions. This will help reduce GP workloads, offer opportunities for pharmacists to review patient medication and minimise waste by not dispensing medicines that patients no longer require. Repeat dispensing is especially of benefit to people with long-term conditions.

We have recently finished consulting representative organisations on the regulatory changes needed to bring in the new framework and the reforms to the control of entry system. We will shortly lay these before Parliament together with the final regulatory impact assessment. We will also publish directions to PCTs, concerning how they are to implement some of the aspects of the new framework and a determination regarding the remuneration to be paid to national health service community pharmacy contractors.

The regulations will ensure the new framework and the balanced package of control of entry reform measures broaden the range and quality of services for patients, encouraging innovation and excellence in service provision.

Counselling and Psychotherapy Profession

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on current and planned future regulation of the counselling and psychotherapy profession in England; and what discussions he has held with *(a)* the Health Minister in the Scottish Executive, *(b)* the National Assembly for Wales Secretary for Health and *(c)* the Northern Ireland Office on current and future regulation of the counselling and psychotherapy profession across the UK. [220307]

Mr. Hutton: Counsellors and psychotherapists are not currently subject to statutory regulation. Some are subject to partial voluntary regulation through membership of professional organisations.

Departmental officials in England are working towards the statutory regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists via the Health Professions Council (HPC). The HPC is a United Kingdom-wide regulator. However, since regulation of currently unregulated professions is a devolved matter it is for the health department of the Scottish Executive (SEHD), the National Assembly of Wales (NAW) and the Northern Ireland Office (NOI) to decide whether or not they wish to regulate counsellors and psychotherapists in this way. Departmental officials keep their counterparts in the SEHD, NAW and NIO informed regularly about progress in this area.

Counter Fraud and Security Management Service

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training the staff of the Counter Fraud and Security Management Service who are directly involved in investigation receive; and what plans he has to change their training. [216138]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national health service counter fraud and security management service (CFSMS) provides training for all staff who counter fraud and corruption within the NHS.

It is mandatory for all NHS counter fraud specialists to complete successfully a counter fraud foundation level course. This high quality professional training has been accredited by the universities of Portsmouth, East London and Wolverhampton and is worth 40 higher education credits.

Successful completion of the foundation level leads to the nationally recognised professional qualification of accredited counter fraud specialist (ACFS). The NHS is one of a number of organisations where staff are trained to this standard. At the end of 2004, there were 8,274 qualified ACFSs from hundreds of organisations in both the public and private sectors including six Government Departments, such as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Government agencies such as the Audit Commission, several police forces, banks, investment companies and over 300 local authorities.

Further training includes an intermediate level course, which focuses on prevention and deterrence of fraud. Additionally, the CFSMS provides refresher training on issues such as interviewing skills and regularly updates training where there are changes in law or procedures that have an impact on work to counter fraud.

Throughout the year, the CFSMS ensures ongoing support and training for staff through quarterly forums and an annual conference. There is also assistance through a training centre helpline and a regional network.

Because the training attracts higher education credits, it can lead on to further academic study and the CFSMS supports staff who want to continue to develop and work towards a BSc. (Hons) in counter fraud and criminal justice studies.

At present there are no plans to change the training. It is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is relevant and meets the requirements of staff.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many investigations by the Counter Fraud and Security Management Service are ongoing with respect to *(a)* GPs, *(b)* nurses, *(c)* hospital doctors and consultants, *(d)* pharmacists, *(e)* dentists, *(f)* external contractors and *(g)* others. [216139]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are currently 462 investigations being undertaken by the national health service counter fraud and security management service. A breakdown of staff groups involved is shown in the following table.

Category	*Number under investigation*
General practitioners	60
Hospital doctors and consultants	23
Nurses	35
Pharmacists	68
Dentists	86
External contractors	28
Others	191

The breakdown shows a greater number than the total of 462 as there can be more than one person involved in any particular investigation 77 patients are also being investigated.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the financial benefit has been to the NHS of the Counter Fraud and Security Management Service and its predecessor the NHS Counter Fraud Service in each year since September 1998; and if he will list successful recoveries of assets worth over £500,000 in each year since September 1998. [216141]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national health service counter fraud and security management service has published its performance statistics annually since 1999–2000.

The financial benefit to the NHS per year is shown in the following table.

	Amount (£)
1999–2000	52,477,000
2000–01	71,993,000
2001–02	84,716,000
2002–03	135,269,000
2003–04	134,017,000

Single recoveries of over £500,000 in each year are shown in the following table.

	Recoveries	
		£
2000–01	1x	1,337,610
	1x	650,000
2001–02	1x	799,087
2002–03	1x	1,750,000
2003–04	1x	1,400,000
2004–05	1x	1,128,000
	1x	799,087

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget of the Counter Fraud and Security Management Service and its predecessor the NHS Counter Fraud Service has been in each year since September 1998. [216142]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The budgetary allocation for national health service counter fraud service is shown in the following table.

£ million

	Budgetary allocation resource from the Department[1]
1999–2000	4.15
2000–01	4.25
2001–02	5.44
2002–03	6.10

[1] This was increased in 2003–04 to £14.71 million when responsibility was assumed for the security management service.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the proposals to strengthen the powers of the Counter Fraud and Security Management Service announced by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on 21 October 2004 will require primary legislation; and when he expects to publish the outcome of the consultation process on the proposals; [216183]

(2) what powers the Counter Fraud and Security Management Service has to access personal information; and what powers he expects the service will have following the proposed changes announced by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on 21 October 2004. [216184]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Responses to the consultation document Access to Relevant Documents, Records and Data to Counter Fraud are currently being analysed. In accordance with the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultations a summary of responses will be published within three months of the consultation closing date of 21 January 2005. At this stage, it is too early to say what shape any future measures may take but they will be informed by the outcome of the consultation exercise.

The NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service (CFSMS) do not currently have any specific powers to require access to personal information. Under the National Health Service Act 1977 the Secretary of State for Health has directed national health service bodies to co-operate with the CFSMS to enable it to efficiently and effectively carry out its counter fraud functions. This includes the supply of information to the CFSMS unless the supply of such information is prohibited by law.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Polish dentists *(a)* have registered and *(b)* are waiting to register with the General Dental Council to practise consequent on his Department's contract with Methods Consulting; and how many have commenced practising in England; and what support his Department is providing to these dentists. [218300]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* As a result of the Department's recruitment activity in Poland, 69 dentists have registered with the General Dental Council and no dentists are currently waiting to register with the General Dental Council. 28

dentists have started in practice and a further 41 will begin practice in England during March and early April. Pastoral support and induction are provided by local primary care trusts and the Post Graduate Dental Deanery.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms are in place to co-ordinate the different government groups working on the Personal Dental Service (PDS) contract; what the running costs of *(a)* the Modernisation Agency and *(b)* Options for Change field sites to administer the PDS conversion process were in the latest year for which figures are available; and what steps he is taking to reduce administration costs in the PDS conversion process. [218598]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* The NHS Modernisation Agency set up the Modernising Dentistry Programme in 2002 following the publication of Options for Change report to look at new ways of working in dentistry. The total budget for the programme, which includes field sites, was £1 million in 2004–05. The 48 field sites involve around 250 dental practices, which are widely distributed across England. They range from practices looking at remuneration and commissioning, electronic booking, the patient experience, clinical governance and customer care, through to primary care trust wide and strategic health authority wide remuneration sites. Field sites have been supported to develop, and monitor their Option for Change projects, some of which have required conversion to personal dental service (PDS) schemes. Building upon these foundations, PDS is now providing dentists with the opportunity to take advanced benefit of the new contractual arrangements, which we are to introduce by April 2006. We now have some 4,400 dentists in over 1,500 dental practices working under PDS arrangements and, by April 2005, we expect 25 per cent. of all dental practices to have moved to PDS.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which primary care trusts have not applied to the £59 million fund to help with access to dentistry in 2004–05; [218599]

(2) how many applications made by primary care trusts to the £59 million fund to help with access to dentistry in 2004–05 have been *(a)* granted and *(b)* rejected; and in how many cases decisions are pending. [218600]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 February 2005]:* Of these funds, £50 million have been delegated for strategic health authorities to manage. The remaining £9 million is being used by the national health service dentistry support team, to work with the primary care trusts (PCTs), shown in the table. The team selected the PCTs on the basis of demonstrable, severe access problems rather than by application.

PCTs with support

Fareham and Gosport PCT
Isle of Wight PCT
New Forest PCT
West Gloucestershire PCT
North East Lincolnshire PCT
Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale PCT
Craven, Harrogate and Rural District PCT
Northumbria Care Trust
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT
Hyndeburn and Ribble PCT
Blackburn with Darwen PCT
Morecambe Bay PCT
Shropshire County PCT
Telford and Wrekin PCT
South West Staffordshire PCT
Central Cheshire PCT
Wyre Forest
Herefordshire
South Worcestershire
North Lincolnshire
Selby and York
West Lincolnshire
East Lincolnshire
Lincolnshire South West Teaching
West Cumbria
Carlisle and District
Eden Valley
East Staffordshire
Teignbridge
East Kent Coastal
Portsmouth City

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the percentage Personal Dental Service conversion rates are in each *(a)* primary care trust and *(b)* strategic health authority. [219073]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* Information on the number of personal dental service (PDS) surgery addresses at 31 January 2005 as a percentage of the total general and personal dental surgery addresses for each primary care trust and strategic health authority has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have been recruited overseas to work in NHS dentistry in England since 1 January 2004. [216507]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is gathering information on recruitment activity since April 2004. This will include local national health service international recruitment activity and departmental central recruitment initiatives. The latter will include 28 Polish dentists who began work in England in January and the further 41 starting work between mid March and mid April.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the Government's policy is on supplying digital hearing aids to those who have been diagnosed to be in need of them; [220636]

(2) what the Government's timetable is for providing digital hearing aids to those diagnosed to be in need of them. [220708]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has invested £125 million into the modernising hearing aid services (MHAS) project since it started in September 2000. MHAS has been retaining audiologists and modernising national health service services in a phased way to enable them to offer digital hearing aids to people who would benefit from them.

95 per cent., of all NHS audiology departments in England are fitting digital hearing aids routinely to those people they have diagnosed as suitable and the few remaining departments will be offering the service by the end of March 2005.

We have recently announced new waiting time targets for NHS diagnostic services so that, by 2008, nobody will have to wait longer than 18 weeks from referral to receiving their digital hearing aid if that is what they require.

GP (Registration)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people in England who are not registered with a GP; and what his most recent estimate is of the average length of time a person waits to be registered with a GP. [218165]

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people in England who are not registered with a general practitioner; and what his most recent estimate is of the average length of time a person has to wait before being registered with a general practitioner. [219401]

Mr. Hutton: *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The Department does not collect data on the number of people who are not registered with a general practice. It is also not possible to estimate their number with any accuracy because of inherent differences between practice registration data and the demographic data collected by the Office for National Statistics.

There is no waiting time to register with a general practice beyond the actual time it takes to complete the administrative process of registration. Where a patient cannot register because his or her preferred practice is not accepting new patients there may be a delay while the primary care trust helps the patient find an alternative practice but no data are collected centrally on this.

Health Care Workers (Immunisation)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish new guidance on testing and immunisation of healthcare workers for HIV and hepatitis. [217428]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* Guidance on the health clearance of new health care workers for serious communicable diseases, including HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C is due to be published by the summer.

Health Services (Burnley)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was being spent in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available in (i) East Lancashire Acute Trust and (ii) Burnley General Hospital; and if he will make a statement. [219497]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Trust operating expenses for East Lancashire hospitals national health service trust and its predecessor trusts is shown in the table.

	Trust	*Amount (£ thousand)*
1997–98	Burnley Health Care NHS Trust	88,898
1997–98	Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Health Care NHS Trust	79,313
2003–04	East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	231,430

Sources:
1. Audited summarisation schedules of the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust 2003–04.
2. Audited summarisation schedules of the Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Health Care NHS Trust and the Burnley Health Care NHS Trust 1997–98.

Hospital Acquired Infections

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he plans to publish on *(a) Clostridium difficile*, *(b)* vancomycin-resistant enterococci and *(c)* post-surgical infection in orthopaedics; and when he expects to begin publishing this information. [218118]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on *Clostridium difficile* disease, vancomycin resistant enterococci and surgical site infections is already available from the Health Protection Agency's voluntary reporting scheme and published routinely on its website at www.hpa.org.uk.

Insulin

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to ensure the continued availability of a reliable supply of animal insulin. [217123]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are two companies who supply animal insulin to the United Kingdom market, Wockhardt UK and Novo Nordisk. Neither has informed the Department of any intention to cease supply.

Lancashire Teaching Hospital Trust

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the procedure is for informing hon. Members of the appointment of a new chairman for Lancashire Teaching Hospital Trust. [212306]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Secretary of State has delegated functions relating to the appointments to national health service trusts to the NHS Appointments Commission. I have asked the chair of the Appointments Commission, Sir William Wells, to write directly to my hon. Friend with the information he has requested.

Mental Health

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what evaluation he has made of the Appleby Report on the National Service Framework for Mental Health—five years on, with particular reference to variations in access to atypical anti-psychotic drugs; [220469]

(2) what action is being taken by his Department to encourage implementation of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines on the use of atypical anti-psychotics in schizophrenia; when full implementation will be achieved; and how implementation will be measured. [220470]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* The National Director for Mental Health's review of the national service framework for mental health states that the use of atypical antipsychotics had been increasing prior to the publication of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) technology appraisal and that the appraisal may have its greatest benefit in parts of the country that have been slow to use such drugs. No evaluation has been made of the report's reference to variations in access to atypical antipsychotic drugs. However, the Department will continue to monitor antipsychotics accounted for 60 per-cent. of all prescription items of antipsychotics dispensed in the community in England, compared to 48 per cent. of all antipsychotics for the year ending June 2002, when the relevant NICE appraisal guidance was published.

Since January 2002, the national health service has had three months from the date of publication of each technology appraisal guidance to provide funding so that clinical decisions made by doctors involving NICE recommended treatments or drugs can be funded.

Mesothelioma

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will introduce a national strategy for the diagnosis and treatment of mesothelioma; and if he will make a statement. [219770]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* A lung cancer advisory group has been established to support the development and delivery of high quality services for lung cancer patients. One of key areas that this group will address is the management of the increasing incidence of mesothelioma.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines are available to NHS staff on the treatment of mesothelioma. [219771]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* We continue to keep a close eye on clinical trials to determine when the development of clinical guidelines on mesothelioma might be appropriate.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is currently appraising pemetrexed disodium (Alimta), for the treatment of mesothelioma. NICE is currently consulting on the draft scope for this appraisal and final guidance is expected to be issued in the summer of 2006.

MRI Scans

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1337W, on MRI scans, what aspects of the contract are monitored; how the information is collected; and if he will publish *(a)* the data collected to date and *(b)* an evaluation of the effectiveness of the contract to date. [217203]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 23 February 2005]:* The contract is monitored using key performance indicators (KPI) and management information regarding patient referrals by the national health service. KPI data are submitted monthly under the terms of the contract and is reviewed by the Department. The KPI data contains information on numbers of scans delivered, timeliness, quality and customer satisfaction.

Alliance Medical provide a full report of activity and rejections (including reasons for this) to the referring bodies and NHS leads in the local health economy. This information is commercially sensitive and may include information on patients, which is confidential.

The contract has delivered scans to in excess of 25,000 patients to date. Evidence suggests that this programme has already proved effective in driving down waiting times.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of NHS MRI scans will be delivered under the Alliance Medical contract during the term of the contract. [218701]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 1 March 2005]:* The Department does not have information on national health service diagnostic activity levels for every year of the five-year contract period. The information requested is therefore not available.

MRSA

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidents of MRSA there have been at Conquest hospital in Hastings, East Sussex, in each year since 1997. [220576]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* The number of reports of methicillin resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" (MRSA) bacteraemia is not available centrally by individual hospital. All acute national health service trusts are required to report MRSA bloodstream infections as part of the mandatory surveillance system introduced in April 2001.

NHS (Treatment Contracts)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS contracts with private diagnostic and treatment centres require the NHS to pay for all contracted operations whether they are carried out or not. [213757]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 4 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1470W.

NHS Spending

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on hospital and community services in the NHS in each year since 1991. [218123]

Mr. Hutton: Information on the expenditure on hospital and community services in England is shown in the table. Expenditure figures provided include the commissioning of secondary healthcare, which is the closest to the information requested. It is not possible to provide comparable figures prior to 1996–97.

	Amount (£000)
1996–97	21,740,132
1997–98	22,823,715
1998–99	24,464,341
1999–2000	26,390,562
2000–01	29,091,286

	Amount (£000)
2001–02	30,432,239
2002–03	32,941,536
2003–04	36,305,199

Notes:

1. Expenditure is taken from audited health authority summarisation forms and primary care trust summarisation schedules which are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. Figures are given in cash terms.

2. Figures for 1996–1997 to 2000–01 have been prepared using gross expenditure figures.

3. Figures for 2001–02 to 2003–04 have been adjusted to eliminate expenditure which would be double counted where an authority acts as a lead in commissioning healthcare or other services.

Sources:

1. Health authority audited accounts 1996–97 and 1997–98.

2. Health authority audited summarisation forms 1998–99 to 2001–02.

3. Strategic health authority audited summarisation forms 2002–03 and 2003–04.

4. Primary care trust audited summarisation schedules 2000–01 to 2003–04.

NHS University

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many courses have been completed at the NHS University since its establishment. [219441]

Mr. Hutton: For the period 16 July 2003 to 11 January 2005, there have been 41,008 staff enrolments onto NHSU programmes. From these 41,008, NHSU has advised that 36,855 have completed the course on which they enrolled.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many persons will be made redundant as a result of the decision to close the NHS University; [220092]

(2) how many persons will be transferred to other NHS posts as a result of the closure of the NHS University. [220093]

Mr. Hutton: Decisions about the future of each of the functions and programmes of the NHS University will be taken in light of the wider programme of work, being led by Sir Ian Carruthers QBE, Chief Executive of Dorset and Somerset strategic health authority, to establish the new NHS Institute for Learning Skills and *Innovation. The number of any associated* redundancies will be minimised.

Physiotherapists (North-east)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many physiotherapists are employed at each hospital primary care trust within County Durham and Tees Valley, and Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority; and how many vacancies exist. [219307]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

Department of Health vacancies survey, March 2004. National health service three month vacancies in the North East Government office region, by strategic health authority (SHA) area and organisation for qualified physiotherapy staff three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

		March 2004 Three month vacancy rate		September 2003 Staff in post	
		Percentage	Number	Whole-time equivalent	Headcount
England		4.1	626	14,455	17,922
of which:					
A					
North East Government office region		1.7	15	855	1,004
Q10					
County Durham and Tees Valley SHA		2.0	7	351	412
County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	RXP	0.0	—	57	71
County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust	RTC	0.0	—	12	15
County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	Q10	—	—	0	0
Darlington PCT	5J9	*	—	3	3
Derwentside PCT	5KA	—	—	0	0
Durham and Chester-le-Street PCT	5KC	8.1	5	55	63
Durham Dales PCT	5J8	—	—	0	0
Easington PCT	5KD	—	—	0	0
Hartlepool PCT	5D9	—	—	0	0
Langbaurgh PCT	5KN	0.0	—	12	14
Middlesbrough PCT	5KM	0.0	—	23	31
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust	RVW	1.0	1	104	122
North Tees PCT	5E1	—	—	0	0
Sedgefield PCT	5KE	*	—	2	2
South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust	RTR	1.3	1	82	89
Tees and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust	RVX	*	—	1	2
Q09					
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA		1.4	8	504	592
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust	RLN	2.2	2	79	91
Gateshead Health NHS Trust	RR7	1.3	1	70	77
Gateshead PCT	5KF	—	—	0	0
Newcastle PCT	5D7	0.0	—	31	39
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust	RTD	2.0	2	82	96
Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust	RNP	0.0	—	25	30
North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust	RVK	—	—	0	0
North Tyneside PCT	5D8	*	—	3	4
Northgate and Prudhoe NHS Trust	RM6	3.3	1	29	34
Northumberland Care Trust	TAC	*	—	8	10

Department of Health vacancies survey, March 2004. National health service three month vacancies in the North East Government office region, by strategic health authority (SHA) area and organisation for qualified physiotherapy staff three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

		March 2004 Three month vacancy rate		September 2003 Staff in post	
		Percentage	Number	Whole-time equivalent	Headcount
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	Q09	—	—	0	0
Northumbria Health Care NHS Trust	RTF	1.4	2	133	161
South of Tyne and Wearside Mental Health NHS Trust	RW9	*	—	5	6
South Tyneside Health Care NHS Trust	RE9	0.0	—	38	43
South Tyneside PCT	5KG	*	—	1	1
Sunderland Teaching PCT	5KL	—	—	0	0

Three month vacancy notes:
1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2004
2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole-time equivalents).
3. Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. Three month vacancy rates are calculated using staff in post from the Vacancy Survey, March 2004.
5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.
6. * figures where sum of staff in post (as at 31 March 2004) and vacancies is less than 10.
7. '—' Figures where sum of staff in post (as at 31 March 2004) and vacancies is zero.

Staff in post notes:
1. Staff in post data are from the non-medical workforce census, September 2003.

General notes:
1. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates.
3. Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts.
4. SHA figures are based on trusts and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of healthcare.

Sources:
1. Department of Health vacancies survey, March 2004.
2. Department of Health non-medical workforce census, September 2003.

Practice Closures

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in *(a)* England and *(b)* each primary care trust have had to be allocated to a GP list in each year since 1996. [218164]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not collect this information.

Prescription Costs

Peter Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average costs *(a)* per patient and *(b)* per unit were of prescriptions issued by (i) dispensing and (ii) non-dispensing general practitioners for each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [220474]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The average cost per patient and per general medical practitioner (GMP) of prescriptions issued by dispensing and non-dispensing doctors in each year since 1998, is shown in the table.

	Average cost per patient (£)		Average cost per GMP (£)	
	Dispensing doctors	Non-dispensing doctors	Dispensing doctors	Non-dispensing doctors
1998	100	90	79,500	181,900
1999	110	100	83,800	205,100
2000	130	100	86,700	214,900
2001	130	110	93,100	234,300
2002	140	130	102,000	261,000
2003	150	140	108,300	281,100

Note:
Data for 1997 is not available.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on how many occasions his Department's Ministers used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years. [213700]

Ms Rosie Winterton: None.

Radiation Risks

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes his Department plans to make to its *(a)* policies and *(b)* regulatory practices following the recommendations of the Report of the Committee Examining Radiation Risks of Internal Emitters, with particular reference to risk estimates. [220590]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have considered the report from the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) about the final report from Committee Examining Radiation Risks of Internal Emitters (CERRIE). I accept COMARE's view that:

> "In the field of radiological protection in general, the precautionary approach has been standard practice and models have been refined as new information has become available."

I therefore do not consider that there needs to be a change in the Department's policies. Similarly, I consider that current regulatory practices, in particular the environmental regulatory framework regulated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, are sound.

SSRI Review Group

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* membership and *(b)* attendance record of

each member of the Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor review group is. [213094]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Committee on Safety of Medicines' (CSM) expert working group on the safety of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors was established in May 2003. The membership included experts in psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry/ epidemiology, statistics and general practice, and lay membership. A total of 17 meetings have been held.

The membership of the group and the number of meetings each member attended is shown in the table.

Member	*Number of meetings attended*
Professor Ian V. D. Weller (Chair)	[1]16
Professor Deborah Ashby	17
Mr. Richard Brook[2]	9
Professor Mary G. A. Chambers	7
Dr. Jonathan D. Chick	15
Professor Colin Drummond	8
Professor David J. Gunnell	12
Professor Klaus Ebmeier	16
Ms Hilary Hawking[3]	3
Dr. Elizabeta Mukaetova-Ladinska	11
Mr. Eamonn O'Tierney[4]	3
Dr. Ross J. Taylor	14
Dr. Ann York	13
Dr. Morris Zwi	10

[1] Professor Gordon Duff, chairman of the CSM, chaired the first meeting of the group.

[2] Resigned in March 2004.

[3] Appointed in September 2004.

[4] Mr. O'Tierney was unable to continue as an active member of the group from July 2003 for personal reasons.

Staff Costs

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of *(a)* medical and dental staff and *(b)* administration and estates staff was (i) in cash terms and (ii) as a proportion of total NHS expenditure in each year since 1991. [218121]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Hospital and community health services (HCHS) expenditure on medical and dental staff in England: 1991–92 to 2003–04

	Total expenditure (£ billion)	*Total NHS expenditure (£ billion)*	*Percentage of total expenditure asa proportion of total NHS expenditure*
1991–92	1.926	25.353	7.60
1992–93	2.220	27.968	7.94
1993–94	2.295	28.942	7.93
1994–95	2.419	30.590	7.91
1995–96	2.614	31.985	8.17
1996–97	2.838	32.997	8.60
1997–98	3.022	34.664	8.72
1998–99	3.301	36.608	9.02
1999–2000	3.665	40.201	9.19
2000–01	4.138	43.932	9.42
2001–02	4.791	49.021	9.72
2002–03	5.445	54.042	10.02
2003–04	6.491	63.667	10.20

HCHS expenditure on administration and estates staff in England: 1991–92 to 2003–04

	Total expenditure (£ billion)	*Total NHS expenditure (£ billion)*	*Percentage of total expenditure as a proportion of total NHS expenditure*
1991–92	2.035	25.353	8.03
1992–93	2.125	27.968	7.60
1993–94	2.432	28.942	8.40
1994–95	2.555	30.590	8.35
1995–96	2.747	31.985	8.59
1996–97	2.899	32.997	8.79
1997–98	2.962	34.664	8.54
1998–99	3.122	36.608	8.53
1999–2000	3.369	40.201	8.45
2000–01	3.706	43.932	8.43
2001–02	4.175	49.021	8.47
2002–03	4.711	54.042	8.67
2003–04	5.211	63.667	8.18

Notes:

Administration and estates staff includes:

Administration and clerical staff.

Maintenance and works staff.

Senior managers and managers.

Total NHS expenditure:

1. Expenditure pre 1999–2000 is on a cash basis.

2. Expenditure figures from 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are on a stage 1 resource budgeting basis (and consistent with figures published in tables 3.4a of the Departmental report 2004).

3. Expenditure for 2003–04 is on a stage 2 resource budgeting basis (and consistent with table 3.4b of the Departmental report 2004).

Source of expenditure on medical and dental staff and administration and estates staff:

1. Annual financial returns of NHS trusts 1991- to 2003–04.

2. Annual financial returns of the regional and district health authorities and special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals 1991–92 to 1995–96.

3. Annual financial returns of health authorities 1996–97 to 2001–02.

Annual financial returns of strategic health authorities 2002–03 to 2003–04.

Annual financial returns of primary care trusts 2000–01 to 2003–04.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce emergency bed days by 5 per cent. by 2008, through improved care in primary care and community settings for people with long-term conditions will be met; [219079]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to ensure that no-one waits more than 18 weeks from general practitioner referral to hospital treatment by 2008 will be met; [219080]

(3) whether the public service agreement target to guarantee access to a primary care doctor within 48 hours from 2004 has been met; [219226]

(4) whether the public service agreement target to guarantee access to a primary care professional within 24 hours from 2004 has been met; [219225]

(5) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to make it easier for patients and their general practitioners to choose the hospital and consultant which best meets their needs will be met by the end of 2005; [219228]

(6) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to ensure that every hospital appointment will be booked for the convenience of the patient will be met by the end of 2005; [219227]

(7) whether the public service agreement target of reducing the proportion of those waiting for over one hour in accident and emergency was met; [219224]

(8) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the maximum wait for an in-patient appointment to six months will be achieved by the end of 2005; [219221]

(9) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the maximum wait for an out-patient appointment to three months will be achieved by the end of 2005; [219220]

(10) whether the public service agreement target to reduce the maximum waiting in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge to four hours by the end of 2004 was met; [219223]

(11) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the maximum in-patient and day case waiting time to three months will be achieved by 2008; [219222]

(12) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to improve health outcomes for people with long-term conditions by offering a personalised care plan for vulnerable people most at risk. [219250]

Mr. Hutton: The Department's autumn performance report, published in December 2004, sets out the latest assessment for delivery of targets agreed as part of the Department's spending review 2002 public service agreement. This report is available in the Library.

The March 2005 data due for publication in mid May will be the first opportunity to assess sustained delivery of those targets due at the end of 2004.

Plans for delivery of targets agreed as part of the spending review 2004 are now being developed in discussion with the national health service as part of the process for agreeing local delivery plans for 2005–08.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to increase the number of older people being supported to live in their own homes by 1 per cent. annually in 2007 and 2008 will be met; [219081]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to increase the number of older people supported intensively to live at home to 34 per cent. of the total being supported by social services at home or residential by 2008 will be met; [219082]

(3) what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to increase the number of older people supported intensively to live at home to 30 per cent. of the total being supported by social services at home or in residential accommodation will be met by March 2006. [219237]

Dr. Ladyman: The public service agreement (PSA) target to increase, by March 2006, the number of those supported intensively to live at home to 30 per cent. of all those being supported by social services at home or in residential care, rose from 29 per cent. to 30 per cent. in 2003–04; this means the target was met two years ahead of the target date. This PSA target was changed to 34 per cent. by March 2008, following the 2004 spending review. Information for 2004–05 showing progress towards this target will be available in autumn 2005. The final position on this target will be assessed in the autumn of 2008, when the data for 2007–08 is available.

Data are not yet available to assess progress against the PSA target to increase the number of older people being supported to live in their own homes by 1 per cent. annually in 2007 and 2008. The baseline for the target will be calculated for the year 2005–06 by the end of 2006, when the data are published. We will be able to measure the final position at the end of 2008.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce the mortality rate from suicide and undetermined injury by at least 20 per cent. by 2010 will be met. [219235]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national suicide prevention strategy for England annual report on progress 2004, published on 21 January 2005, stated that the overall death rate from suicide in the most recent period (2001–03) has fallen to 8.6 deaths per 100,000 population. This marks a reduction of 6 per cent. from the baseline rate in 1995–97 of 9.2 deaths per 100,000. The rate has been steadily falling for the past five years and if this trend were to continue, the target would be met. The strategy is a co-ordinated set of activities, which will take place over several years and is subject to regular annual review and evaluation. A copy of the annual report has been placed in the Library.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 10 March 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bridleways (Bolton)

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking to resolve the PROW claim regarding bridleways linking the villages of Darcy Lever, Little Lever, Kearsley and Prestolee and the township of Farnworth in the constituency of Bolton, South-East in the Croal-Irwell Valley. [217088]

Alun Michael: Bolton metropolitan borough council was directed by the Secretary of State to determine the claim within a specified period which ended in November 2004. The council did not do so; instead it has sought to resolve the claim, and a second one in respect of a linked path, by persuading landowners to dedicate the routes as bridleways. At my request Defra officials have written to the council requesting details of how the council proposes to resolve the matter and its timetable for doing so. I shall review the issue in light of this response.

Air Pollution

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many days of *(a)* moderate, *(b)* high and *(c)* very high air pollution have been recorded by each automatic monitoring station in London in each year since 1997. [212369]

Alun Michael: There are currently 113 automatic air monitoring stations in London incorporated in the Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN) and the London Air Quality Network (LAQN). The following table summarises the average number of days of *(a)* moderate, *(b)* high and *(c)* very high air pollution recorded by all automatic monitoring stations in London in each year since 1997.

Average number of days in each band across London by year and pollutant (1997 to 2004)

Pollutant/Band	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Carbon monoxide								
2. Moderate	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
3. High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.Very High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nitrogen dioxide								
2. Moderate	4	2	2	6	4	4	6	9
3.High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.Very High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ozone								
2. Moderate	54	48	72	60	61	68	85	73
3. High	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	0
4.Very High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Participate Matter (PM10)								
2. Moderate	34	30	43	54	55	64	77	59
3. High	3	0	2	2	3	2	4	3
4.Very High	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	1
Sulphur dioxide								
2. Moderate	3	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
3. High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.Very High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The detailed information for each automatic monitoring station is published

on the National Air Quality Information Archive at:

http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/reports/reports.php?report_id=309

Historic and current data from the AURN and LAQN networks can be found at the following locations:

AURN: http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/index.php

LAQN: http://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/home.asp

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the concentration was of *(a)* nitrogen dioxide, *(b)* sulphur dioxide and *(c)* benzene in each (i) London borough and (ii) London ward in each of the last five years. [212379]

Alun Michael: There are extensive networks of automatic and non-automatic air monitors in London. Air quality is not measured for these pollutants in each London borough and ward.

Table 1 summarises the minimum (min) and maximum (max) annual mean concentrations of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and benzene across London in each of the last five years. The information is collected by Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN), the London Air Quality Network (LAQN). Historic and current data from the AURN and LAQN networks can be found at:

AURN: http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/index.php

LAQN: http://www.londonair.org.uk/london/asp/home.asp

Table 1: Range of annual mean concentrations in micrograms per metre cubed across London by year and pollutant (1997–2004)

	Pollutant					
	Benzene		Nitrogen dioxide		Sulphur dioxide	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
1997	3.38	5.67	35	74	9	20
1998	2.68	12.79	32	92	7	19
1999	2.52	10.77	32	93	4	13
2000	1.58	6.29	28	121	4	15
2001	4.55	4.55	29	119	4	14
2002	—	—	25	122	3	13
2003	3.33	3.33	28	107	24	183
2004	2.48	2.48	24	183	3	21

Note:
Data for 2004 are provisional. No data are available for benzene for 2002. The number of sites used in the analysis varies each year as networks change. The minimum and maximum annual mean benzene figures presented in the table are the same for 2001, 2003 and 2004 because only a single site was operational for that pollutant in London during those years.

Table 2 summarises nitrogen dioxide concentrations measured by the UK nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube network in London since 1999. Average minimum and average maximum concentrations are presented for all roadside and background locations. A detailed table showing information for the London boroughs in which the diffusion tubes are located is available from the Air Quality Archive at:

http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/reports/reports.php?report id = 309 .

Table 2: Minimum and maximum annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations are in micrograms per metre cubed over London by year at both roadside and background locations

	Minimum roadside annual mean	Maximum roadside annual mean	Minimum background annual mean	Maximum background annual mean
1999	34	80	21	64
2000	29	66	22	47
2001	31	87	20	42
2002	28	77	16	43
2003	38	101	23	67
2004	31	97	19	71

Note:
Data for 2004 are provisional. Data for December 2004 are not yet available.

Animal By-Products Regulation

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons the processing of slaughter house waste is designated by her Department as a major hazard operation; and whether this designation was required under Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002. [220249]

Mr. Bradshaw: The regulation does not define a major hazard operation. However, in order to ensure that the controls are applied evenly across the country, Defra has issued guidance on how we intend to apply the regulation in relation to intermediate plants. The guidance is the result of our interpretation of the legislation and our assessment of the risks to human and animal health associated with handling animal by-products at intermediate plants.

In the guidance we differentiate between loading operations that we regard as a major hazard (e.g. tipping of slaughterhouse waste). and operations that we consider to be a lesser hazard.

A major consideration is the physical characteristics of the material to be handled. The handling of slaughterhouse waste (containing viscera, bones, specified risk material etc.) is more likely to result in environmental contamination due to spillage of material or associated fluids than the handling of entire carcases.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for how long temporary licences will be granted to businesses that need to make changes to their operations to comply with Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002; and whether temporary licences to businesses will take into account the time required to obtain planning consent. [220250]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Animal By-Products Regulation has applied in member states since 1 May 2003, and operators have therefore had over 18 months to achieve compliance with its requirements. Continued extension of temporary approvals for non-compliant premises would disadvantage those operators who have invested to meet the required standards, and as a general rule we are not granting such extensions. However, we recognise that in a very small number of cases, short-term approval may be appropriate to allow for specified remedial works to be carried out to an agreed deadline. A temporary approval will only be issued in these circumstances. If the operator cannot provide us with a clear deliverable schedule of works, for example because he has not obtained planning consent, we will not issue a temporary approval.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the other ways are in which Intermediary Plants can demonstrate compliance with the Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002 referred to in the answer to the hon. Member for North Wiltshire of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1558W; and how many intermediary plants in England have been licensed which demonstrate compliance with the Animals By-Products Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002 in other ways. [220264]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002 requires Intermediate Plants to have a "covered space" to receive animal by-products. It also requires the plant to be constructed in such a way that it is easy to clean and disinfect, and that floors must be laid down in such a way as to facilitate the draining

of liquids. The plant must also have appropriate arrangements for protection against pests, such as insects, rodents and birds.

As stated in the answer of 12 February 2004, in our view, the combination of these requirements is such that it would be necessary for the plant to have a roof, walls and a floor before we can approve it. I am not aware of any operator who has been able to demonstrate that their plant complies in another way. However, it is open to them to propose alternative ways of complying with all of the above requirements.

Bovine Artificial Insemination

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether test samples from bulls for artificial insemination purposes may be sent to approved laboratories in other member states of the EU. [219504]

Mr. Bradshaw: Tests to support the official approval of a bull for use in artificial insemination may only be carried out in the member state where the bull resides. Where additional private testing is carried out by the industry to help it monitor the health status of animals, such testing may be carried out in another member state, but the results would not carry official recognition.

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of testing a bull for the purpose of artificial insemination is *(a)* in Great Britain and *(b)* in Northern Ireland. [219505]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The cost of testing a bull for artificial insemination in Great Britain is governed by the Artificial Insemination (Cattle and Pigs) (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 1992.

£

Category	*First animal*	*Each additional animal*
Approval of a bull for semen collection for domestic purposes at a domestic centre/on-farm	207	144
Approval of a bull in accordance with the tests specified in Directive 88/407/EEC for semen collection at an EU centre	152	95

(b) The cost of testing a bull for artificial insemination in Northern Ireland is charged under the powers laid down in the Artificial Reproduction of Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1975 (as amended). Domestic centres/on-farm collections are not permitted. Bulls are sampled by private veterinary practitioners with financial arrangements agreed between the bull owner and the veterinary practice concerned.

Category	£
Approval of a bull in accordance with the tests specified in Directive 88/407/EEC for semen collection at an EU centre	
Fee for certificate of approval	41
Charge for laboratory tests	28.82

All fees are currently under review as part of the exercise to update controls on the production of bovine semen.

Bovine TB

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of whether biosecurity measures applied by farmers to their cattle herds to prevent contact between cattle and badgers reduce significantly the incidence of endemic infection in badgers. [214166]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such assessment has been made.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications of *(a)* the length of the period in cattle affected by bovine tuberculosis before overt lung lesions develop and *(b)* annual or six-monthly tuberculosis testing and removal of infected animals for the threat of cattle-to-cattle transmission from infected animals. [214705]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The development of disease in individual cattle is variable with no consistent timeframe for those that may go on to develop lung lesions. The period before lung lesions develop depends on factors such as the number of bacilli infecting the lung and the strength of the immune response of the animal.

(b) The sooner infected animals are detected the less likely they are to transmit disease to direct contacts or other herds. Local prevalence of bovine TB is reviewed annually, and this is used to determine parish TB testing frequencies. Areas where disease is more established are tested more regularly and yearly testing is carried out in herds at higher risk of infection. In addition, divisional veterinary managers can increase the level of testing in their areas to reflect changes in the local TB situation.

Testing every six months would detect some infections sooner but there would be resource restraints on such a policy. In order to target resources most effectively, only cattle herds which have recently suffered a TB breakdown are tested after a six-monthly interval.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her most recent estimate of the badger population in England and Wales is; and what estimates have been made of the population during the last 30 years. [214707]

Mr. Bradshaw: Surveys of badger populations in Great Britain were undertaken in the mid-1980's and mid-1990's. In the mid-1980's the badger population was estimated to be 250,000 badgers[1] and in the mid-1990's in the region of 300,000 to 400,000 badgers[2].

We are not aware of other national surveys and do not have figures for England and Wales or estimates of the population before the mid-1980s.

The history, distribution, status and habitat requirements of the badger in Britain. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough.

The National Badger Survey.

[1] Cresswell, P. Harris, S. and Jefferies, D. J. (1990).

[2] Wilson, Harris and Mclaren (1997).

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her most recent estimate is of the incidence of bovine tuberculosis in the West Midlands region. [217128]

Mr. Bradshaw: The estimated incidence of bovine tuberculosis in the West Midlands and surrounding counties for the period 1 January-31 December 2004 is detailed in the following table:

County	*Cattle herds*	*Tests on unrestricted herds*	*Confirmed new herd incidents (CNIs)*	*Estimated TB herd incidence[1] (percentage)*
West Midlands	175	35	0	0.0
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	2,931	2,127	194	9.1
Shropshire	2,846	1,726	62	3.6
Staffordshire	2,702	1,798	63	3.5
Warwickshire	903	332	5	1.5

[1] Confirmed new herd incidents as a percentage of tests on unrestricted herds (used as a way of estimating the herd incidence of confirmed TB).

Note:

Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service database on 15 February 2005. Subject to change as more data become available.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to announce the outcome of the gamma interferon test to identify cases of bovine TB in cattle. [218766]

Mr. Bradshaw: The gamma-interferon policy pilot is designed to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of this test as an ancillary diagnostic tool to identify additional cases of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in cattle herds affected by confirmed TB breakdowns with multiple reactors.

The outcome of the pilot will be announced once the required sample size of herds (approximately 600) has been achieved, or statistically significant differences between the trial and control groups are observed.

As of the end of January 2005, 141 herds had been recruited into the pilot. Herd owners' participation in this study is voluntary. The Veterinary Laboratories Agency will be conducting an interim analysis of the pilot's preliminary results once 150 herds have been recruited and sufficient time has elapsed for a preliminary estimate of the effects of treatments to be calculated.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects a vaccine against bovine TB in *(a)* badgers and *(b)* cattle to become available. [219782]

Mr. Bradshaw: The research programme for producing an effective vaccine against tuberculosis in *(a)* badgers and *(b)* cattle remains broadly in line with the timetable outlined in the Krebs report (1997). This estimated:

Years 1–5: Identification of candidate vaccines and development of differential diagnostic tests;

Years 5–10: Experimental investigations of vaccination protocols;

Years 10–15: Field trials.

The first stage started in 1999 and is on-going. My department is now planning how to take forward the second stage, taking advice from independent experts on this complex issue.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the conclusions of the Irish four counties bovine TB study regarding the relative methods of badger removal and vaccination as strategies for the elimination of bovine TB. [219784]

Mr. Bradshaw: Advice from the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISO) and Professor Charles Godfray and his group on the report of the Irish Four Area Culling Trial, together with a statement from Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser, was published on Defra's website: (http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/index.htm) on 1 March.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the merits of reintroduction of reactive culling of badgers to eradicate bovine TB. [220271]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* There is no evidence to suggest that the resumption of reactive culling would reduce the incidence of bovine TB in cattle. The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) has continued to collect data from the reactive areas of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial and recent analyses are consistent with results presented in late 2003, with the confidence limits providing no evidence for a beneficial effect of the reactive strategy over the time scale under study. Further detailed investigations based on the distribution of TB breakdowns in space and time are underway to investigate whether the observed increased incidence was linked to proximity to reactive culling. In addition, as further TB incidence data are obtained, the ISG will continue to analyse data from reactive areas. If the TB incidence rates in reactive and survey areas become more similar over time, this finding would indicate that the observed increase in TB breakdowns in reactive areas, compared with survey-only areas, was associated with reactive culling.

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 9 December 2004 with regard to Mr. and Mrs. K. Carding of Kingsbridge. [219813]

Alun Michael: The Department has no record of receiving any letter dated 9 December 2004 from the hon. Member. If he will send me a copy, I will ensure that he receives a speedy response.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-New Zealand Joint Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214314]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EC-New Zealand Joint Management Committee met on 1–2 June 2004 in Brussels, during the Irish presidency. The UK was represented by a senior veterinarian from Defra.

The UK supports veterinary equivalence agreements with third countries as a way of strengthening relationships, exchanging information on animal health issues and developing trade opportunities between the EU and the country concerned.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Canada Joint Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214315]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EC-Canada Joint Management Committee met on 15–17 July 2003 in Apeldoora, Netherlands, during the Italian presidency, and on 17–18 February 2004 in Quebec, Canada, during the Irish presidency. On each occasion the UK was represented by a senior veterinarian from Defra.

The UK supports veterinary equivalence agreements with third countries as a way of strengthening relationships, exchanging information on animal health issues and developing trade opportunities between the EU and the country concerned.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitat) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [217817]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Committee on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Committee) met a total of three times during the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies, on 14 October 2003, 24 March 2004 and 19 October 2004. Each meeting took place in Brussels.

UK representation at the October 2003 meeting consisted of two officials from my Department, one official from the Scottish Executive and a scientific expert from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). At the March 2004 meeting representation was one official from my Department, a scientific expert from the JNCC, plus one official from each of the devolved administrations. At the October 2004 meeting the UK Representation was two officials from the Department, a scientific expert from the JNCC and one official from the Department of Environment (Northern Ireland).

Farm Subsidies

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the 20 largest farms or farm companies were in each county in England in each of the last three years; and how much subsidy was received by each in each of the last three years. [218487]

Alun Michael: The release of Common Agricultural Policy scheme payments details is currently under discussion and is also the subject of a number of requests under the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations. A decision on how to respond to questions of this nature will be made shortly. I will write to the hon. Member to inform him of our decision.

Fisheries

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent evidence she has found of pair trawlers fishing in the offshore sea bass fishery. [203879]

Mr. Bradshaw: Prior to the recent introduction of UK legislation to prohibit pelagic pair trawling for bass within the 12 nautical mile zone of the south-west coast of England, UK vessels had been involved in this fishery early in the current season, both inside and outside the 12 mile zone.

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what plans she has to monitor the pair trawl sea bass fishery in the south west; [219807]

(2) what recent reports she has received from observers in the south-west approaches monitoring the pair trawl sea bass fishery. [219866]

Mr. Bradshaw: As in previous years, Defra-funded observers have been placed on UK vessels pair trawling for bass in the south-west. This work is now undertaken to comply with the EU bycatch regulation, Council Regulation (EC) No. 812/2004,and so is now a requirement for other member states with vessels in this fishery. The pair trawl fishery for bass usually takes place between November/December and April. Results from the observations will be made available after the fishing season has closed, allowing time for collation and analysis of the data.

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the European Commission regarding the pair trawl sea bass fishery. [219867]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 27 January the UK made a request to the European Commission for the UK prohibition on pair trawling within 12 miles of the south-west coast to be extended to vessels from other member states with historic rights of access to the six to 12 mile zone. On 21 February the Commission rejected the UK request. I am currently considering the Commission's response and our next steps, building on the Commission's commitment to find an effective solution to the bycatch problem in the south-west.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much *(a)* Government and *(b)* EU aid was paid to the UK fishing industry in each of the last eight years for which figures are available. [218108]

Mr. Bradshaw: The total amount of Government aid and EU aid paid by Fisheries Departments in the UK to the fishing industry in each of the last eight years is as follows:

£ million

	UK aid	*EU aid*
1997–98	17.1	14.3
1998–99	5.9	9.8
1999–2000	3.5	11.0
2000–01	2.1	5.6
2001–02	4.3	7.6
2002–03	24.2	20.7
2003–04	42.5	15.0
2004–05	10.7	8.7
Total	110.6	92.9

In addition to this the Government supports the fishing industry and its communities through other schemes.

Flood Defences

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how much has been spent by the Government on flood management and defence in each year since 1997; and how much was spent on *(a)* preventative measures and *(b)* repairs and restoration for damage caused by flooding incidents in each year; [218637]

(2) how much has been spent by the Government on coastal protection in each year since 1997. [218639]

Margaret Beckett: Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. Prior to April 2004 Government funding of flood risk management took the form of capital grants from Defra for improvement projects and support from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to local authorities towards the levies they paid to the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Boards. Since April 2004 Defra has funded the great majority of the flood defence work of the Environment Agency.

Grant aid was not available from Defra for repairs and restoration for damage caused by flooding incidents. However, following the severe flooding in 2000, exceptional funding of £9 million in 2000–01 and £7 million in 2001–02 was paid to the Environment Agency in support of emergency response and repairs to defence infrastructure following flood damage.

Total funding and grant to the operating authorities is set out in the following table. The latter includes Supplementary Credit Approval (SCA) (replaced by Supported Capital Expenditure (Revenue) from April 2004) for local authorities to fund the balance of their costs after grant.

£ million

	Total Government funding[1]	*Defra grant and SCA for flood risk management improvement projects*[2]	*Defra grant and SCA for coastal erosion risk management improvement projects*[3]
1997–98	312	[4]48.5	33.0
1998–99	315	34.5	35.9
1999–2000	326	34.1	33.9
2000–01	328	33.6	20.4
2001–02	363	57.9	20.2
2002–03	407	80.0	35.0
2003–04	430	80.0	40.4

[1] Total figure across Government, including significant support from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to local authorities to support their levies to the Environment Agency and internal drainage boards and their own spend on flood and coastal erosion risk management. Also Defra contributions to Environment Agency national initiatives such as for the National Flood and Coastal Defence Database, public awareness campaigns, development of catchment flood management plans etc.

[2] Flood risk improvement projects (including flood warning) and related studies, tidal and coastal as well as inland. Actual investment would have been significantly higher as Defra grant formed only about 60 per cent. of the investment, the balance being made up from local authority levy funding for the Environment Agency.

[3] Coastal erosion improvement projects and related studies; many of these provide protection against flooding from the sea as well as erosion.

[4] Figures for grant reflect outturn of demand by operating authorities within allocation, not necessarily original provision. The original grant allocation for 1997–98 was increased significantly in year by redistribution of funds from elsewhere in the Department.

Food Safety (Imports)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from which countries known to be experiencing outbreaks of *(a)* foot and mouth disease, *(b)* avian influenza, *(c)* bovine spongiform encephalopathy and *(d)* bovine tuberculosis food may be imported; what safeguards are in place to protect UK consumers; and if she will make a statement. [219023]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra does not hold a list of countries that are recorded as having endemic diseases such as foot and mouth disease (FMD), highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and bovine tuberculosis (TB). The internationally recognised central source for official

information on the distribution of animal diseases is the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). Also known as the World Organisation for Animal Health, the OIE is the world organisation responsible for the collection and dissemination of information on international animal health—it has a role analogous to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Information on countries with FMD, HPAI, BSE and TB can be found on their website, at the following address:

http://www.oie.int/eng/en index.htm

Community rules establish lists of countries from which food of animal origin can be imported. These lists are complex and can vary depending on the type of product eg fresh meat, cooked meat and milk. In addition to this, most food of animal origin has to be accompanied by appropriate animal and public health certification and has to come from approved establishments.

Defra provides information on import requirements in the form of Trader Information Notes (TINs) which set out the conditions under which food products of animal origin should be imported. The TINs are available on our website:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/int-trde/misc/tins/index.htm

Safeguards

If there is an outbreak of disease in an exporting country, community legislation allows member states to take appropriate emergency safeguard action, which may include a ban on imports of animal products from all, or parts, of that country, pending emergency action at community level. Once community measures are put in place the safeguard measures will reflect them.

All meat and milk imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated border inspection posts where they are subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks. At least 20 per cent. of consignments of animal products undergo physical checks. These checks ensure import conditions are met.

Foodstuff Importation

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will make a statement on the measures in place to control the importation of foodstuffs; [218462]

(2) what the budget is in 2004–05 for the inspection and monitoring of food imports; and if she will make a statement; [218463]

(3) what inspection facilities are in place at *(a)* ports and *(b)* airports to control the importation of foodstuffs; and if she will make a statement. [218464]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows:

Illegal imports

£25 million of new money has been made available over three years 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 to tackle illegal imports of products of animal origin (POAO) and plants and plant based goods (PBG) from third countries.

HM Customs and Excise have enforcement responsibility at the frontier for illegal imports of products of animal origin (POAO) and plant based goods (PBG) from countries outside the European Union.

Customs have over 3,500 Detection staff who have anti-smuggling responsibilities for POAO and PBG. Within this Customs has dedicated around additional 100 officers specifically to POAO and PBG; 10 POAO detector dogs are also deployed.

Food of animal origin

All products of animal origin imported from third countries must enter at designated border inspection posts (BIPs) where they are subject to veterinary inspections to make sure they comply with EU import rules. BIPs are approved by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health. There are currently BIPs at 11 ports and five airports in England that are approved to check imports of products of animal origin for human consumption. The inspection services at the BIP are the responsibility of the local authority. Officers from the State Veterinary Service regularly visit BIPs to offer advice and check on compliance with EU requirements. FVO inspectors inspect BIPs to ensure that they are operating correctly. EU law requires the local authority to recover the costs of the import checks from importers: details of budgets are not held centrally.

If there is an outbreak of disease likely to present a risk to human or animal health, Community legislation allows us to take appropriate safeguard action, which may include a ban on imports of meat from all, or parts, of that country.

For non-animal food

Food imports from countries outside the European Union must meet food safety and food standards requirements equivalent to those for UK produced food, and can be subject to checks by local food authorities at UK ports and inland to ensure they comply.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for allocating local authority budgets, and funding for imported food controls would form part of the Revenue Support Grant arrangements. The Food Standards Agency has made further specific funding available through grants for local authority sampling and surveillance of imported food. In 2003–04, a total of £600 000 was allocated to 110 authorities and, in 2004–05, £840 000 to 140 authorities.

Under the Imported Food Regulations 1997, the person importing food not of animal origin shall provide all such facilities as may be reasonably required for the examination of the food. In practice, facilities are provided by the port operators and vary according to the type of port and the nature and size of the foods imported. We have been discussing with the European Commission the possibility of sharing BIP facilities with authorities checking non-animal food goods.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what conclusions were drawn from Operation Hornbeam regarding the role of local knowledge in combating future outbreaks of foot and mouth disease. [219783]

Mr. Bradshaw: Exercise Hornbeam did not set out to test those aspects of disease control in which local knowledge would have been important. Its principle objectives were to validate and confirm the Government's foot and mouth disease contingency plan and to focus on the strategic and tactical decision-making process. However, local operational partners were engaged in the exercise in five Animal Health Divisional Offices in England, Scotland and Wales and their knowledge and expertise was important to its success.

The Government recognise the importance of a collaborative response to a disease outbreak and local operational partners will continue to be involved in future exercises testing animal disease contingency plans.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the 10 largest amounts paid in the UK to valuers during the foot and mouth epidemic were; and to whom they were paid. [220609]

Mr. Bradshaw: The 10 largest amounts paid in the UK to organisations that undertook valuations during the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak were:

	£
Penrith Farmers and Kidds	2,319,242
Harrison and Hetherington Limited	1,396,810
Cumberland and Dumfrieshire Farmers	540,243
Kivells	442,684
Hopes Auction Company Limited	409,660
Hexham and Northern Markets	336,696
KVN Stockdale Limited	325,434
Richard Turner and Son	321,902
Craven Cattle Marts	207,192
Mitchells Auction Company Limited	205,712

Footpaths

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 24 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 773W, on footpaths, for how many footpaths the Secretary of State has issued a direction authorising continued closure in each of the last five years; for what reasons in each case; and when she expects each to be re-opened. [221202]

Alun Michael: It will take some time to assemble this information from Government regional offices as files are having to be called back from depositories. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as it is available. The reasons for authorising extended temporary closure fall into two categories: either to protect public safety or to allow for completion of works. It is not possible to say when each footpath under a temporary closure will be re-opened as this is a matter for the local highway authority. Government offices are required to take care to ensure that no temporary order (or subsequent extensions) will allow, in effect, the permanent closure of a public right of way.

Harmful Cargoes

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what monitoring of *(a)* fish stocks and *(b)* other marine wildlife occurs in parts of UK waters where harmful cargoes are known to have been lost overboard. [220600]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* The need for monitoring in relation to incidents where harmful cargoes are lost overboard is determined on a case-by-case basis taking into account the physical and chemical characteristics of the cargoes, and the characteristics of the local environment and resources that are under threat. This may involve monitoring of fish stocks and other marine wildlife. Such monitoring is usually focused on the substances contained in the cargoes and is limited to the duration of the incidents and shortly thereafter, although periodic monitoring over a longer period is done when it is justified.

CEFAS, FRS, EA, SEPA and the statutory nature conservation agencies conduct general monitoring of the marine environment. CEFAS and FRS are involved in monitoring fish stocks while the statutory nature conservation agencies are involved in monitoring the condition of a range of habitats and species.

Horse Exports

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the effect of the introduction of horse passports on the number of equines exported live from the UK; and if she will make a statement. [220688]

Alun Michael: We can see no reason for the introduction of horse passports to have any effect on the number of equines exported live from the UK.

Mr. David Blunkett

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what enquiries she has made into payments made to the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) by a company involved in major commercial dealings with her Department; and if she will make a statement. [220520]

Alun Michael: The Register of Members' Interests records that the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) is an adviser to Indepen Consulting Ltd. From information held centrally, the Department has no record of commercial dealings with this company.

Peat-free Soil Improvers

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what market data her Department *(a)* collects and *(b)* plans to collect on progress towards the Government's targets for peat-free materials. [211221]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (and previously those Government Departments responsible) collected data on the use of peat and alternative products for growing media and soil improvers in the UK between 1993 and 2001 at various intervals. The use of peat and alternative products by all market sectors was not monitored by this survey until 1999. The results of the last survey were published in 2003. A more recent Defra report studying the use of peat and peat alternatives by the commercial horticulture sector in 2003 was published in 2004.

A new survey will monitor the use of peat and alternative products between 2005 and 2010. This will measure the use of these products by all market sectors. Further surveys may be commissioned as part of the work of a growing media forum that we plan to convene shortly to inform the development of an action plan to reduce the use of peat in the UK.

Regional Bodies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what regional *(a)* bodies, *(b)* institutions, *(c)* taskforces, *(d)* panels, *(e)* offices and *(f)* organisations the Government has established since May 1997 which are the responsibility of her Department. [220191]

Alun Michael: The following is from internal sources only. A full Defra wide canvass was not undertaken due to the disproportionate cost of doing so. This is correct as at 8 March 2005.

The following regional "bodies" have been established since 1997:

The Regional Rural Affairs Forums were set up in 2001. Members give their time voluntarily and they are asked to be objective and independent in their work. They are asked to advise both Defra and the Government Office in the region, of her views.

Regional steering groups, were established in 2003 to provide input into the development of regional delivery plans for the Government's Farming and Food Strategy.

The following regional "body" has been established since 1997, then disbanded:

Regional Dialogue Panels were established and then disbanded in 2004. They were established in each English region as part of consultations on preparing the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy.

Regional Offices

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which *(a)* non-departmental public bodies and *(b)* executive agencies within the remit of her Department have regional offices based on the Government Offices for the Regions' regional structure; and when the regional offices were established in each case. [219884]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows:

Executive Agencies

There are no executive agencies which have any regional offices based on the Government Offices regional structure.

NDPBs

Two NDPBs have regional offices or Regional Directors based on the Government Offices regional structure, as follows:

1. The Countryside Agency currently has regional offices based on the Government Office regional structure. These offices were established when the Agency was created in April 1999.

2. English Nature has a sub-regional structure. It does not have regional offices as such but does have Regional Directors who have an overview of the local teams in areas which appear to be based on the GO Regions. There is no internal information as to when these Directors were established.

Sewerage

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress is being made in adopting private sewers; and when a framework will be available to explain how this will occur. [220706]

Mr. Morley: The Government published a response to its consultation—Review of Existing Private Sewers and Drains in England and Wales—in October 2004. Eighty one per cent. of respondents favoured a change of ownership, and of these, 90 per cent. held the view that sewerage undertakers should take over responsibility. The Government acknowledged the strength of support for this solution and undertook to look into it in more depth.

The Department chairs a Steering Group, of which WaterVoice, Ofwat and Water UK are members, which is currently considering sustainable options for the way forward on private sewers and lateral drains. The Department also recently held a seminar with stakeholders to examine these options. Further information on the seminar is available on the Department's website at www.Defra.gov.uk

The Government intends to publish a decision paper this summer, but does not rule out the need to consult further on the scope and form of transferring ownership.

Sudan 1

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with officials in *(a)* the Department of Health and *(b)* the Food Standards Agency regarding the addition of Sudan 1 to food for human consumption. [218455]

Alun Michael: Defra officials have participated in a number of recent FSA-led meetings with the food industry and other stakeholders on Sudan I. This was also discussed when my noble Friend, the Lord Whitty, met Sir John Krebs, Chair of the Food Standards Agency, on 23 February.

Wind Farms

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of birds which have been killed by wind farms in the UK in each of the last three years; and what estimate she has made of likely future numbers. [211627]

Mr. Bradshaw: No systematic collection of bird mortality caused by wind farms has been undertaken in the UK in the last three years or is planned in the immediate future. Collision mortality is very difficult to assess comprehensively due to the problems experienced in carcase recovery at inaccessible sites i.e. at sea offshore or over hilly terrain.

In the UK ornithological assessments are conducted for proposed wind farm sites as part of the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). The EIA forms part of the environmental statement submitted by wind farm developers in support of a planning application.

Defra is producing guidance for off shore areas that will help developers to consider how to minimise any impacts on bird numbers to ensure that any that do occur are below significant levels.

The Government's renewable energy initiatives form part of it's response to the threat of climate change, including the acknowledged likelihood that climate change is likely to lead to irreversible and accelerated losses of biodiversity.

Bird Control

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what notice she gave of her intention to alter the terms of general Licence WLF18 to include an obligation to consider appropriate non-lethal methods. [220443]

Mr. Bradshaw: Between 31 March and 14 July 2004 a pre-consultation exercise was undertaken by Defra on the review of general licences to kill or take so-called "pest species" of birds. This pre-consultation, on a number of proposed changes to general licences, included reference to other satisfactory solutions, involved key interests and was also published on the Defra website. The pre-consultation document can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/bird-licence/index.htm.

The responses to the pre-consultation were carefully considered and further discussions took place between Defra officials and organisations representing shooting and conservation interests.

On 10 February 2005 I announced the removal of the house sparrow and starling from general licences. This was supplemented at the time by a press release and a table of proposed changes to be made to general licences. This included reference to a condition regarding the use of non-lethal alternatives.

The press release and table can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2005/050210a.htm.

On 9 March 2005 in order to clear up misunderstanding in relation to the obligation to consider appropriate non-lethal methods Defra altered the wording of the general licence condition to read,

"This licence can only be relied on in circumstances where the authorised person is satisfied that appropriate non-lethal methods of control such as scaring are either ineffective or impracticable."

A press notice was issued and the revised licences were immediately published on the Defra website. A copy of the press notice can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2005/050309c.htm.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what consultation she undertook before adding to the General Licence WLF18 the obligation for the authorised person to demonstrate that appropriate non-lethal methods are ineffective or impracticable. [220444]

Mr. Bradshaw: A pre-consultation exercise on the review of general licences to kill or take so-called "pest species" of birds was undertaken in the summer of 2004. This pre-consultation, on a number of proposed changes to general licences, involved key interests and was also published on the Defra website.

The pre-consultation document can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/bird-licence/index.htm.

The responses to the pre-consultation were carefully considered and further discussions took place between Defra officials and organisations representing shooting and conservation interests.

On 9 March 2005 in order to clear up misunderstanding in relation to the obligation to consider appropriate non-lethal methods Defra amended the wording of the general licence condition to read,

"This licence can only be relied on in circumstances where the authorised person is satisfied that appropriate non-lethal methods of control such as scaring are either ineffective or impracticable."

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance she intends to issue to authorised persons under General Licence WLF18 on how they should assess whether non-lethal methods are ineffective or impracticable. [220445]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 9 March 2005 in order to clear up misunderstanding in relation to the obligation regarding appropriate non-lethal methods Defra altered the wording of the general licence condition to read,

"This licence can only be relied on in circumstances where the authorised person is satisfied that appropriate non-lethal methods of control such as scaring are either ineffective or impracticable."

A press notice was issued and the revised licences were immediately published on the Defra website. A copy of the press notice can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2005/050309c.htm.

Cross-compliance

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from what date cross-compliance will take effect; when the first payments will be made under the Single Farm Payment Scheme; if she will make interim payments; what other relief will be available to farmers who receive delayed payments; and if she will make a statement. [218468]

Alun Michael: Cross-compliance requirements for the Single Payments Scheme (SPS) apply from 1 January 2005.

The payment window for SPS runs from 1 December 2005 to 30 June 2006. The Rural Payments Agency's objective is to maximise the number of payments made early within that window or to help farmers affected by the timing this year. It must be borne in mind that this is a year of major change in the payments regime, that we are dependant on confirmation of points of detail and that the IT arrangements to underpin the new system are also new. It is important to make sure that our systems are robust.

It should also be noted that farmers are likely to benefit from early payment in full, in future years. I am considering with my officials, what action can be taken to speed up payments this year or to help in other ways.

EU Emissions Trading Scheme

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons negotiations on the application to opt out of phase one of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme have been linked with those on the National Allocation Plan. [220718]

Mr. Morley: The EU Commission has made clear that they will not consider an application for temporary exclusion without a complete list of installations to which the application applies. It was therefore necessary that each operator made a final decision on whether to be included in the list before the application is put to the Commission. In order to make this decision, the operators needed as complete information as possible as to the extent of their installations' allocations. These allocations were announced on 14 February. This is the link between the national Allocation Plan and the application for temporary exclusion for Climate Change Agreement holders.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she has taken to ensure that a complete and definitive list of those installations wishing to opt out of phase one of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme is available; who she has consulted in compiling such a list; and when she expects the list to be available. [220721]

Mr. Morley: Installation level allocations under the National Allocation Plan were announced on 14 February. Operators who are covered by the EU ETS and a Climate Change Agreement were asked to decide whether they wished to be included in the UK's application for temporary exclusion from EU ETS by 4 March. The resulting list is now being compiled and checked through sector associations and will form part of the UK's application. We expect the application to be made before Easter and the list will be published at that time. A list of operators, whose installations are included in the UK ETS as Direct Participants and for whom temporary exclusion has already been approved by the Commission, is available on the UK ETS website.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the impact on the UK of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [219544]

Mr. Morley: Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) have been carried out throughout the implementation of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. These are available on the Defra website (see link below). A full, final RIA is currently being drawn up and will be published alongside the final allocation decision.

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechanqe/trading/eu/index.htm

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will press for the abolition of climate change agreements in Phase 1 of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [220503]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* Climate Change Agreements are an important part of the UK's Climate Change Programme to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. They have proved very successful in improving energy efficiency in energy intensive industry, saving industry an estimated £450 million pa in energy costs. At the first target period, in 2002, the 44 sectors covered reduced their emissions of carbon dioxide by 16.4Mt. I have no plans to abolish them.

EU Export Refunds

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her Answer to Question 217200 tabled by the honourable Member for Rutland and Melton, if she will list the EU export refunds for each year from 1999 to 2003, broken down by commodity; and what assessment she has made of the reasons for the reduction between 2000 and 2001. [220335]

Alun Michael: The following table sets out EU export refunds for the budget years 1999 to 2003, broken down by commodity:

Expenditure (€ million)

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*[2]2003*
Arable crops[1]	883.1	823.6	259.8	99.3	104.0
Sugar	1,592.6	1,438.8	1,008.2	1,151.6	1,257.0
Olive oil	2.5	0.2	0.2	0.1	—
Dried fodder and dried vegetables	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Textile plants	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fruit and vegetables	40.4	46.1	50.8	46.4	38.0
Wine	27.4	21.5	22.5	23.8	25.0
Tobacco	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other sectors	30.5	38.4	38.7	41.1	—
Milk and milk products	1,439.4	1,671.0	1,106.5	1,159.6	1,568.0
Beef/veal	594.9	661.3	362.6	386.7	534.0
Sheepmeat and goatmeat	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pigmeat, eggs and poultrymeat	385.6	348.2	115.7	104.4	177.0

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	[2]*2003*
Non-annex 1 products	576.4	572.2	435.6	413.8	—
Food programmes	0.0	24.9	0.0	5.6	—
Total	5,572.8	5,646.2	3,400.6	3,432.4	3,703.0

[1] Cereals and rice.
[2] Data for 2003 refers to appropriations for commitments entered in the budget for 2003.
Sources:
"Agriculture in the European Union" for 2000–03 and "The Agricultural Situation in the European Union" for 1999.

For most commodities both the unit value of export refunds and the volume of subsidised exports declined between marketing years 1999–2000 and 2000–01.

Export refunds bridge the gap, for subsidised exports, between the high EU domestic prices and the lower world price. Expenditure on export refunds may vary for a number of reasons including, principally, conditions on world and domestic markets, changes in the €/$ rate of exchange and changes in the level of domestic institutional prices.

Changes in domestic and world market conditions are specific to individual commodities and it is therefore difficult to generalise. However, the EU-world price gap narrowed for a number of important commodities around 2001, primarily due to an increase in world prices (thus reducing the unit rate of export refund required for subsidised exports). Changes in the exchange rate have an impact across commodities: the value of the euro against the dollar declined between 1999 and 2001 thereby reinforcing the affects of the trends in world prices, in euro terms. In addition, domestic institutional prices for cereals and beef were subject to a stepped reduction, starting from 2000, under the Agenda 2000 CAP reforms.

It is significant to note that expenditure on export refunds remains highest in the sugar and dairy sectors where the UK is pressing for further reforms.

EU LIFE Directive

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which applications to her Department for funding under the EU LIFE Directive have been *(a)* successful, *(b)* unsuccessful and *(c)* received but are yet to be determined; and what grants were awarded to each successful project. [220739]

Mr. Morley: The LIFE Regulation was set up by Council Regulation 1973/92/EEC in July 1992, with effect until 31 December 1995. The regulation was continued into a second phase by the adoption on 15 July 1996 of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1404/96, amending the previous regulation, with effect until 31 December 1999. A third phase, up to 31 December 2004, was begun on 17 July 2000 with the adoption of Regulation (EC) No. 1655/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council. On 14 September 2004 this regulation was extended until 31 December 2006.

The current LIFE Programme has three strands: Environment, Nature and Third Countries. LIFE Environment supports demonstration and pilot projects on methods for the protection and enhancement of the environment with particular emphasis on innovative technologies and new approaches. LIFE Nature supports the implementation of EU nature conservation policy, particularly Natura 2000. Applications from the UK are submitted through Defra to the European Commission for competitive evaluation against those from other member states. LIFE Third Countries funds technical assistance activities for capacity building in non-EU countries bordering the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas which have signed association agreements with the European Union and, therefore, the UK does not submit applications to this strand.

Since 1992, in the UK, LIFE has contributed over €100 million towards 122 innovative demonstration projects through LIFE Environment and 38 nature conservation projects through LIFE Nature.

Co-financing varies from around 30 per cent., where income is generated, to 50 per cent. for LIFE Environment and up to 75 per cent. for some LIFE Nature projects. On average around 50 per cent. of project costs are co-financed, meaning that the programme has generated around €200 million worth of investment in environment actions.

The current phase of LIFE (LIFE III) has, to date, supported 36 projects in the UK with €47 million of co-financing. Fourteen LIFE Nature projects secured €26.6 million and 22 LIFE Environment projects secured €20.4 million. Annexes 1 and 2, available in the Library of the House, list the projects supported under LIFE Environment and LIFE Nature respectively.

The following table shows, for the UK, the number of applications, number co-financed and amount of co-financing by year for both LIFE Environment and LIFE Nature under the current LIFE III programme.

	LIFE Environment			*LIFE Nature*		
	Number of applications	*Number Co-financed*	*Total € million of co-financing*	*Number of applications*	*Number Co-financed*	*Total € million of co-financing*
2000	No projects funded as regulation adopted too late in the year					
2001	34	3	1.8	10	6	10.5
2002	16	6	5.6	11	4	10.2
2003	18	[1]7	7.7	3	2	2.1
2004	24	6	5.3	6	2	3.8
Total	92	22	20.4	30	14	26.6

[1] Originally nine projects were selected but two projects withdrew before funding commenced.

In the most recent call for projects to commence in 2005, the UK submitted 26 applications to LIFE Environment and three to LIFE Nature. The list of projects to be co-financed will be known in the summer.

Greenhouse Gases

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere relative to the increase in the concentration of other greenhouse gases has been over the last 30 years; what proportion of radioactive forcing is estimated to have been due to increases in *(a)* carbon dioxide and *(b)* other greenhouse gases over the last 30 years; and what the estimated temperature rises are from each of these increases. [220646]

Mr. Morley: The increase in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, during the period 1970 to 2000 was approximately 13.5 per cent. During the same period methane increased by approximately 26 per cent. and nitrous oxide by 7 per cent.

Of the radiative forcing due to man-made greenhouse gases experienced in the year 1970, about 65 per cent. was due to carbon dioxide, about 25 per cent. to methane, and about 5 per cent. to both nitrous oxide and the halocarbons. In 2000, about 60 per cent. of the radiative forcing from man-made gases was due to carbon dioxide, about 20 per cent. was due to methane, about 5 per cent. due to nitrous oxide, and the remainder due to halocarbons.

Due to complexities in the climate response to greenhouse gases, there is no simple link between radiative forcing and temperature change. There has been a global temperature rise of 0.5^{C} between pre-industrial times (1860) and 1990, and a further temperature rise of approximately 0.2^{C} since 1990.

Milk Forum

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the membership is of *(a)* the Milk Forum and *(b)* its sub-committees. [219779]

Alun Michael: The Dairy Supply Chain Forum, established by my noble Friend, the Lord Whitty, in July 2002 to encourage supply chain co-operation, increase efficiency and promote the sustainable development of industry is represented by the following organisations:

(a) Forum:

Aria Foods UK, British Retail Consortium, Country Land and Business Association, Dairy Crest Ltd., Dairy Farmers of Britain, Dairy UK, Defra, First Milk, Food and Drink Federation, Forgefirst Ltd., Milk Development Council, Milk Link, National Farmers' Union, Provision Trade Federation, Robert Wiseman Dairies, Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers, and the Tenant Farmers Association.

The Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, Scottish Milk Forum and Welsh Assembly Government attend as observers.

The Forum is chaired by my noble Friend Lord Whitty, with the secretariat provided by Defra.

(b) Sub groups:

Industry development sub group:

Aria Foods UK, Dairy Crest Ltd., Dairy Farmers of Britain, Dairy UK, Defra, First Milk, Forgefirst Ltd., HSBC, Milk Development Council, Milk Link, National Farmers' Union, Nestle, Robert Wiseman Dairies, Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers, Tesco.

The Sub-Group is chaired by Aria Foods with the secretariat provided by the National Farmers Union.

CAP reform sub group:

British Retail Consortium, Dairy Farmers of Britain, Dairy UK, Defra, First Milk, Milk Development Council, Milk Link, National Farmers' Union. Defra chair and provides the secretariat for the Sub-Group.

Market innovations sub group:

Steering group:

British Cheese Board, Defra, Hindsight, Imperial College, Wye, Milk Development Council, OMSCo, Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers.

Workshop:

Alvis Brothers Limited, Aria Foods UK, Associated Creameries Co-operative, British Cheese Board, Cricketer Farms, Dairy Crest Ltd., Dairy UK, Defra, Delaval, Deloitte Consulting and Technology Ltd., Dohler UK, Food From Britain, Highgrove Foods, Imperial College London, International Food Network Ltd., Lynher Dairies, Midlands Co-Op, Milk Development Council, Milk Link, Reaseheath College, Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers, Safeway Stores plc, J Sainsbury plc, The Cheese Company, The Fifield Organisation, The Society of Dairy Technology, Waitrose, Welsh Development Agency, Yoplait Dairy Crest.

The Milk Development Council chair and provide the secretariat for the Sub-Group and Workshop.

Departmental Costs

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was paid by her Department to external companies for *(a)* flowers and *(b)* plants in each of the last five years. [216399]

Alun Michael: In the Department's regional offices, costs of plants and flowers are included under the general umbrella of "grounds maintenance" on the various facility management contracts that are in place, and are not separately identifiable. There has not been any specific planting schemes undertaken in the last five-years beyond simple replacement of dead stock under contract. In London headquarters offices there has been a trend towards the provision of artificial plants to save on ongoing maintenance costs. There are now only two locations where live plants remain with ongoing maintenance charges of £2,566 per annum since the contract commenced in April 2004.

Rendering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under what circumstances A2 permits under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 can be granted to rendering plants that have not obtained planning permission for their activities. [221333]

Mr. Morley: In accordance with regulation 10(4) of the Pollution Prevention and Control (England and Wales) Regulations 2000, as amended, the requirement

for planning permission before an A2 permit is issued applies to specified waste management activities defined in regulation 2(1). Animal rendering plants as defined in Section 6.8 of Part I of Schedule 1 to these Regulations do not constitute a specified waste management activity within the terms of regulation 2(1).

Shooting Licences

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who was consulted by her Department prior to the publication of the orders varying the terms of a general shooting licence with respect to the shooting of pests. [220456]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* A pre-consultation exercise on the review of general licences to kill or take so-called "pest species" of birds was undertaken in the summer of 2004. This pre-consultation, on a number of proposed changes to general licences, involved key interests and was also published on the Defra website.

The pre-consultation document can be accessed via the following link:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/bird-licence/index.htm.

The responses to the pre-consultation were carefully considered and further discussions took place between Defra officials and organisations representing shooting and conservation interests. On 9 March 2005 in order to clear up misunderstanding in relation to the obligation regarding appropriate non-lethal methods Defra amended the wording of the general licence condition to read, "This licence can only be relied on in circumstances where the authorised person is satisfied that appropriate non-lethal methods of control such as scaring are either ineffective or impracticable."

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the amendments made to the open general licence for shooting of pest species. [220905]

Mr. Bradshaw: Between 31 March and 14 July 2004 a pre-consultation exercise was undertaken by Defra on the review of general licences to kill or take so-called "pest species' of birds. This pre-consultation, on a number of proposed changes to general licences, included reference to other satisfactory solutions, involved key interests and was also published on the Defra website. The pre-consultation document can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/bird-licence/index.htm.

The responses to the pre-consultation were carefully considered and further discussions took place between Defra officials and organisations representing shooting and conservation interests.

On 10 February 2005 I announced the removal of the house sparrow and starling from general licences. This was supplemented at the time by a press release and a table of proposed changes to be made to general licences. This included reference to a condition regarding the use of non-lethal alternatives. The press release and table can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2005/050210a.htm.

On 1 March 2005 the revised licences came into force.

On 2 March 2005 Defra issued guidance to clarify the requirements regarding appropriate non-lethal methods. The information bulletin can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2005/050302d.htm.

On 9 March 2005 in order to clear up misunderstanding in relation to the obligation regarding appropriate non-lethal methods Defra amended the wording of the general licence condition to read,

"This licence can only be relied on in circumstances where the authorised person is satisfied that appropriate non-lethal methods of control such as scaring are either ineffective or impracticable."

A press notice was issued, which can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2005/050309c.htm.

The revised licences can be accessed via the following link: http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/gen-licence.htm.

TREASURY

Tax Credits

17. **Helen Jones**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of tax credits on family incomes in Warrington, North. [221082]

Dawn Primarolo: 8,600 in-work families in the Warrington, North constituency are benefiting from tax credits including 8,100 in-work families with children. Tax credits provide the most support to families on the lowest incomes and there are 4,000 in-work families with children in Warrington, north receiving more than the family element of child tax credit.

For example for a family in full-time work with one child tax credits and child benefit would mean an extra £103 a week, which together with the national minimum wage would mean that that family is guaranteed an income of £252 a week.

Unemployment

19. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on levels of unemployment in Wirral, South since 1997. [221084]

Mr. Boateng: The Government have put in place a broad range of policy reform since our election in 1997 designed to reduce unemployment in all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, claimant unemployment has fallen by 62 per cent. while long-term and long-term youth unemployment have fallen by over 90 per cent. in the Wirral, South constituency.

Education

20. **Mr. Plaskitt**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on spending plans for education. [221085]

Mr. Boateng: The Government regularly receives representations on spending plans for education.

This Government are taking forward a programme of high investment in education and skills. From being £36 billion in 1996–07, the education and skills budget for the UK stands at £63 billion in 2004–05, and is set to rise to £76 billion by 2007–08.

Government Staffing

21. **Mr. Amess**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of central government staffing levels on the level of taxation. [221086]

Mr. Boateng: No assessment has been made on the effect of central government staffing levels on levels of taxation. The Government have delivered sustained increases in public spending in order to deliver significant improvements in public services. As part of this, we expect to see an increase in the size of the front-line service delivery workforce—in particular for key public services like health, education and criminal justice.

Administration cost limits set for Departments at the 2004 spending review will reduce central Government running costs as a proportion of total spending to a record low.

G7 Presidency

22. **Mr. Lazarowicz**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on how he intends to further the millennium development goals at the G7 meetings to be held in April. [221087]

Mr. Timms: The conclusions on development, issued by G7 Finance Ministers following their February meeting, set out the G7 agenda of work on ways to accelerate progress towards the millennium development goals. We agreed that more needs to be done on debt relief based on our willingness to provide as much as 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief and that a substantial increase in oda is needed to meet the MDGs. We also agreed a work programme on the IFF, revenue proposals and other financing measures. Finally, we agreed that we must ensure that the Doha round of trade negotiations delivers substantial benefits to developing countries. We will discuss these issues again when we meet in April.

24. **Mr. Savidge** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the UK's presidency of the G7 and progress towards the millennium development goals. [221089]

Mr. Timms: We know already that in September of this year, the UN millennium declaration review summit will find that progress towards the internationally agreed millennium development goals is too slow. During our G7 presidency, the UK Government will seek agreement on increased aid volume through an international finance facility, the provision of 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief and progress towards a freer and fairer global trade system to accelerate progress towards the goals. The Government will also press for progress on developing vaccines for Malaria and HIV/AIDS.

Borrowing

23. **Mr. Boswell**: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the relationship between the level of taxation and levels of Government net borrowing. [221088]

Mr. Boateng: The 2004 pre-Budget report set out the Treasury's latest projections for net borrowing and tax receipts.

Projections will be updated in the Budget in the usual way.

Tax Compliance

25. **Mr. Leigh** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Inland Revenue's revised compliance strategy and supporting performance measures, will be published; and what assessment he has made of consequent improvements in taxpayer compliance and tax yield. [221090]

Dawn Primarolo: Work on the Inland Revenue compliance strategy has been subsumed into work on a strategy for HM Revenue and Customs the new organisation that will integrate direct and indirect taxes. Public Sector Agreement targets for HMRC are available on the Inland Revenue website at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/psa/ind05_08.htm.

Pre-owned Assets

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will issue final regulations and guidance notes on implementation of legislation on pre-owned assets. [220827]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the written statements which I made on 7 and 8 March 2005, *Official Report*, columns 99–100WS and 103–04WS respectively.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Capping Criteria

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) when he will make a statement on the Government's criteria for capping for 2005–06; [220768]

(2) what the expected time scale and procedure for capping local authorities will be in 2005–06; and when he expects that any revised bills would be issued. [220887]

Mr. Raynsford: No decisions on capping have been taken for 2005–06. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will take decisions on capping after authorities have set their budgets for 2005–06.

Car Parking

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out the terms of reference of the research study being carried out by his Department into car parking provision consistent with policies on sustainable residential environments; when the research project began; and when he expects it to be concluded. [220847]

Keith Hill: Consultants were commissioned in October 2003 to carry out this research study. The terms of reference are contained within the "Specification of Requirements: Car Parking Standards and Sustainable Residential Environments", which has been made available in the Library of the House. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister plans to publish the research study in the summer.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average parish council precept in areas with parish councils in England is on band D bills for 2004–05. [220539]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to her on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 324W.

English Partnerships

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will require English Partnerships to ensure that social rented housing is included on the long-term derelict site chosen as part of its pilot hardcore brownfield programme. [220994]

Keith Hill: The purpose of the National Brownfield Strategy is to engage with local communities and businesses in the 14 local authorities taking part in the pilot programme to identify sites that are of greatest concern in those areas. All sites brought forward in this way will be assessed to understand the barriers to re-use of the sites and to identify development opportunities for both "hard" (e.g. housing, employment) and "soft" (e.g. public space, leisure) end uses.

Once a shortlist of sites has been identified in each pilot project area, they will be evaluated and feasibility studies undertaken. In each case work will be led by a "local brownfield partnership" with representatives from the local authority, English Partnerships, the Regional Development Agency, development industry and local business and community groups.

The aims will be to develop at least one long-term brownfield site in each area with funding being acquired through private sector investment. It will be for the local brownfield partnership, in consultation, to agree the objectives for the sites within their areas which may or may not include an housing element.

English Partnerships takes account of local strategies and consults the local authority and local community with regard to its projects including local housing need.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many social rented homes will be built on the East India Dock Road site acquired by English Partnerships under its London-wide initiative. [220997]

Keith Hill: The number of social rented homes built on the East India Dock site will be determined through the normal planning process. In addition, the site will provide affordable homes for sale to key workers and other first time buyers. The number of these will be the subject of discussions with the London borough of Tower Hamlets and other stakeholders. As part of this process, full account will be taken of local housing need.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which development and management partnership has been chosen for the East India Dock Road site acquired by English Partnerships under its London-wide initiative. [220998]

Keith Hill: No final decision has been made on which Development and Management Partner will work with the various stakeholders to take forward this site. Once a decision is made, all stakeholders, including the London borough of Tower Hamlets, will be informed to allow proposals to be worked up collaboratively.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the London borough of Tower Hamlets can require planning gain as a condition in relation to the properties for market sale to be built on the East India Dock Road site acquired by English Partnerships under its London-wide initiative. [220999]

Keith Hill: It is for the local planning authority to decide whether or not it would be appropriate to negotiate a planning obligation as part of this proposed development. Current policy guidance on the appropriate use of agreements made under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991) is set out in DOE Circular 1/97. Revised draft guidance was issued for consultation in November 2004.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which three long-term derelict sites have been identified in Tower Hamlets for consideration under English Partnerships hardcore brownfield programme. [221000]

Keith Hill: At the present time, 7 March 2005, no sites have been identified for consideration under the National Brownfield Strategy. Tower Hamlets has been included along with 13 other local authorities to take part in a pilot programme aiming to tackle England's brownfield legacy.

From the National Land Use Database 87 hectares of brownfield land has been identified (including nine hectares of hardcore land) within Tower Hamlets and the pilot study is expected to reveal additional sites.

These will be taken forward as part of the pilot study as described in the answer given to my hon. Friend today UIN 220994.

Growth Areas

Phil Sawford: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding his Department has earmarked for growth areas to ensure that they have the resources required to meet the demands of a growing population. [218335]

Keith Hill: Through the growth areas fund, in the period 2003–08 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is making £840 million available in the Thames Gateway and £425 million for the newer growth areas. This funding will support a range of projects which will unlock development sites and ensure that new and expanding communities have the facilities that they need.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on three-year financial settlements for local government. As part of this process we are considering whether forward looking population data should be used to take account of planned housing growth.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also providing more help to local authorities who are facing financial pressures as a result of rapid growth by abolishing the 'ceilings' from the financial year 2005–06.

A number of other Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's funding streams are benefiting the growth agenda by providing funding for individual services and programmes in these areas. For example, between 2003–04 and 2005–06 local authorities in the four growth areas are estimated to receive a combined total of around £1.3 billion of housing investment. This includes the major repairs allowance, part of local authorities' housing revenue account subsidy entitlement for the capital costs of maintaining their housing stock in its present condition and to repay the capital element of housing debt. It excludes Gypsy sites funding. The Housing Corporation, sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, has allocated around £396 million to schemes within the growth areas as part of their approved development programme for 2004–05 to 2005–06.

The local authorities in the growth areas have been allocated a combined total of over £8.6 million between 2003–04 and 2004–05 as part of the planning delivery grant (PDG) for their contributions to housing delivery. Provisional figures indicate that these LAs will receive a combined PDG allocation total of around £9.5 million for 2005–06.

10 growth area local authorities are also benefiting from the neighbourhood renewal fund, with a combined allocation total of around £278 million from 2001–06. In addition six growth area local authorities have been allocated a combined total of around £314 million between 2000–01 and 2010–11 from the new deal for communities fund. Three local authorities within the growth areas are also receiving a combined total of over £10 million in funding allocated by the Department's liveability fund, from 2003–04 to 2005–06.

Between 2004–05 to 2007–08 English Partnerships will be allocating around £600 million to a variety of schemes in the growth areas, including London.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides the majority of funding to the regional development agencies' (RDAs) single programme which is coordinated by the Department of Trade and Industry. The RDAs undertake activities that will contribute to delivering Government and regional economic priorities, including in the growth areas. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's contribution for the four RDAs whose regions include the growth areas, is estimated as £462.2 million 2004–05; £454.2 million 2005–06; £467.9 million 2006–07; and £478.6 million 2007–08.

London Safety Plan

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many responses were received to the public consultation exercise by the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority on the Draft London Safety Plan *(a)* supporting and *(b)* opposing the proposals in the Draft Plan. [220467]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 7 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1550W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon (Mr. Dismore).

RAF Aston Down

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list representations he has received in the last 12 months regarding future *(a)* planning and *(b)* business uses of the former RAF Aston Down site. [220665]

Keith Hill: Due to the application of the Data Protection Act it is generally not possible for my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister to disclose the names and addresses of those who have written to him in connection with any matter. An exception to this is where the correspondence received is such that it would, in the ordinary course of events, be likely to be made publicly available. Representations submitted in connection with the merits of a registered planning application fall into this category. However, such representations are generally made direct to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) which is dealing with the application, and not to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister.

In this case, there are currently two planning applications registered with Stroud DC and Cotswolds DC, being the relevant LPAs for the site. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has not received any representations from third parties on the merits of those applications. The Government office for the south-west has received other correspondence in connection with the current use of the site and the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in connection with the current planning applications. However, given the nature of this correspondence, it would be in breach of the Data Protection Act for us to supply the information requested by my hon. Friend.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Service Personnel

Mr. Evans: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what action the Electoral Commission is taking to ensure that all members of the armed services are able to vote in the forthcoming general election. [221096]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission informs me that it has undertaken a considerable amount of work in partnership with the Ministry of Defence to make those in the armed forces aware of the need to register to vote and how to do so, that the deadline for registration can be up to two months before an election, and in particular that the deadline for registration in time to vote in any election taking place on 5 May is 11 March. This work includes a publicity leaflet, of which over 110,000 copies have so far been ordered by the Ministry and other organisations. In addition, the Commission is providing information on its websites, and has been working with the British Forces Broadcasting Service and several services publications to generate coverage about this issue.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CAMFED Projects

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding he has provided for CAMFED International projects in the last five years; and what funding he plans to provide for those projects. [220717]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: CAMFED is currently receiving DFID funding for two ongoing projects. Both projects were approved within the last five years, and are due for completion this year. These are:

a project to address the widespread exclusion of rural girls from education in Ghana, which began in 2001 at a cost of £149,000.

a project to promote a safe environment for girls in Zimbabwe, which also began in 2001 at a cost of £398,000.

Drug Treatments

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to expand the use of proven effective drug combinations for AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria treatment in developing countries. [220771]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK Government are committed to increasing access to medicines in developing countries, including drug treatment programmes for HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria. In recent years, there has been considerable progress in making medicines for the treatment of HIV and AIDS, TB and Malaria more affordable.

The UK has worked with the pharmaceutical industry to encourage differential pricing that provides affordable medicines for developing country use. This includes recommendations agreed with industry on differential pricing from the UK Working Group on Increasing Access to Essential Medicines in Developing Countries in November 2002.

The UK supports developing countries to make use of internationally agreed flexibilities in the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPs) agreement, that allow recourse to the use of generic versions of proprietary medicines where there is a public health need.

The UK has pledged £259 million to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM). 49 per cent. of GFATM grants go towards the procurement of drugs and commodities for AIDS, TB and malaria resulting in 130,00 people on HIV treatment, 385,000 treated for TB and 300,000 people treated with effective artemisinin containing treatments (ACTs) for malaria. Additional commitments for each of the three diseases are set out as follows:

The HIV and AIDS Treatment and Care Policy, published in June 2004, sets out the UK's commitment to increasing access to HIV treatment in developing countries. The UK has provided £3 million to support the work of the World Health Organisation on HIV and AIDS, with a strong focus on its role supporting the target of 3 million people on treatment by 2005 (3 by 5). In total, the UK has committed to spend £1.5 billion on HIV and AIDS from 2005–07, a significant part of which will support increased access to treatment.

The UK has provided £2 million to the Stop TB Partnership since 2002. The Partnership has established mechanisms, which support countries to access stable supplies of effective anti-TB medicines.

DFID is the largest funder of the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) partnership, having contributed £48 million to date. The UK is working with RBM and other partners to secure greater international commitment for affordable pricing of ACTs. DFID Kenya has also recently awarded a start up grant of £35,000 to support increased cultivation of artemisia annua in Kenya. This is the key raw material for ACT production and is currently in short supply.

Effective health systems are equally important if all medicines are to be delivered safely. The UK has committed over £1.5 billion since 1997 to help developing countries strengthen the health and supply systems. Increasing Access to Essential Medicines in Developing Countries: UK Policy and Plans', published in June 2004, gives further information on UK positions and activities in this crucial area.

Iraq

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance is being provided to the Iraqi Health Ministry for the provision of prosthetic limbs to Iraqi children injured in the conflict and subsequent insurgency. [219873]

Hilary Benn: Assistance to the Basra Prosthetics Centre has been provided by the Coalition Provisional Authority and by the UK military. They have funded the purchase, repair and delivery of prosthetic equipment. Repairs to the Centre's facilities are currently under consideration by the UK military under their Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). The Basra Prosthetics Centre provides a number of services including assessment, treatment and provision of lower limb prosthetics to Iraqis throughout Southern Iraq. It treats accident victims, disabled people, amputees including mine victims, and patients with cerebral palsy, polio and rheumatic conditions. It also provides physiotherapy to post-operative patients.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) works to support amputees in Iraq, although their activities have been constrained by the security situation. The ICRC is supporting five orthopaedic centres in central and southern Iraq with components, spare parts, local purchases and maintenance machinery. DFID has committed a total of £16.5 million to the ICRC since March 2003 in support of their activities in Iraq. UNICEF is also involved in assisting Iraqi children in particularly vulnerable situations. This includes help for disabled children.

DFID's broader support to the Iraqi health sector includes technical advice to the Ministry of Health, £5 million in assistance via the World Health Organisation (WHO) and part of our £70 million contribution to the multi-donor trust funds managed in line with Iraqi priorities by the United Nations and the World Bank. Additionally, DFID's Civil Society Fund for Iraq works to strengthen the capacity of Iraqi civil society organisations to better address the needs of poor and vulnerable groups, and includes support specifically focused on the needs of children.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to provide assistance to disabled children in Iraq, with particular reference to children disabled by recent military action. [220807]

Hilary Benn: DFID's support to the Iraqi health sector includes technical advice to the Ministry of Health, £5 million in assistance via the World Health Organisation (WHO) and part of our £70 million contribution to the multi-donor trust funds managed in line with Iraqi priorities by the United Nations and the World Bank. Additionally, DFID's Civil Society Fund for Iraq works to strengthen the capacity of Iraqi civil society organisations to better address the needs of poor and vulnerable groups, and includes support specifically focused on the needs of children.

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Palestine

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will take steps to bring together representatives of countries prepared to help a new Palestinian state to discuss a co-ordinated aid programme. [220346]

Hilary Benn: One of the outcomes of the recent London Meeting on Supporting the Palestinian Authority (PA) was a commitment by the international community to more streamlined donor co-ordination and support. DFID will play a full part in strengthening donor co-ordination, including the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. Follow up to the Meeting includes the establishment of a new Working Group on security, and it is anticipated that the World Bank and the PA will jointly convene a donor Consultative Group in the summer.

Relief Initiatives (HIPC)

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures he is taking to address poverty in heavily indebted poor countries in conflict. [221001]

Hilary Benn: There are seven countries affected by conflict that could potentially qualify for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. Last year, the UK was at the forefront of efforts to extend the Sunset Clause of the HIPC Initiative beyond December 2004, thus extending the initiative for a further two years. This could allow these remaining conflict affected HIPC countries to benefit from HIPC debt relief, once they have met the criteria required to qualify. In addition, the UK has announced that it will hold in trust any debt service payments received from these countries and this money will be returned for spending on poverty reduction once they qualify for the initiative.

In January 2005, DFID set out in its publication "Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states," how it will tackle the challenges of poverty in difficult environments. This included reviewing the way aid is allocated to fragile states; joining with other Government Departments to ensure our policies are coherent; doing more regional programming; getting the balance right between humanitarian and development aid and staying engaged over a longer timeframe (five to 10 years). Copies of this publication have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. It can also be accessed at http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs.

DFID is actively involved in supporting conflict resolution initiatives, through among other things the Global and Africa Conflict Prevention Pools, as well as delivering humanitarian aid in conflict situations. DFID is funding operations as well as building the capacity of organisations working on reducing conflict in conflict affected countries, including the United Nations, the European Union, the World Bank and the African Union and several Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). DFID is directly supporting programmes that address insecurity—a barrier to poverty reduction—through our Security Sector Reforms and Small Arms Strategies, and support to Disarming, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes in conflict affected countries.

Mr. Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he plans to use the UK's presidency of the EU to press for 70 per cent. of the EU's aid budget to be given to low income countries. [221002]

Hilary Benn: DFID has a Public Service Agreement target of increasing the proportion of EC Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to low-income countries from its 2000 baseline of 38 per cent., to 70 per cent. by 2008. By 2003, the figure had reached 56 per cent.

It is not clear if any major decisions related to allocation of EC ODA will need to be taken during the UK Presidency. But we will work with our partners, this year and beyond, to ensure that the EU provides the leadership and the quantity and quality of aid needed to tackle global poverty. This includes increasing the amount of EC aid committed to and spent in low-income countries.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions the dispersal powers under section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 have been used. [219329]

Ms Blears: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 690W.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Iranian citizens are in the UK after having been refused asylum. [220871]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* Information on numbers of Iranian citizens in the UK after having been refused asylum is not currently available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost. Some individuals refused asylum may have been granted humanitarian protection or discretionary leave following initial decision or appeal outcomes. Some of those refused asylum are awaiting appeal outcomes and may subsequently be granted asylum or other temporary leave to remain, while some may have departed voluntarily without notifying the authorities.

E-borders and ID cards will enable us to monitor this more precisely in the future.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 20 December 2004, reference M130/5. [217685]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 24 February 2005]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 9 March.

Hunting

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reports he has received of actions by hunt supporters against those who support the ban; and what guidance he has issued to police forces on enforcement of the ban. [218645]

Ms Blears: There have been several incidents reported to the police involving both hunt supporters and those who support the ban on hunting with dogs since the Hunting Act came into force on 18 February but most events have passed off peacefully. The Home Office has not issued guidance to police forces on enforcement of the Hunting Act. However, the Association of Chief Police Officers have published strategic and tactical guidance.

Burglary (Hartlepool)

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many burglaries were committed in Hartlepool in each year since 1997. [218512]

Ms Blears: The available information relates to the Hartlepool Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area and is given in the tables. Statistics at CDRP level are only available from 1999–2000 onwards and only burglary in a dwelling figures are available for 1999–2000 to 2001–02.

Table 1: Offences of burglary recorded by the police in the Hartlepool Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area, 1999–2000 to 2001–02

Number of offences

	Burglary in a dwelling	*Burglary other*	*Total burglary*
1999–2000	1,484	n/a	n/a
2000–01	1,409	n/a	n/a
2001–02	1,294	n/a	n/a

Note:

The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Offences of burglary recorded by the police in the Hartlepool Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area, 2002–03 and 2003–04

Number of offences

	Burglary in a dwelling	*Burglary other*	*Total burglary*
2002/03	1,488	1,230	2,718
2003/04	1,276	1,195	2,471

Note:

The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Mental Health (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures Lancashire police follow for dealing with people in custody who have mental health problems. [216831]

Ms Blears: The question relates to operational issues for the Lancashire constabulary which are matters for the chief officer. I have asked the chief officer to respond directly to my hon. Friend. I have also asked the chief officer to forward a copy of the response to my Department and I will arrange to place a copy in the Library.

Overseas Students

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the proposal to abolish the right of appeal against refusal of leave to enter the UK to study will be put into practice. [218897]

Mr. Browne: On 7 February, we published our five year strategy for asylum and immigration, Controlling our borders: Making migration work for Britain (Cm6472). The strategy states (paragraph 33) that we will legislate to abolish appeals for work and study routes for those refused an entry clearance overseas and

those refused entry at a UK port or airport. This will require primary legislation. As my hon. Friend will be aware, the Government sets out their legislative programme each year in the Queen's Speech.

Police/Crime Statistics (Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police there were in North Durham in *(a)* 2001 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available [214459]

Ms Blears: Police strength by basic command unit has only been collected centrally since 31 March 2002. The North Durham area is made up of three basic command units. The available information for North Durham is given in the following table.

	As at 31 March:		
North Durham Basic Command Units	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Derwentside	173	181	172
Chester-le Street/Durham	244	249	242
Easington	201	209	200
Total North Durham	618	639	614

Police

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police stations within the Greater London area have been *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed in each of the last three years. [214389]

Ms Blears: Decisions about police station openings and closure are operational matters and are made locally.

Prisons (Drug Testing)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many and what proportion of prisoners have tested positive under the mandatory drug testing programme for *(a)* an illegal substance, *(b)* heroin, *(c)* cocaine, *(d)* ecstasy, *(e)* LSD and *(f)* cannabis in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement; [218857]

(2) how many prison inmates have been subject to mandatory drug testing in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [218860]

Paul Goggins: The total number of samples tested under the mandatory drug testing programme in the last five years and the numbers and proportions that have tested positive for all drugs, opiates, cocaine, amphetamines, Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and cannabis are given in the following table.

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Number tested[1]	87,660	88,478	83,407	78,967	83,640
Number positive	17,892	16,802	14,370	12,882	14,644
Percentage positive	20.4	19.0	17.2	16.3	17.5
Opiates2					
Number positive	6,904	7,941	6,962	4,704	4,406
Percentage positive	7.9	9.0	8.4	6.0	5.3
Cocaine					
Number positive	407	472	440	386	382
Percentage positive	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Amphetamines3					
Number positive	121	88	83	63	106
Percentage positive	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
LSD					
Number positive	1	0	0	0	0
Percentage positive	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cannabis					
Number positive	12,009	9,452	7,644	8,195	10,157
Percentage positive	13.7	10.7	9.2	10.4	12.1

[1] Some prisoners may have been tested more than once in any financial year.
[2] Opiates include heroin
[3] Amphetamines include ecstasy

Special Constables

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his Department's policy to pay special constables; and if he will make a statement. [220550]

Ms Blears: Allowance schemes for Special Constables are in operation in four forces. These schemes are subject to evaluation to assess the impact of paying an allowance on the recruitment and retention of Specials and also the number of hours specials are prepared to offer for police duties. We have no plan to change the voluntary status of the Special Constabulary.

West Mercia Police

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the length of employment of each Chief Superintendent in the West Mercia Police Constabulary is; [213314]

(2) what the salary is of *(a)* the West Mercia Police Chief Constable and *(b)* each West Mercia Police Chief Superintendent. [213317]

Ms Blears: There are ten chief superintendents in West Mercia Constabulary. As of 1 February 2004, their lengths of employment are as follows.

19 years and 1 month;
19 years and 3 months;
21 years and 4 months;
23 years and 5 months;
24 years and 9 months;
25 years and 4 months;
26 years and 4 months;
27 years and 5 months;
28 years and 5 months;
29 years and 1 month.

Three officers are on the first point of the chief superintendents' salary scale at £63,345, one officer is at the second point of the scale at £65,145 and six officers are at the third point of the scale and receive a salary of £66,951.

The chief constable of West Mercia receives a salary of £121,071.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Council England

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many full-time equivalent staff were employed by the Arts Council England in each year between 1997–98 and 2003–04; and if she will make a statement. [221011]

Estelle Morris: The following figures supplied by Arts Council England provide a breakdown of the average number of staff employed, 1997–98—2003–04.

	Average number of staff	Average number of staff (including creative partnerships programme)
1997–98	654	654
1998–99	673	673
1999–2000	644	644
2000–01	665	665
2001–02	690	690
2002–03	679	698
2003–04	642	707

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the *(a)* technical and financial contracts, *(b)* technical consultants used on a call-off basis and *(c)* financial consultants used on a call-off basis by the Arts Council England for each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04; what the nature of the assignment for each consultant was; and what the value of work done by each consultant was. [221012]

Estelle Morris: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the administration costs of the Arts Council England were in each year between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* staff costs and *(b)* non-staff costs; and if she will make a statement. [221013]

Estelle Morris: The following figures provided by Arts Council England provide a breakdown of the information requested.

£

	Staff costs	Staff costs (including creative partnerships programme)	Non staff costs[1]
1997–98	15,774,030	15,774,030	21,310,051
1998–99	16,646,015	16,646,015	20,155,506
1999–2000	17,472,477	17,472,477	20,263,578
2000–01	20,273,618	20,273,618	20,328,583
2001–02	21,517,000	21,517,000	21,140,000
2002–03	23,418,000	24,578,000	21,974,000
2003–04	22,356,000	25,061,000	19,909,000

£

	Non staff costs[1] (including creative partnerships programme)	Total administration costs	Total administration costs (including creative partnerships programme)
1997–98	21,310,051	37,084,081	37,084,081
1998–99	20,155,506	36,801,521	36,801,521
1999–2000	20,263,578	37,736,055	37,736,055
2000–01	20,328,583	40,602,201	40,602,201
2001–02	21,140,000	42,657,000	42,657,000
2002–03	22,818,000	45,392,000	47,396,000
2003–04	21,725,000	42,265,000	46,786,000

[1] Note that 1997–98 to 2000–01 figures have been adjusted to remove inter-company transactions with the Regional Arts Boards to prevent double counting of costs. Exceptional items have been excluded.

Surplus Assets Sales

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her Department sold surplus stock on the e-Bay auction website in each year since 2000–01. [220950]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS has not used the e-Bay auction website.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the value of sales of surplus assets from her Department was in each year since 2000–01. [220975]

Mr. Caborn: The value of sales of assets are as follows:

	£
2001–02	5,000,000
2002–03	0
2003–04	232,000
2004–05	2,643,000

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Alcohol

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has had with the Office of Fair Trading on minimum pricing as a means of tackling alcohol misuse. [220388]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In the context of considering the options for tackling problems associated with excessive consumption of alcohol, both the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and my Department have provided advice to the

Home Office on relevant aspects of domestic and European competition law. OFT and DTI officials have been involved in a number of relevant discussions, including on the particular issue of minimum pricing schemes. The Home Office's proposals on these matters were also raised briefly during a regular meeting between the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Board of the OFT that took place in mid-January The Home Office launched its public consultation document "Drinking Responsibly" on 25 January 2005

Call Centres

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated number of people employed in call centres in the UK is; and what percentage of the work force that figure represents. [220358]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 7 March 2005]:* The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has recently begun to publish statistics for the number of jobs in enterprises whose main activity falls within Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 74.86 (call centre activities). The number of jobs in SIC 74.86 is estimated as 20,000, averaged over 2003, approximately 0.07 per cent. of total work force jobs. Some call centre activity takes place within enterprises whose main activity is classified to other sectors e.g. financial services. The DTI study on the UK Call Centre Industry, published in May 2004, quoted an unofficial estimate of 790,000 jobs based on this wider definition.

Economic Partnership Agreements

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industrywhat steps she is taking to ensure that economic partnership agreement are being negotiated in such a way as to benefit developing countries. [218982]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government warmly welcome the recent statements by the EU Trade Commissioner on the importance that he places on ensuring that the development needs of ACP countries are put at the heart of negotiations on economic partnership agreements. Ministers and officials are in regular contact with their counterparts in the European Commission and ACP Governments to discuss how the EPA negotiations are being taken forward to benefit developing countries. The Government are undertaking research on key issues to inform these negotiations and will share the outcome of this research with the European Commission and ACP Governments.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she is taking to ensure the economic partnership agreements between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries give appropriate priority to development in those countries; and what representations she has made to the European Commission on the subject. [220898]

Mr. Alexander: As set out in the White Paper "Making Globalisation a force for good", the Government are clear that the focus of the economic partnership agreements must broad-based, focusing not just on trade but also on political co-operation, technical assistance and trade-related capacity building, and be truly development-focused. The EU has stated that it has no offensive market access interests in negotiating economic partnership agreements, and the UK will seek to hold our EU partners to this. Ministers and officials are in regular contact with the Commission to discuss various aspects of the agreements and we are commissioning research into aspects of the negotiations to inform the policies of the European Commission and ACP countries.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the appropriate level of regional integration which African, Caribbean and Pacific countries should reach before committing to economic partnership agreements with the EU; and what representations she has made to the European Commission on the subject. [220899]

Mr. Alexander: The Government warmly welcome the recent statements by the EU Trade Commissioner on the importance that he places on ensuring that the development needs of ACP countries are put at the heart of negotiations on economic partnership agreements. This includes enhancing existing regional integration initiatives, by building regional markets among developing countries, and strengthening regional producers. Before economic partnership agreements come into force, each region will need to have agreed a common external tariff, a timetable for removing the tariff barriers between members of the regional economic grouping and a process for harmonising regional trade-related rules. Negotiations are at an early stage; however, Ministers and officials are in regular contact with the European Commission on a number of issues.

EU Emissions Trading Scheme

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme on the competitiveness of British industry in comparison to its European competitors. [220719]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department published in 2004 an assessment of the implications of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) for the competitiveness of British industry. The paper is available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/euetsimplications.pdf.

The Department also commissioned Ilex Energy Consulting in 2004 to produce a report on the impact on electricity prices across EU countries as a result of the ETS. This report is a available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/ilexetsfinal.pdf.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Department expects to reach an agreement with the European Commission on first phase exemption from EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [209323]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

We expect the UK's application for temporary exclusion from the EU ETS for installations covered by Climate Change Agreements to be made before Easter. We will then await the Commission's response and consideration by the Comitology Committee.

Energy Policy

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much funding, and in what form, is being provided by the Government to assist trade associations and other industry representative bodies in addressing barriers to distributed generation, in pursuit of the goal to achieve 10 per cent. of electricity and 10gW of combined heat and power to be supplied by renewable sources. [220822]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: During 2004–05 the DTI expects to provide some £280,000 of direct support to trade associations and similar bodies to help in providing representation on various industry forums dealing with distributed generation-related issues, including renewables and combined heat and power. In addition the DTI expects to expend some £1.7 million during 2004–05 on specific projects aimed at the removal of barriers to the development of distributed generation or its impact on the electricity networks.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EC-Argentina RTD Co-operation Steering Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215422]

Mr. Alexander: The last Joint S and T Committee meeting with Argentina was held in Brussels on 15 November 2002. The next meeting is planned for the second half of 2005. These meetings are convened by the Commission and member states are not invited to participate—UK officials will not therefore attend.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent progress has been made towards reducing fuel poverty in the west midlands. [220934]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The number of fuel poor households in the west midlands fell from over 500,000 in 1996 to around 200,000 in 2001. This mirrors the overall fall in the number of fuel poor households in the UK, a figure which has fallen from about 5½ million in 1996 to about 2¼ million in 2002. Regional breakdowns are not available for 2002.

Minimum Wage

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has for *(a)* amendments to and *(b)* elimination of the development rate of the minimum wage. [220349]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government continues to believe that the development rate of the minimum wage is necessary to help protect the employment prospects of young workers. As the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Hewitt) said in her written statement to Parliament on 25 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 71WS, the Government have accepted the Low Pay Commission's recommendation in their 2005 Report that the development rate should be increased to £4.25 an hour in October 2005.

However we have not accepted the Commission's recommendation that 21 year-old workers should be moved onto the adult rate, because the economic evidence on this point remains mixed. We therefore intend to make no change in 2005 but to look carefully at this issue in the future.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will require the prevailing rate of the national minimum wage to be printed on pay slips. [220377]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The question has been considered but rejected because it would add considerable costs for business.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action her Department is taking to reduce the number of employers who consistently refuse to pay the minimum wage. [220935]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In their latest report, the Low Pay Commission said that the vast majority of employers support and comply with the minimum wage. However we recognise that a small minority of employers are not paying their workers the minimum wage. We are presently considering a number of options for improving enforcement and intend to make a statement on this in early summer.

National Radiological Protection Board Report

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of the National Radiological Protection Board Report W62; [217696]

(2) if she will instigate a formal measurement audit of the 2,000 base stations omitted from National Radiological Protection Board Report W62. [217697]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The project "Exposure of the General Public to Radio Waves near Microcell and Picocell Base Stations . . . " was carried out under the auspices of the LINK Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme (MTHR) Programme (see www.mthr.org.uk). The project was designed to establish the best methodology for undertaking such measurements and was not a part of a national measurement audit. The project considered those sites with the accepted characteristics of microcell and picocell base stations. Of the 3,000 sites that fall into this category, 20 sites were randomly selected for survey. The study found that exposures at all sites surveyed were well below the International Commission for Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) levels (the highest level recorded was 8.6 per cent. of the ICNIRP public reference level). The study demonstrated a viable measurement protocol.

The DTI have no plans to instigate a formal measurement audit of micro and picocell base stations. Microcell and picocell installations may be measured under the Ofcom measurement audit programme see: http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consumer_guides/mob_phone_base_stat/audit_info?a=87101.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to question reference 214199, tabled for answer on 3 February 2005. [221139]

Ms Hewitt: Question 214199 has been transferred to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Post Offices

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria have been used to define *(a)* urban and *(b)* rural sub-post offices. [220716]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The classification of a post office branch as urban or rural is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). My officials have asked POL to issue a direct reply to the hon. Member.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will ask Post Office Ltd. to reconsider its decision to close the sub-post offices in *(a)* Hurcott road, Kidderminster, Wyre Forest, *(b)* Sutton road, Kidderminster, Wyre Forest, *(c)* Calder Road, Stourport, Wyre Forest, *(d)* Lister road, Kidderminster, Wyre Forest, *(e)* Belmont, Stonecot Hill, Oldfields road, Ewell road, Angel Hill and Church Hill road in Sutton and Cheam and *(f)* Furnace Fields in Pine Tree road, Bedworth; [220774]

(2) if she will ask Post Office Ltd. to reconsider its decision to close *(a)* five post offices in north-west Leeds, *(b)* seven post offices in Harrow, *(c)* the sub-post office at (i) Aldershot road and (ii) Madrid road, Guildford, *(d)* six post offices in Weymouth, *(e)* Tildesley road post office on the Ashburton estate in Putney, *(f)* three post offices in Pudsey and *(g)* five post offices in Worcester; [220775]

(3) if she will ask Post Office Ltd. to reconsider its decision to close the sub-post offices at *(a)* Clifton road, Maida Vale, London, *(b)* Formosa street, London, *(c)* Sutherland avenue, London, *(d)* Furnace Fields, Bedworth, *(e)* Clifton street, South Swindon, *(f)* Oxford road, North Swindon, *(g)* Ferndale, North Swindon, *(h)* Duffield Road, Derby, *(i)* Duffield road, Darley, Abbey, Derby, *(j)* Nottingham Road, Spondon, Derby, *(k)* Rooseveldt avenue, Chaddesden, Derby, *(l)* St. Barnabas, Stables street, Mackworth, Derby, *(m)* Scarborough Rise, Derwent Heights, Derby, *(n)* Uttoxter Old road, Mackworth, Derby, *(o)* Fulham Palace road, London, *(p)* Brackenbury road, London and *(q)* Dukes Avenue, Richmond, London. [220776]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Decisions on post office closures and relocations are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. In accordance with the Code of Practice on Post Office Closures and Relocations—agreed between Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch, the consumer watchdog for postal services—the company enters into consultation on all proposed closures. Postwatch are consulted on every post office closure before a decision is made and there is every opportunity for those affected by a proposal, and the local MP, to make representations to the company or to Postwatch.

Vehicle Pricing

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 10 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1801–02W, on vehicle pricing, what steps she is taking to encourage competition in the car industry as a means of bringing prices of new cars in line with the EU. [220918]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I am not aware of any pressing need to take further steps to encourage more competition in the car industry at present.

It is too soon for the competition authorities to be able to assess the full effects of the recent changes to competition rules as they apply specifically to this sector. The "location clause" of the revised block exemption regulation which will permit car retailers to open additional sales outlets in any part of the EU does not come into force until 1 October this year. It is for car manufacturers to ensure that their agreements with franchised dealers do not contain restrictions of the type outlawed under competition law, and for the competition authorities to enforce the regime.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

A2-levels

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many entrants graded A and B at A2 level in *(a)* mathematics, *(b)* chemistry and *(c)* physics were from (i) independent, (ii) grammar and (iii) maintained schools in (A) 2003 and (B) 2004; and what percentage of each cohort this was in each case. [221217]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested on the number of 16–18 year old students achieving As or Bs in mathematics, chemistry and physics by school type is given in the following table:

	2003			2004		
	Independent	*Grammar*	*Comprehensive*	*Independent*	*Grammar*	*Comprehensive*
Number achieving A/B in chemistry	5,688	2,666	5,211	6,030	2,872	5,475
As a percentage of:						
Chemistry candidates	73.1	62.8	42.7	73.7	65.2	43.7
Total candidates	16.0	14.0	5.0	16.6	14.7	5.1
Number achieving A/B in physics	4,179	2,079	4,278	4,095	2,040	3,936
As a percentage of:						
Physics candidates	68.0	58.8	38.3	67.7	61.7	38.5
Total candidates	11.8	10.9	4.1	11.3	10.4	3.7

	2003			2004		
	Independent	*Grammar*	*Comprehensive*	*Independent*	*Grammar*	*Comprehensive*
Number achieving A/B in mathematics	8,054	3,725	8,608	8,527	3,979	9,084
As a percentage of:						
Mathematics candidates	76.6	67.6	48.9	78.3	69.7	50.2
Total candidates	22.7	19.6	8.3	23.5	20.3	8.5

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many entrants graded A and B at A2 level in *(a)* French, *(b)* German and *(c)* Spanish were from (i) independent, (ii) grammar and (iii) maintained schools in (A) 2003 and (B) 2004; and what percentage of each cohort this was in each case. [221219]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested on the number of 16–18 year old students achieving As or Bs in French, German and Spanish by school type is given in the following table.

	2003			2004		
	Independent	*Grammar*	*Comprehensive*	*Independent*	*Grammar*	*Comprehensive*
Number achieving A/B in French	*3,060*	*1,043*	*2,127*	*2,989*	*1,075*	*2,145*
As a percentage of:	*73.7*	*63.2*	*46.3*	*74.9*	*67.6*	*47.9*
French candidates						
Total candidates	8.6	5.5	2.0	8.2	5.5	2.0
Number achieving A/B in German	1,285	474	1,054	1,181	527	950
As a percentage of:						
German candidates	77.2	56.8	43.8	77.6	64.4	43.7
Total candidates	3.6	2.5	1.0	3.3	2.7	0.9
Number achieving A/B in Spanish	1,369	241	602	1,388	330	640
As a percentage of:						
Spanish candidates	78.1	55.9	47.2	78.2	65.0	48.4
Total candidates	3.9	1.3	0.6	3.8	1.7	0.6

Capital Funding

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what capital funding has been made available to *(a)* Dartford primary and secondary schools and *(b)* schools in the Kent local education authority area in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement on the Government's capital funding plans for Kent schools in the next five to 10 years. [221101]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The table sets out the total capital resources allocated to Kent local education authority and schools in area in each of the last five years. Information on how capital funding was made to primary and secondary schools in the Dartford area in this period is not held centrally. Decisions on how resources should be invested in schools are taken by the local education authority in accordance with locally prepared asset management plans.

Government's capital funding plans for Kent schools in the next five to 10 years will depend on the outcome of future spending reviews. Kent LEA is in wave three of the Building Schools for the Future programme, with an estimated commencement date of 2007–08.

	Allocation (£000)
2000–01	63,044
2001–02	48,222
2002–03	72,951
2003–04	92,848
2004–05	181,101

Correspondence

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to reply to the letters from the constituent of the hon. Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey, Richard Carter, dated 29 January and earlier. [220882]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 9 March 2005]:* A full response was sent yesterday to my hon. Friend's constituent.

Regional Bodies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what regional *(a)* bodies, *(b)* institutions, *(c)* taskforces, *(d)* panels, *(e)* offices and *(f)* organisations the Government have established since May 1997 which are the responsibility of her Department. [219913]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since May 1997 the Government have established the following regional bodies which are the responsibility of the Department for Education and Skills:

Nine Sure Start/Children's Fund Regional Teams introduced into existing Government Offices to support, monitor and challenge local authorities and their partners to deliver the Sure Start agenda, in particular the 10-Year Childcare Strategy; and nine Standards Unit Regional Directors co-located within the Learning and Skills Development Agency. They work in collaboration with partner organisations and colleagues to ensure that the work of the Standards Unit supports all learning organisations to overcome barriers to effective teaching and learning and raise standards, develop their workforce and achieve excellence and improve success for all post 16 year old learners.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which *(a)* non-departmental public bodies and *(b)* executive agencies within the

remit of her Department have regional offices based on the Government Offices for the Regions' regional structure; and when the regional offices were established in each case. [219920]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: On 7 January 2004 the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) announced a new regional management structure to help drive forward its work in the regions and develop relationships at a regional level. This has allowed for a more streamlined and effective management structure that avoids additional bureaucracy, and delivers the LSC's agenda with fewer staff overall. Except in London, each LSC Regional Director also has responsibility for a specific local LSC within their region, and the region itself maps on to the same geographical areas as those covered by the relevant Government Office for the Region.

Replacement Secondary Schools

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the time that local education authorities and promoters will need to plan and implement proposals for replacement secondary schools resulting from the proposal in the Education Bill to include replacement secondary schools in the secondary school competition arrangements; and what assessment she has made of whether there will be an increase in pressures on staff, parents and pupils subject to the competition procedures while undergoing school reorganisation. [220890]

Derek Twigg: Competitions for replacement secondary schools will take place only where the local authority decides that statutory proposals for a new secondary school are necessary. The time scale will therefore be the same as for any other reorganisation, with the addition of four months for prospective promoters to prepare their bids. We would expect the local authority to take this into account in planning future reorganisations and discussing them with schools.

Since competitions will take place only where proposals for new schools would be required in any case, there should be no increased pressure on staff, parents and pupils. The competition requirement, and increased time for preparation of possible alternative options and provision for people to comment on those proposals, will together give greater opportunities for staff, pupils and parents to have a say about the type of school that they believe will best meet local needs.

Retirement Awards

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* award schemes and *(b)* other forms of official recognition are available in respect of retiring teachers who have completed exceptionally long periods of service to the teaching profession; and if she will make a statement. [220879]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 9 March 2005]:* There are no specific award schemes for retiring teachers who have completed exceptionally long periods of service. However, all teachers are sent a letter of thanks and recognition from the Secretary of State at the time of their retirement.

In addition, the televised Teaching Awards ceremony, which celebrates excellence in teaching, and the Honours system provide opportunities for individual achievement to receive formal recognition. At a local level, employers and school communities do regularly recognise long and dedicated service of teachers at retirement functions.

Teachers (Student Loans)

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to continue the pilot scheme to repay the students loans for teachers under the Secondary Shortage Subject Scheme. [221197]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We are currently considering whether or not to extend the pilot Repayment of Teachers' Loans Scheme and expect to announce a decision in the coming weeks. The Secondary Shortage Subject Scheme is an entirely separate scheme which is essentially a hardship fund for undergraduate trainee teachers.

Teaching and Administrative Staff

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will estimate how many full-time equivalent staff are employed in *(a)* schools and other institutions of non-advanced further education and *(b)* the administration of education by local authorities and further education colleges; and if she will make a statement. [220878]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 9 March 2005]:* In January 2004, the latest information available, there were 670,800 full-time equivalent staff employed in maintained schools in England consisting of 427,700 full-time equivalent regular teachers and 243,100 teaching assistants and other support staff. In 2002/03 there were 74,500 full-time equivalent teaching staff employed in further education sector colleges. In the same year there were 56,400 full time equivalent support staff employed by further education sector colleges. This figure includes administrative staff as well those involved in other non-teaching roles such as building maintenance, cleaning and security. It is not possible to separate the administration staff from the overall total.

Information on the number of non-school based administration staff employed by local education authorities is not collected centrally.

Tuition Fees

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her latest estimate is of the total amount that has been paid by students in tuition fees since their introduction. [220810]

Dr. Howells: Students on full-time undergraduate courses and their families are expected to make a contribution towards the cost of their tuition only if they can afford to do so.

The amount of private contributions to tuition fees by students from England, Wales, and the European Union from 1999/2000 to 2004/05 is given in the table.

Private contributions to tuition fees by students domiciled in England, Wales, or the European Union for academic years 1999/2000[1] to 2004/05

Academic year	*£ million*
1999/2000	199.2
2000/01	309.2
2001/02	373.3
2002/03	403.1
2003/04	420.1
2004/05[2]	427.0

[1] Tuition fees were introduced in academic year 1998/99, however as that year was treated as a transitional year, data are not available on the same basis as subsequent years.
[2] Provisional (as at 7 March 2005).
Source:
Student Loans Company

HEALTH

Alcohol-related Deaths

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action the Government are taking to reduce the number of deaths for which alcohol is the primary cause. [221246]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The policies set out in the alcohol harm reduction strategy for England seek to reduce harm caused by alcohol, thus, contributing to a reduction in the number of deaths for which alcohol is the primary cause.

In addition, the White Paper, "Choosing Health", published on 16 November 2004 highlighted that the Government will build on commitments within the alcohol harm reduction strategy for England through:

Guidance and training to ensure all health professionals are able to identify alcohol problems early.

Piloting approaches to targeted screening and brief interventions in both primary care and hospital settings, including accident and emergency departments.

Developing a programme for improvement for alcohol treatment services based on the findings of an audit of demand for and provision of alcohol treatment in England and the models of care framework for alcohol treatment.

Avian Influenza

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the World Health Organisation's estimates of numbers of people likely to be affected by an avian influenza pandemic. [220286]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We are aware of the assessments made by the World Health Organization (WHO) and others, of the estimates of the number of people likely to be affected by an influenza pandemic whatever the origins may be of a novel influenza virus. Until a pandemic arrives, we will not know how many people will be affected, but have used WHO's estimate as a working assumption for planning purposes. We will continue to update our assumptions as more information becomes available.

Bone Marrow Donors

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what funding was made available to *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* charitable bodies to recruit bone marrow donors in (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04; [216286]

(2) what action the Government have taken to encourage the staff of Government Departments and public sector bodies to join bone marrow registers by arranging clinics and circulating literature. [216294]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department provided the National Blood Service (NBS) with £3.3 million in 2002–03 and £3.3 million 2003–04 to recruit additional bone marrow donors.

The NBS recruits potential bone marrow donors at blood donation sessions using a range of methods. These include approaching potential donors on session, making available bone marrow literature on session and sending out bone marrow literature with blood donor session invitations.

Government and other public service employees can find out about bone marrow donation and are recruited as potential bone marrow donors through invitation to or attendance at public blood donation sessions. The NBS organises blood donation sessions within Government Departments and other public sector bodies primarily aimed at staff within these bodies. Information on bone marrow donation is available at these sessions.

Breast Cancer

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of women aged *(a)* 50 to 64 and *(b)* 65 to 70 have been screened for breast cancer by the NHS in (i) England, (ii) each strategic health authority area and (iii) each primary care trust area in each year since 1997. [219400]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow) on 8 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1727W.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what tendering process was completed by Methods Consulting prior to the award of the contract for the recruitment of dentists from Poland; and what expertise they have in this field. [218299]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 25 February 2005]:* Methods Consulting was awarded the contract to manage International Recruitment Services for the national health service in England as the result of a competitive tendering process, in accordance with the Department's procurement policy and takes into account expertise gained through previous recruitment services to the NHS.

Methods Consulting have extensive experience of working with the NHS, Modernisation Agency and the Department, including management of NHS Jobs electronic recruitment service.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1616W, on dentistry, if he will list in value order the number of bursaries awarded to dentists as a result of the Returning to Dentistry scheme. [219381]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 1 March 2005]*: The total number of bursaries awarded so far in 2004–05 from the Returning to Dentistry scheme is 137, at a combined total of £113,178. The number of bursaries awarded, by cohorts of value, is:

	Number
£0-£500	31
£501-£999	70
£1,000-£1,999	23
£2,000-£3,000	0
£3,000-£4,000	13
Total	137

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answers to questions of 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 682W, how many dentists in Kent have closed their lists to NHS patients during the last 12 months; and how many dentists have opened their lists to NHS patients during the same period. [219384]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 1 March 2005]*: The great majority of dental practices treat both private and national health service patients. The Office of Fair Trading report, "The private dentistry market in the UK", published in March 2003, estimated that out of 11,000 dental practices about 210 are totally private, treating no NHS patients. The information available relates to the general dental service practices in Kent that, at 15 February, were accepting at least one category of NHS patient for registration:

50 practices are registering charge exempt adults for NHS treatment,

31 practices that are registering charge paying adults for NHS treatment,

91 practices that are registering children aged 0–18 years for NHS treatment.

In addition, in the last 12 months, eight practices in Kent have moved to the personal dental services scheme, whereby they contract with their primary care trusts to undertake a specific amount of NHS treatment.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of providing free annual dental checks for adults. [217493]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of providing free annual dental checks for adults depends on the number of checks carried out and the payment to the dentist for each check. Patient charges for dental examinations are about £90 million a year. Some patients have more than one examination each year.

Doctor Retention

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of doctors who trained in England continued to work in the national health service for five years in the last period for which figures are available. [220485]

Mr. Hutton: The latest information available is shown in the table. It relates to doctors who graduated in 1996 and who were working in the national health service five years later, in 2001.

United Kingdom medical graduates working in the NHS five years after graduation[1,2]

	Number percentage
Respondents working in NHS	2,349
Respondents not working in NHS	337
Total	2,686
Percentage working in NHS	87.5

[1] Year of graduation 1996.
[2] Five year period ending 2001.
Source:
UK medical careers research group, Oxford University.

Healthy Eating

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the merits of including the calorific content on the labelling of alcoholic products. [220799]

Miss Melanie Johnson: No assessment has been made of the merits of including the calorific content on the labelling of alcoholic products.

Insect-borne Diseases

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on (i) insect-borne diseases and (ii) Lyme disease; and if he will make a statement. [220808]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Following the completion of eight research projects investigating aspects of Lyme disease, the latest in 1999, the Department is not currently undertaking research into Lyme disease. Details of the research projects completed can be obtained from the national research register. The Department is currently providing support funding for one on-going project relating to insect borne disease being undertaken by Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals National Health Service Trust. Further information can be found at www.nrr.nhs.uk/ViewDocument.asp?ID=NO112072861.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what treatment protocols are available to NHS patients suffering from *(a)* insect-borne diseases and *(b)* Lyme disease; and if he will make a statement. [220809]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Advice to doctors about the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease is readily available on the Health Protection Agency (HPA) website at www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/zoonoses/lyme_borreliosis/fag.htm.

Guidance on treatment and prevention of other insect borne infections such as malaria and West Nile virus can be found on a number of websites, including the HPA's at http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/list.htm.

Mental Health

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on links between drug abuse and mental health. [215491]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department recognises that there is a wide range of links and associations between substance abuse and mental health disorders. In order to improve the evidence within England, we commissioned a review of research literature, and the development of an information manual for practitioners from the Royal College of Psychiatrists, which were published in 2001.

As part of the Department's drug misuse policy research initiative, which funded £2.4 million research between 2000 and 2003, we funded five studies to improve the evidence within England that related to substance abuse and mental health problems.

Guidance commissioned by the Department, "Dangerousness of Drugs—a Guide to the Risks and Harms associated with Substance Misuse", published in September 2003, describes the various health consequences of abusing drugs, including the mental health implications.

Although we have not commissioned any further specific research into the links between substance abuse and mental health, the Department continues to monitor research in this area, and has a range of expert advisors to inform policy.

MRSA

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how frequently doctors are swab-tested for MRSA in the NHS. [219409]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Data on testing healthcare workers for methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* are not collected centrally. Policy on testing is determined by local national health service trusts.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1623W, on MRSA, what assessment has been made by the National Health Service Litigation Authority of the risk to the NHS of civil litigation cases from patients who have contracted MRSA in hospital through a hospital's negligence. [219690]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 4 March 2005]:* The NHS Litigation Authority assesses future claims provisions on an aggregate basis for the whole of the national health service. Risks associated with specific conditions are not assessed or identified separately.

Obesity

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the Health Select Committee's report on obesity. [216362]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We have not received any representations specifically related to the Health Select Committee report on obesity.

Patients' Information

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that there is good communication between healthcare professionals and their patients, with particular reference to the information patients receive on *(a)* tests, *(b)* medication and *(c)* advice on the matters they should be aware of following discharge from an out-patient or accident and emergency department. [218122]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In December 2004, the Department published "Better Information, better choices, better health". This is a three year programme of action, at both national and local level, designed to improve equitable access to the quality information people need and want about their personal health and healthcare. The strategy places an emphasis on enhancing the relationship between healthcare professionals and patients through supporting the dialogues within consultations. It also sets out to build further national resources and ensure that patients receive good quality information at all stages of treatment, from diagnosis to discharge.

Copies of the document have been placed in the Library.

Pharmacy Contracts

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what financial support is available to pharmacists dispensing fewer than 2,000 items a month from *(a)* primary care trusts and *(b)* central Government; [214169]

(2) what annual savings his Department expects to make as a result of the withdrawal in 2008 of the Establishment Fee for smaller pharmacies; [214201]

(3) what estimate his Department has made of the number of pharmacies that will close as a result of the withdrawal in 2008 of the Establishment Fee for smaller pharmacies; [214202]

(4) what financial support will become available to pharmacists dispensing fewer than 2,000 items a month *(a)* from primary care trusts and *(b)* from central Government after the withdrawal of the Establishment Fee in 2008. [214203]

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress is being made in developing a standard form for local pharmaceutical services under the new pharmacy contract; [216148]

(2) what the reasons are for restricting the exit payment under the new pharmacy contract to the first year of the contract's operation; [216149]

(3) what support will be given to pharmacies dispensing less than 2,000 items per month under the new pharmacy contract. [216150]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The current essential small pharmacies scheme (ESPS) enables pharmacies dispensing fewer than 26,100 prescriptions per year and located more than 1 km from the next nearest pharmacy to receive financial support. This is currently £43,150 per year. There were 223 ESPS pharmacies in England as at 31 March 2004. National health service primary care trusts (PCTs) can in addition support, or commission services from, other pharmacies with lower dispensing volumes in their area that do not meet the ESPS criteria if they wish to do so.

The new community pharmacy contractual framework, due to go live from 1 April, will include special measures for pharmacies with lower dispensing

volumes. The ESPS will continue and in 2006–07, we plan that these pharmacies will be able to choose whether to convert to being a local pharmaceutical services (IPS) pharmacy and retain their current ESPS entitlements or to transfer to the new contractual framework. In addition, a standard form of IPS for other pharmacies, with lower dispensing volumes, is being developed. This may help increase income for such pharmacies where they provide services which meet local health care needs.

We expect these support arrangements to continue to be in place in 2008. We also expect NHS PCTs will, in reviewing their assessment of pharmaceutical needs, continue to consider what support can be offered to pharmacies with lower dispensing volumes which contribute effectively to meeting such needs.

Pharmacies dispensing between 1,100 and 2,000 items a month will continue to receive the professional allowance until 31 March 2008. This ranges from £9,300 to £18,000 per year, depending on prescription volume. Pharmacies dispensing fewer than 2,000 prescriptions per year will also receive the new practice payment. Pharmacies dispensing under 1,100 prescriptions per month will receive a payment of £500 per annum as part of the practice payment. Additionally, pharmacies will have the option, during the first year of implementation, to decide whether they wish to relinquish their right to provide NHS services and to receive compensation.

We discussed and agreed as part of our negotiations with the pharmaceutical services negotiating committee that pharmacies would be entitled during the first year of the new contractual framework to claim an exit payment. That framework will enhance the range and quality of pharmaceutical services contractors offer—and which patients will come to expect—in future. None the less, we recognised that some contractors may not wish to continue to provide services though we hope this number will be very few. We believe we have allowed a reasonable time limit within which contractors should come to a decision. To prolong the period for deliberation risks depriving all patients of the benefits the new arrangements will bring.

We estimate that some 650 community pharmacies in England—or approximately 7 per cent. of the total—will be eligible for these special support arrangements in 2005–06. We have not estimated the number of such pharmacies that will close when these arrangements come to an end in 2008. That is a commercial decision for the contractor concerned. Consequently, we have not estimated any savings that may accrue. We do however fully expect all contractors to take advantage of the significant opportunities the new framework offers to expand the range and quality of services they offer and to be remunerated accordingly.

Residential Care (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* residential, *(b)* nursing and *(c)* elderly mentally infirm (i) homes and (ii) places were available in London in each of the last 10 years, broken down by (A) local authority, (B) private sector and (C) charity and voluntary providers; and what percentage of capacity in each sector was used in each year. [212368]

Dr. Ladyman: Tables 1 and 2 show the number of residential and nursing homes and places in London at 31 March for the years 1993 to 2001 by sector. Tables 3 and 4 show the number of homes and places in care homes for elderly mentally infirm people. Data is not available for the percentage of capacity used each year.

I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission, and now CSCI, but comparable details are not available.

Table 1: Number of care homes in London, by type of accommodation: 31 March 1993–2001

	Residential homes				Nursing homes[1]
	Local authority	Voluntary	Private	Small[2]	Independent
1993	390	580	490	n/a	330
1994	360	580	510	370	400
1995	350	610	530	490	400
1996	350	640	540	570	350
1997	300	730	590	600	370
1998	300	710	610	640	520
1999	270	740	600	630	550
2000	270	740	590	630	550
2001	240	750	560	690	550

n/a = Not available.

[1] Includes dual registered homes.

[2] Independent registered care homes with less than four places; required to register from 1 April 1993.

Sources:

Department of Health forms RA part A, RAC5, KO36 and RH(N) part A.

Table 2: Number of care home places in London, by type of accommodation: 31 March 1993–2001

	Residential homes					Nursing homes[1]
	Local authority	Voluntary	Private	Small[2]	Dual registered[3]	Independent
1993	11,830	9,410	7,910	n/a	1,020	11,310
1994	10,870	9,030	8,080	900	1,300	12,540
1995	9,980	9,250	8,310	1,200	1,180	12,720
1996	9,470	9,230	8,460	1,390	1,280	10,690
1997	8,170	9,960	9,390	1,490	960	12,390
1998	7,740	9,620	9,530	1,660	1,650	17,750

Table 2: Number of care home places in London, by type of accommodation: 31 March 1993–2001

	Residential homes				Nursing homes[1]
	Local authority	*Voluntary*	*Private*	*Small*[2]	*Dual registered*[3]	*Independent*
1999	6,690	10,010	9,360	1,550	1,900	18,260
2000	6,350	10,460	9,310	1,520	2,490	18,290
2001	5,410	10,640	9,160	1,700	2,440	18,080

n/a = Not available.
[1] Includes nursing places in dual registered homes.
[2] Independent registered care homes with less than four places; required to register from 1 April 1993.
[3] Residential places in dual registered homes.
Sources:
Department of Health forms RA part A, RAC5, KO36 and RH(N) part A.

Table 3: Number of elderly mentally infirm[1] homes in London, by type of accommodation: 31 March 1993–2001

			Dual			
	Local authority	*Voluntary*	*Private*	*Dual registered*[2]	*Small*[3]	*Nursing*
1993	10	[4]—	20	0	n/a	n/a
1994	10	[4]—	10	0	n/a	n/a
1995	10	[4]—	10	0	n/a	n/a
1996	20	[4]—	10	0	n/a	n/a
1997	20	10	20	10	30	n/a
1998	20	30	50	10	20	n/a
1999	10	20	20	[4]—	20	n/a
2000	20	10	30	10	10	n/a
2001	10	10	30	10	40	n/a

n/a = Not available.
[1] Homes that cater primarily for elderly mentally infirm people.
[2] Homes that have registered for both residential and nursing care.
[3] Independent registered care homes with less than four places; required to register from 1 April 1993.
4 Five or less.
Sources:
Department of Health forms RA part A and RAC5.

Table 4: Number of elderly mentally infirm[1] home places in London, by type of accommodation: 31 March 1993–2001

			Dual			
	Local authority	*Voluntary*	*Private*	*Dual registered*[2]	*Small*[3]	*Nursing*
1993	410	90	360	n/a	n/a	n/a
1994	400	70	280	n/a	n/a	n/a
1995	400	120	270	n/a	n/a	n/a
1996	430	140	290	n/a	n/a	n/a
1997	690	280	390	150	100	n/a
1998	620	880	890	190	60	n/a
1999	440	430	560	110	40	n/a
2000	560	310	630	260	40	n/a
2001	530	270	670	270	110	n/a

n/a = Not available.
[1] Homes that cater primarily for elderly mentally infirm people.
[2] Residential places in homes registered for both residential and nursing care.
[3] Independent registered care homes with less than four places; required to register from 1 April 1993.
Sources:
Department of Health forms RA part A and RAC5.

Saneline

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the contribution of Saneline to the provision of support and advice to mentally ill people and their families; what assessment he has made of the impact of any reduction in Saneline's activities as a result of funding shortfall; and if he will make a statement. [208493]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[pursuant to the reply, 7 February 2005, Official Report, c.1340–41W]*: I regret my previous reply was incorrect.

The third sentence in the first paragraph should read as follows:

"At present, Saneline is operating two of its three call centres without a reduction in service level."

Staff Abuse (Lancashire Teaching Hospitals)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff have suffered *(a)* physical and *(b)* verbal abuse at Lancashire teaching hospitals in each of the last three years. [220977]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Sudan 1

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Food Standards Agency has made to ensure that concerns about food which may contain Sudan 1 have been adequately disseminated to (i) local authority trading standards departments, (ii) environmental health departments, (iii) food retailers and (iv) caterers; [218327]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of whether all food products containing Sudan 1 have been identified; [218457]

(3) what action his Department has taken *(a)* to inform the public of the risks involved in consumption of products known to contain Sudan 1 dye and *(b)* to ensure that products are withdrawn from retail and catering outlets promptly; [218756]

(4) what estimate his Department has made of the amount of food containing Sudan 1 dye which has not been withdrawn from retail and catering outlets. [218757]

(5) what assessment he has made of the longer term consequences of the Sudan 1 incident, in relation to his Department's responsibilities for the overseeing of food production and processing. [218753]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has advised me that full information has been made available on its website of foods known to be contaminated with Sudan 1, and that this was provided to a number of stakeholder organisations to distribute to their members. In addition, the FSA has asked all local authorities to contact food businesses in their area to ensure the recall has been effective.

In addition the FSA has held a number of meetings with stakeholders, including retailers, caterers and other trade associations.

The FSA is working with manufacturers and local authorities to ensure that all foods known to be contaminated with Sudan 1 are removed from sale and information has been provided to consumers on these products. Since 1 January 2005 all food businesses are legally required to have in place systems to allow full traceability of ingredients and products.

The FSA estimates that the majority of foods known to be contaminated with Sudan 1 have been withdrawn. The FSA is working with food companies and local authorities to verify that the recall has been fully effective.

The FSA has responsibility for overseeing the safety of food in the United Kingdom. The FSA will be conducting a thorough and robust review of the incident which will be published.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Food Standards Agency first became aware that Sudan 1 was being used as an additive to food for human consumption in the UK. [218474]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 25 February 2005]*: The Food Standards Agency first became aware of the first instance of contamination of a food with Sudan 1 was present in foods in the United Kingdom on 11 June 2003. Shortly afterwards, controls on the import of chilli powder into the European Union were introduced in all member states which require prior testing of these products to show they are free of Sudan dyes. Regulations introducing the above measures were signed on 28 July 2003.

Surplus Assets Sales

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the value of sales of surplus assets from his Department was in each year since 2000–01. [220967]

Mr. Hutton: The value of sales of fixed assets for each year since 2000–01 are shown in the table.

	Value of sales (£ thousand)
2000–01	84,363
2001–02	214,068
2002–03	180,806
2003–04	67,506

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to reduce mortality rates from cancer by at least 20 per cent. in people under 75 years by 2010 will be met. [219234]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The latest information on cancer mortality shows a 12.2 per cent. reduction compared with the baseline period of 1995–97. We are ahead of where we planned to be at this stage and are therefore well on track to deliver a 20 per cent. reduction in cancer mortality by 2010.

Transsexuals

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether transsexualism is classed as a mental disorder for the purposes of sections 1 and 3 of the National Health Service Act 1977. [218733]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Sections 1 and 3 of the NHS Act 1977 do not refer directly to "mental disorder", but do require the Secretary of State to provide a health service to secure improvement in physical and mental health and to prevent, diagnose and treat "illness". "Illness" is defined by section 128 of the Act as including "mental disorder within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1983".

Transsexualism is defined in the International Classification of Diseases—tenth edition (ICD-10)—as a mental disorder and it is therefore likely that it would be regarded as a mental disorder for the purposes of the 1983 Act.

The ICD-10 classification reads as follows:

"F64.0 Transsexualism

A desire to live and be accepted as a member of the opposite sex, usually accompanied by a sense of discomfort with, or inappropriateness of, one's anatomic sex, and a wish to have surgery and hormonal treatment to make one's body as congruent as possible with one's preferred sex."

Guidance on gender dysphoria was included in the national definitions set for specialised services, which suggests that primary care trusts should commission such services collectively. Specialised services for mental health, including services for people with gender dysphoria, are being reviewed by the national director for mental health, Professor Louis Appleby, and a report is due in May.

Trumpington House

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the statement made by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 63WH, if he will clarify the position regarding the funding given by Somerset Coast Primary Care Trust to Trumpington House surgery. [220644]

Dr. Ladyman: I regret that my previous statement, given on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 63WH, was incorrect. I am advised that, following acceptance of the new general medical service contract, the primary care trust (PCT) has an ongoing investment of £450,991 in the Trumpington House surgery.

The Somerset Coast PCT has been allocated an additional £250,000 capital funding for 2005–06 to assist with the development of this modernisation project. I also understand that additional recurrent revenue, in the form of notional rent payments, will be allocated to the surgery to fund this development.

DEFENCE

Air Tanker Programme

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the air tanker programme; and from where the proposed air tanker will be *(a)* serviced and *(b)* operated. [219756]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft (FSTA) project is aimed at providing the Royal Air Force's Air Refuelling capability through the private finance initiative.

I refer my hon. Friend to the announcement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 73WS, in which he announced to the House that AirTanker has been selected as the preferred bidder for the FSTA project. The PFI contract currently under negotiation with AirTanker is based on the firm assumption that the FSTA aircraft are both operated from, and maintained at, RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire. We shall of course ensure that the House is kept fully informed of significant developments.

Atomic Weapons Establishment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's personnel are assigned to the Atomic Weapons Establishment. [220105]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently 95 Ministry of Defence Personnel whose duties relate predominantly to activities at the Atomic Weapons Establishment.

Camp Cropper

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to ensure that the UK meets its obligations under the Geneva Convention with regard to prisoners held at Camp Cropper for whom the UK is responsible. [219752]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom is not responsible for any internees or detainees at Camp Cropper.

Chinook Crash

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library *(a)* the Boscombe Down CA Release Recommendations as they applied to the HC2 Chinook standard embodied in ZD576 at the time the HC2 Chinook entered service and *(b)* changes in those recommendations that were made up to and including 2 June 1994. [219459]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the right hon. Member, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 651W, on Air Crash (Board of Inquiry), whether the Chief of the Air Staff, the Air Officer Commanding No. 1 Group, the Air Officer Commanding in Chief and members of the RAF Directorate of Legal Services met prior to 2001 to discuss the Board of Inquiry into the crash of ZD576 on the Mull of Kintyre. [219460]

Mr. Ingram: A search of available records has provided no evidence that a meeting involving all the named officials took place.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 651W, on Air Crash (Board of Inquiry), if he will place in the Library the memoranda, minutes and other documents which were circulated *(a)* in preparation for and *(b)* as a result of the meetings that took place in 2001 at which the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshals Wratten and Day, and the Director of Legal Services RAF were present. [219461]

Mr. Ingram: Three meetings took place in 2001 at which the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshals Wratten and Day, and the Director of Legal Services (RAF) were present. The documents concerned are being recalled from archives and their suitability for release will be considered. I will write to the right hon. Member when this has been completed and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment other than by Racal he has examined of the findings of Racal regarding the SuperTANS on Chinook ZD576. [218418]

Mr. Ingram: Data was extracted from the RS252 SuperTANS unit by the equipment manufacturer, Racal Avionics Ltd. The extracted data was subsequently examined by the Board of Inquiry with the assistance of the Aircraft Accident Investigations Branch.

Civil Servants (Gibraltar)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether TUPE rules will apply to the transfer of his Department's jobs in Gibraltar to the private sector. [218933]

Mr. Ingram: The Gibraltar Employment Ordinance provides the equivalent legislation in Gibraltar. MOD staff transferred to a contractor will have their terms and conditions of service, including pay, protected as part of a transfer of undertakings.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 729W, on cluster munitions, whether any foreign-owned company has *(a)* manufactured cluster munitions in and *(b)* exported cluster munitions from the UK since 1998. [220806]

Mr. Ingram: No foreign-owned company has manufactured cluster munitions in the UK or exported cluster munitions from the UK since 1998.

Death in Service

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements are made for parents of service personnel who have died *(a)* while on active service abroad and *(b)* while stationed at overseas barracks to visit the sites of the deaths. [220802]

Mr. Caplin: When a service person dies overseas the body will be repatriated or, if the next of kin request it, interred locally. In the latter case the service will bear the cost, including travel expenses of close relatives. Where the body has been interred overseas without the attendance of the relatives, or was not recovered, funding may be provided for two close relatives to visit the site within two years of the death.

Defence Information Infrastructure Project

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to award the contract for the Defence Information Infrastructure project. [220257]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 2 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 88WS.

Defence Service Agencies (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 the Duke of York's Royal Military School spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each case; and if he will make a statement. [215437]

Mr. Caplin: All the information requested is published in our annual Accounts, which are available in the Library of the House.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 the Defence Medical Services Department spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each case; and if he will make a statement. [215457]

Mr. Caplin: In the current financial year 2004–05, specifically the Defence Medical Services Department (DMSD) is spending £56,424 of its personnel budget in Scotland which forms approximately 0.5 per cent. of the total DMSD personnel budget for this year. This covers less than five members of staff.

In previous years the DMSD has not employed any personnel in Scotland as they have been employed by other agencies and thus the figure is zero for all other years requested.

Devonport

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what departmental reviews currently under way affect the future of Devonport Dockyard and Devonport Naval Base. [219715]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is carrying out a number of studies as part of a wider strategy intended to optimise UK industry's warship and submarine sector. All have a similar headline aim of improving programme and cost performance, and ensuring sustainable capacity and capability. The main studies are:

Maritime Coherence Study

UK Naval Shipbuilding Industrial Strategy

Surface Ship Support Study

Submarine Acquisition Modernisation

Future Defence Supply Chain Initiative

The aim is to create an overall 'road map' that will identify how and when the outcomes of these studies might converge to improve overall efficiency. However, it is too early to say what impact, if any, these studies will have on Devonport, or any other, Dockyard or Naval Base.

Equipment Programmes

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will begin Equipment Programme 06. [220546]

Mr. Ingram: To align the Ministry of Defence's planning cycle with the Government's biennial planning cycle based on Spending Reviews in alternate years, and to improve further the effectiveness of our planning, we have decided to conduct future planning rounds every two years, rather than annually. Equipment Plan 2007 will therefore be the next equipment planning round; the main work will commence early in 2006.

Gibraltar

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service quarters are available for the armed forces in Gibraltar; how many are *(a)* being and *(b)* planned to be improved; which are planned to be (i) sold and (ii) gutted; and if he will make a statement. [218619]

Mr. Ingram: British Forces Gibraltar currently owns 515 houses. None are being sold or gutted. However, under the Lands Agreement, 123 quarters will be passed to GOG, 392 quarters in total will then be available for use by MOD, including 96 which will be leased from Royal Gibraltar Regiment Trust. A total of 47 properties are currently being improved and it is planned to improve 114 in the future.

Iraq

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel have been deployed in

private security companies on behalf of coalition forces during the course of the Iraq war; and how many personnel are currently deployed in private military companies in Iraq. [216041]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 February 2005]*: The Ministry of Defence does not employ private military companies or private security companies in Iraq. Use of private military companies by other coalition partners is a matter for them.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the number of Iraqi casualties in the UK sector since the end of the war; and what percentage this represents of the total estimated number of Iraqi casualties since the conflict began. [218551]

Mr. Ingram: None. The United Kingdom armed forces do not maintain records which would enable a definitive estimate of the total number of civilian casualties arising from the Iraq conflict to be calculated.

UK military reporting is limited to the UK area of operations. But even within the UK area of operations reporting is limited to what troops see on the ground. So military reporting is incomplete and cannot provide the basis of civilian casualty estimates. This is why we do not publish figures.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how much was spent by the Government on military operations between the outbreak of hostilities in Iraq on 19 March 2003 and 1 May 2003; and how much has been spent by the Government on military operations in Iraq since 1 May 2003; [219503]

(2) how much money was spent by the Government on preparations for the war in Iraq before the outbreak of war on 19 March 2003. [220350]

Mr. Ingram: Figures for the net additional costs of operations, in Iraq and elsewhere, are calculated and audited on an annual basis. The total cost of operations in Iraq in 2002–03, including the costs of preparations and the war fighting phase beginning in March 2003, was £847 million. Total costs in 2003–04 including the remainder of the war fighting phase, were £1,311 million.

Military Police

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are to move Royal Military Police training from Chichester to HMS Dryad in Portsmouth; and if he will make a statement. [219280]

Mr. Ingram: The future of Royal Military Police training at Chichester, which forms part of the Defence College of Police and Personnel Administration, is under consideration. As yet, no decisions have been made. Should any proposals materialise, they will be subject to normal consultation processes and the hon. Member will be advised.

Military Tanker Capacity

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to match military tanker capacity to defence requirements. [220828]

Mr. Ingram: The military afloat reach and sustainability project is planned to provide new maritime tankers. Land and air requirements will be met respectively by the wheeled tanker, which has just entered service, and the future strategic air tanker for which the preferred bidder has just been announced.

Naval Refit Contracts

Rachel Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the competition process for the contract for the repair of HMS Nottingham. [219455]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 8 March 2005]*: The contract for the repairs to HMS Nottingham was awarded to Fleet Support Ltd. (FSL) in 2002 following a three-way competition between FSL Portsmouth, Devonport Management Ltd. (DML) Devonport, and Babcock Support Services Ltd. (BSSL) Rosyth, the outcome having been judged on overall value for money.

Naval Shipbuilding Implementation Study

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who the members are of the UK naval shipbuilding implementation study; what its terms of reference are; and when it will report. [220572]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 March 2005]*: A team has been established within the Ministry of Defence to investigate the potential for a United Kingdom naval shipbuilding industrial strategy that best meets the needs of the forward naval equipment programme. The strategy will be developed in consultation with key members of the UK naval shipbuilding industry, other Government Departments (OGDs) and the trades unions. Formal terms of reference are under consideration, but in broad terms the study will investigate the potential for sustaining sufficient industrial capability and capacity, at the requisite level of performance and quality, to deliver an affordable UK naval ship programme in the longer term.

Time scales for delivery and implementation of the strategy are currently under review in consultation with industry.

RAF

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which squadrons will be affected by planned changes to the Royal Air Force. [212364]

Mr. Ingram: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 343, a number of changes to the Royal Air Force which affected squadrons. These included a reduction in the number of Tornado F3 squadrons by one (XI (F) Squadron in October 2005), bringing forward the disbandment of Jaguar Squadrons (54(F) to 2005 and 41(F) to 2006 and the disbandment of the final Jaguar squadron in 2007 (6 Squadron)), and a reduction in the Nimrod MR2 fleet to 16 aircraft. As a result of the latter, I announced in December that 206 squadron would be disbanded.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Government's plans for the future of RAF High Wycombe. [220401]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 8 March 2005]:* As I advised the hon. Member in my letter to him of 27 February last year, the use of RAF High Wycombe, along with all of the defence estate, is kept under constant review. RAF High Wycombe is the headquarters of RAF Strike Command and it is currently being considered as part of the process and organisation review into the collocation of the two RAF headquarters. I will announce the outcome of this review when the work is complete.

RAF Flights (Ascension Island)

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civilian passengers have flown on RAF flights to Ascension Island in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [220322]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has no requirement to retain information specifically relating to the numbers of civilians flown on RAF or chartered aircraft utilized on the South Atlantic schedule. Furthermore, the MOD does not retain air travel booking information longer than the current and previous financial years. No figures are, therefore, available for the period 1997 to March 2003. Booking information for the financial year April 2003 to March 2004 is not all held centrally and detail of civilians is not in a form which could be extracted without disproportionate cost.

While information for the current financial year is not all held centrally, it has been possible to establish the number of fare-paying civilian passengers who have been booked through the Defence Passenger Reservations Centre in the UK and who have flown to/from Ascension Island during the period April 2004 to February 2005: 1,481.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effects on UK military operations on Ascension Island of civilian aircraft using Wideawake Airport. [220323]

Mr. Ingram: Wideawake is a United States military facility operated under the terms of the 1950 Bahamas Agreement as modified by subsequent Exchange of Notes. The use of Wideawake by civil aircraft was established under an Exchange of Notes in October 2003. Up to four movements (two arrivals, two departures) are allowed a week. Under the terms of agreement, military movements, both UK and US, have priority over civil movements at all times. In times of crisis, civil flights would be allowed only if there is no operational impact.

Regiments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what plans he has for regimental headquarters which will not be used following the formation of the Kings, Lancashire and Border Regiment; [219058]

(2) what estimate has been made of the value of regimental properties and establishments of each of the three regiments to be merged into the King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment; and what estimate he has made of potential savings from the merger? [219044]

Mr. Ingram: Work on potential changes to the Army's estate resulting from the formation of the King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment is still at an early stage. Announcements on this issue will be made once details have been finalised.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence under what circumstances an Army Board decision on a regimental name could be changed. [219059]

Mr. Ingram: The only circumstances under which a decision on a regimental name could be changed would be when there is an organisational requirement to do so.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) where the regimental headquarters for the King's Lancashire and Border Regiment will be located; and when he expects relocation to take place. [219065]

Mr. Ingram: It is anticipated that a study into the future of the Army's Corps and Regimental Headquarters, which would likely contemplate issues such as locations in the light of the restructuring of the Army and the Infantry, will be commissioned in the near future. At the present time I can provide no details as to what conclusions such a study might draw and no timescale as to when it may report.

RFA Argus

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue costs were of maintaining RFA Argus for the last year for which records are available; and what the forecast is for each of the next three years. [219724]

Mr. Ingram: In financial year 2003-04, the last year for which records are available, £14.78 million was spent on maintaining RFA Argus. Of this, £14.7 million were resource costs and £0.087 million were capital costs.

To release details of maintenance budgets for the next three financial years could prejudice future competitions for RFA refit and maintenance work and this information is therefore being withheld on commercial grounds.

Rosyth Dockyard

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* other Ministers in his Department had with the right hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) prior to the decision to award the contracts to refit HMS Edinburgh and HMS Ark Royal to Rosyth Dockyard; [219732]

(2) what representations were received by Ministers in his Department from hon. Members representing constituencies in and around Rosyth, Scotland, in relation to the contracts to refit HMS Edinburgh and HMS Ark Royal. [219731]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 3 March 2005]:* There were no discussions between Defence Ministers and the right hon. Member for Dunfermline, East prior to the

decision to award the contracts to refit HMS Edinburgh and HMS Ark Royal to Rosyth Dockyard. Defence Ministers have received representatives from hon. Members representing constituencies in and around Rosyth, Scotland on a range of issues, including in relation to these contracts.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on what basis the contracts to refit HMS Edinburgh and HMS Ark Royal were awarded to Rosyth Dockyard; and what the cost to public funds is of each contract; [219714]

(2) whether his Department always accepts the most competitive tender for the refitting of surface ships. [219716]

Mr. Ingram: Contracts for the refitting of surface ships, including those for HMS Edinburgh and HMS Ark Royal, are awarded following open competitions. Royal Navy surface ship work is competed fairly and all tenders within the same competition are assessed against identical criteria, such as technical and commercial compliance, partnering proposals and price. The outcome is judged on overall value for money against these criteria.

The estimated cost for the refits of HMS Edinburgh and HMS Ark Royal, including the Ministry of Defence supplied materials, are around £20 million and £55 million respectively.

Submarine Acquisition Study

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who the members are of the submarine acquisition study; what its terms of reference are; and when it will report. [220570]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 March 2005]*: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 21 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 127W, to the hon. Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Soames).

Surface Combatants

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who the members are of the surface ship support study; what its terms of reference are; and when it will report. [220569]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 March 2005]*: The surface ship support study (SSSS) is looking at the ways in which the Ministry of Defence might engage with the United Kingdom naval surface ship refit and repair contractors to make best use of the industrial base, taking account of the future size of the Royal Navy surface fleet. The study includes consultations with industry (BAE Systems, Devonport Management Ltd., Babcock International Group, Fleet Support Ltd. and A and P) and aims to deliver recommendations for the way ahead and an outline implementation plan to defence Ministers during spring 2005.

SSSS forms part of a wider strategy intended to optimise UK industry's warship and submarine sector; other elements include the maritime coherence study, the UK naval shipbuilding industrial strategy, the submarine acquisition modernisation project and the future defence supply chain initiative. The aim is to create an overall 'road map' that will identify how and when the outcomes of these studies might converge to improve overall efficiency.

Surface Ship Refits

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has spent, in each of HM Dockyards on repairs and refits of warships and auxiliaries in each year since 1997. [219725]

Mr. Ingram: The data required to answer the question are not held centrally nor in a standard format. I will therefore write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to achieve the objectives established by Ministers for operations and military tasks in which the United Kingdom's armed forces are involved, including those providing support to our civil communities; [219166]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve effectiveness of the UK contribution to conflict prevention and management as demonstrated by a reduction in the number of people whose lives are affected by violent conflict and a reduction in potential sources of future conflict; [219167]

(3) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to deliver improved effectiveness of UK and international support for conflict prevention by 2008, will be met; [219168]

(4) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that a minimum of 90 per cent. of high readiness forces are at their required states of readiness with no critical weakness by 2006, will be met; [219169]

(5) whether the Public Service Agreement target for the Royal Navy and the RAF to achieve manning balance by 2004, was met; [219170]

(6) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target for the Army to achieve manning balance by 2005, will be met; [219171]

(7) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to strengthen European security through an enlarged and modernised NATO, an effective EU military crisis management capacity and enhanced European defence capabilities; [219172]

(8) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to develop and deliver to time and cost targets military capability for the future, including battle-winning technology, equipment and systems, matched to the changing strategic environment; [219173]

(9) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to play a leading role in the development of the European Security Agenda; [219174]

(10) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase value for money by making improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the key processes for delivering military capability; [219175]

(11) whether the Public Service Agreement target to make year-on-year output efficiency gains of 2.5 per cent., was met in 2003–04; [219176]

(12) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to make year-on-year output efficiency gains of 2.5 per cent., will be met in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; [219177]

(13) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to make a 20 per cent. output efficiency gain in the Defence Logistics Organisation. [219178]

Mr. Ingram: Details of the MOD's performance against its Public Service Agreement targets are published every quarter on the Treasury and MOD websites. The MOD's most recent report, covering performance against PSA targets for the third quarter of 2004–05 (October to December 2004), was published on www.mod.uk on 1 March 2005. Further information on the MOD's performance against SR2002 PSA targets can be found in the "Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2003–04," available in the Library of the House and on www.mod.uk.

Tornado Aircraft

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the depth support maintenance will be undertaken by *(a)* RAF personnel and *(b)* BAE Systems personnel at RAF Marham when Tornado GR4s are rolled forward. [220839]

Mr. Ingram: The precise number of RAF and BAE Systems personnel to be employed on Depth Support maintenance for the Tornado GR4 at RAF Marham has yet to be determined.

Trident

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether arrangements are in place for the transfer of command and control functions for the Trident nuclear system to *(a)* the Australian Government and *(b)* the US Administration in the event of a nuclear attack on the UK which leads to (i) loss of communication with and (ii) the destruction of the UK Government. [221030]

Mr. Hoon: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made clear in the answer he gave on 28 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 774W, to the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Mr. Marsden), the use of the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons may be ordered only by the Prime Minister. It would not be in the interests of national security to comment further on command and control arrangements for the nuclear deterrent.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has assessed the merits of converting Trident nuclear submarines to carry Tomahawk cruise missiles; and if he will make a statement. [221035]

Mr. Hoon: No.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what alterations would be required to enable the UK to mount current Trident nuclear warheads on cruise missiles. [221037]

Mr. Hoon: The nuclear warhead mounted on the United Kingdom's Trident submarine-launched ballistic missiles was designed for use only on such missiles.

Fundamental design changes would be required to enable it to function safely and effectively when mounted on a cruise missile, but no detailed assessment of such changes, or their feasibility, has been made.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether research is being undertaken in the UK on miniaturisation of current Trident nuclear warheads. [221038]

Mr. Hoon: No.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many nuclear warheads are deployed on Trident submarines. [221432]

Mr. Hoon: As announced in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review (paragraph 67), we have only one Trident submarine on deterrent patrol at a time, carrying 48 warheads.

UK Nuclear Capability

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has assessed the merits of mounting nuclear warheads on cruise missiles as part of the UK's current or future nuclear deterrent. [221036]

Mr. Hoon: For details of an assessment made in 1980, I refer the hon. Member to Defence Open Government Document 80/23, published by the then Defence Secretary in July 1980, particularly paragraphs 35–43. Subsequently, as noted by the then Defence Secretary on 18 October 1993, *Official Report*, column 34, an air-to-surface missile was considered as a possible delivery system to replace the RAF's freefall nuclear bomb. No assessment of the possibility of cruise missiles forming a part of the United Kingdom's current nuclear deterrent capability has been made under the present Administration. Paragraph 3.11 of the 2003 Defence White Paper made clear that we would keep open the range of options for maintaining a nuclear deterrent capability in future until decisions are required.

Union Flag (Gibraltar)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reason the size of the Union flag flown on his Department's site on top of the Rock of Gibraltar has been reduced; and if he will ensure that the flag flown there is of the size flown previously. [220978]

Mr. Ingram: A smaller than usual sized flag has been flown from the top of the Department's site on the Rock of Gibraltar since Christmas 2001, after the previous flag blew away. British Forces Gibraltar have recently ordered, and are awaiting the delivery of, a larger flag.

US National Ignition Facility

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been invested to date by his Department in the US National Ignition Facility. [220103]

Mr. Hoon: The United Kingdom has spent $43.34 million to date against a total commitment of $46 million.

Vice Chief of Defence Staff

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what work is being undertaken in Vice Chief of Defence Staff Medium Workstrands; and if he will make a statement. [220832]

Mr. Ingram: In July 2004 the Ministry of Defence published 'Delivering Security in a Changing World (Future Capabilities)' (Cm 6269), which described the changes to the planned structure of the armed forces and the forward equipment plan flowing from the policy adjustments set out in the Defence White Paper of December 2003 (Cm 6041). The Vice Chief of Defence Staff is leading action to implement these changes and ensure the resultant benefits are delivered.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Cocaine (South America)

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his estimate is of the level of production of cocaine in each of the past 10 years in *(a)* Colombia, *(b)* Peru, *(c)* Bolivia and *(d)* the rest of South America. [220703]

Mr. Rammell: In its 2004 World Drug Report, the United Nations office on drugs and crime listed the following figures for potential cocaine manufacture.

Metric tonnes

	Bolivia	*Columbia*	*Peru*
1993	240	119	410
1994	255	201	435
1995	240	230	460
1996	215	300	435
1997	200	350	325
1998	150	435	240
1999	70	680	175
2000	43	69	141
2001	60	617	150
2002	60	580	160
2003	60	440	155

These figures are based on the amount of cocaine that can be produced from coca leaf grown in the country concerned.

Some coca cultivation has also been reported in Brazil, Panama and Venezuela, but it is thought to be relatively insignificant in comparison with the volumes produced in the Andean countries.

European Constitution

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* officials and *(b)* Ministers in his Department had with the organisation Britain in Europe regarding the question for the referendum on the European constitution. [217448]

Mr. MacShane: None.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department received *(a)* briefing, *(b)* research and *(c)* other submissions from the organisation Britain in Europe regarding the question in the referendum on the European constitution. [217449]

Mr. MacShane: No.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from what non-governmental *(a)* organisations and *(b)* individuals his Department received advice, market research or the results of opinion polling regarding the wording of the question in the referendum on the European constitution. [217450]

Mr. MacShane: None.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide a copy of the proposed European constitution for each household in the UK. [217677]

Mr. MacShane: There are no current plans for such a distribution, but the treaty, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's commentary upon it, are available free at www.europe.gov.uk. The full text and commentary have also been made available to central libraries, and are available to members of the public on request from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Oil for Food Programme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Governments of *(a)* France, *(b)* Russia and *(c)* China on (i) the Volcker investigation into the UN Oil for Food programme and (ii) the illegal movements of oil from Iraq prior to the invasion. [220824]

Mr. Rammell: The Government has had regular bilateral and multilateral discussions with France, Russia, China and other Security Council members about the establishment and ongoing work of the Independent Inquiry Committee (IIC) investigating the Oil for Food Programme, including its endorsement under resolution 1538 (21 April 2004).

Prior to the military action of 19 March 2003, the Government also regularly raised its concerns in the Security Council and bilaterally with other countries about illegal activities under the UN's Iraq sanctions regime, including the illicit smuggling of oil.

Poppy Cultivation

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to ensure that any reduction in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is not replaced by increased cultivation in other countries, with particular reference to Myanmar, Pakistan, Kazhakstan, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkemenistan and China. [220704]

Mr. Rammell: In addition to the UK's lead nation status on counter narcotics in Afghanistan, we are active around the world to increase international capacity to combat the production and illicit trade in drugs which pose a threat to the UK. Pakistan and Iran are two of the highest priority countries for UK assistance. The UK is also providing £1.3 million to build counter narcotics capacity in Tajikistan.

We take forward this work in full cooperation with international partners, in particular engagement with the European Commission and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Sudanese authorities concerning their seizure of the Anglican Church headquarters in Khartoum; and what discussions he has had with *(a)* Bishops of Khartoum and *(b)* their representatives on the matter. [220911]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 9 March 2005]*: On 20 May 2004, police entered the Episcopal Church of Sudan's (ECS) guesthouse in Khartoum (which also served as the provincial office) and ordered the eviction of ECS personnel and properties from the building. This followed a court order on an ownership dispute, in which it is alleged the serving Archbishop had sold the premises to a private businessman. The sale was challenged by the Church. The case is currently before the courts, with the next hearing due to be held on 15 March 2005. The noble Lord, Lord Carey of Clifton raised this matter with Sudanese Vice President Taha during a visit in January 2005. We will continue to follow this case and keep in regular contact with the ECS and representatives of all religious groups in Sudan.

Surplus Assets Sales

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the value of sales of surplus assets from his Department was in each year since 2000–01. [220963]

Mr. Rammell: Sales of fixed assets per the resource accounts were as follows:

£

	Proceeds
2000–01	19,236,000
2001–02	40,015,000
2002–03	13,437,000
2003–04	26,875,000

Suspected Terrorists

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government have received requests from a Department or Agency of the United States Administration to use United Kingdom *(a)* airports and *(b)* airspace to deliver suspected terrorists from one foreign country to another via the United Kingdom. [217487]

Mr. MacShane: No.

UK Nuclear Weapons

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list each multilateral negotiating forum in which United Kingdom nuclear weapons are under discussion pursuant to British obligations under Article 6 of the nuclear non proliferation treaty. [220640]

Mr. MacShane: None.

CABINET OFFICE

Butler Committee

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether all the Butler Committee recommendations concerning the proper recording and minuting of committee meetings have been implemented. [220375]

Mr. Miliband: Yes. The Cabinet Secretariat serves the Prime Minister and Ministers collectively, in particular by servicing Cabinet and Cabinet Committees. The Cabinet Secretariat's role is to put in place appropriate handling of committee business, such as the preparation of papers and minutes to ensure the effective functioning of the committee structure.

EU Rapid Reaction Civil Emergency Force

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have had with EU Governments regarding (A) the provision of a rapid reaction civil emergency force within the EU and (B) co-ordination measures needed to facilitate civil emergency planning; and if he will make a statement. [218890]

Mr. Miliband: Preliminary discussions on better co-ordination of resources within the EU to deal with emergencies and the outline of an Action Plan were discussed at an extra-ordinary meeting of the Council on 7 January. A detailed Action Plan was adopted at the meeting of the Council on 31 January. The Action Plan asks the Institutions of the European Union and the member states to discuss improvements to existing instruments for providing assistance in emergencies, including better co-ordination, and to discuss the setting up of a European rapid response capability including its relationship with the existing civil protection mechanism and EU humanitarian aid. The UK has, along with other member states, contributed ideas on how the EU might further improve its co-ordination of disaster response. These ideas have been discussed at various levels in the Council and its working groups, and between Capitals. The European Commission and Javier Solana are considering the ideas put forward and producing options papers for consideration and discussion by member states.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent on *(a)* provision

of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [213806]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office does not specifically incur any costs for the purpose of providing parking spaces for its employees. Some parking spaces are provided as part of rent paid for some leased office space.

Employees are personally responsible for meeting the cost of parking tickets and penalties. The only parking tickets and penalties incurred were by staff of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (and more specifically the Government Car Service) while undertaking their official duties within Government and the public sector. A sum of £3,610 was incurred in 2003–04. Figures for earlier years cannot be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Regional bodies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what regional *(a)* bodies, *(b)* institutions, *(c)* taskforces, *(d)* panels, *(e)* offices and *(f)* organisations the Government has established since May 1997 which are the responsibility of the Cabinet Office. [219945]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office has not established any regional bodies, institutions, taskforces, panels, offices or organisations since 1997. This reflects the nature of the Department's work.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Asbestos (Trains)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what part was played by the Department in the processing of train carriages containing asbestos in the Crosshill Quarry Site between November 2003 and June 2004; what method of processing was used; on what dates; and whether the Department has assessed the extent to which statutory obligations were adhered to by the asbestos processing company. [219540]

Angela Smith: The Department of the Environment played no part in the repositioning of the carriages at Crosshill. I understand that this work commenced before 19 December 2003 when the regulatory powers for waste management transferred from district councils to the Department's Environment and Heritage Service (EHS).

I understand that the original method of moving the carriages was modified as they were too heavy to be removed in one piece. The carriages were removed by cutting them into three sections using large mechanical shears. The work was undertaken by an operator trained in asbestos removal, who did not observe any asbestos when the work was being carried out.

The site was inspected by my waste management officials on 13 February 2004 and they saw no evidence of railway carriages or asbestos waste, findings reinforced by photographic and documentary evidence on file. The site is also subject to regulation by EHS under the terms of the Water (NI) Order 1999. In the course of a regulatory site visit on 24 February 2004, EHS Water Management officials noted "that no carriages were visible".

In addition, EHS has undertaken independent water quality and soil sampling tests at the site and concluded that there has been no breach of the water order consent nor evidence of contravention of waste licensing controls. The Department therefore has no grounds to take action against the company.

EHS will continue to monitor the Crosshill site for the presence of asbestos to ensure full compliance with the water order consent. Independent air quality monitoring will be a condition of any subsequent waste licence or permit application.

Cabra Towers

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made of the impact of the closure of the South Eastern education and library board's Cabra Towers outdoors facility on the local economy; what plans the Department of Education has for the facility; and if he will make a statement. [220535]

Mr. Gardiner: Provision of outdoor education facilities such as Cabra Towers is a matter for individual education and library boards. I understand that the South Eastern education and library board has not made an assessment on the impact of the closure of Cabra Towers on the local economy and that the board's considerations are based on the costs of maintaining and refurbishing the building and on the board's ability to offer the services delivered through Cabra in a more efficient manner. I also understand that a decision has not yet been taken to close the facility and that the board is currently considering a number of options which will ensure that there are no compulsory redundancies if a subsequent decision to close is taken.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what services are provided by the Cabra Towers outdoor facility; which of these services are classed by his Department as front-line services delivered for children; and what plans the Department of Education has for the provision of services to children in the event of the closure of Cabra Towers. [220536]

Mr. Gardiner: Cabra Towers is an outdoor education centre which focuses on the delivery of outdoor and environmental education to the primary sector. The Department recognises that outdoor activity centres such as Cabra Towers are a valuable educational resource and they enhance both curriculum delivery and the learning experience. However, the relevant aspects for the statutory curriculum can be delivered successfully without availing of the services of such centres and ultimately it is the responsibility of individual schools to decide which educational resources they use. The South Eastern education and library board is currently exploring a range of options which will ensure continued provision of these services

in the board's other outdoor education centres, should a decision be taken by them to close Cabra Towers.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the schools that have made use of the Cabra Towers outdoor facility in each of the last five years were from the *(a)* controlled sector and *(b)* maintained sector. [220537]

Mr. Gardiner: The relevant details are set out in the following table:

Statistics for usage of Cabra Towers by maintained and controlled schools for the period 1999–2004

	Controlled	*Maintained*	*Total*	*Controlled (percentage)*	*Maintained (percentage)*
September 1999 to June 2000	25	11	36	69	31
September 2000 to June 2001	24	8	32	75	25
September 2001 to June 2002	31	10	41	76	24
September 02—June 03	27	6	33	82	18
September 2003 to June 2004	29	9	38	76	24
September 2004 to June 2005 (TBC)	27	10	37	73	27

The figures for September 2004 to June 2005 are based on bookings for the period after 4 March

Domestic Violence

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female victims of domestic violence in Northern Ireland have been recorded in each year since 1997. [220633]

Mr. Pearson: The figures requested are set out in the following table.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland currently record statistics in respect of the number of domestic violence incidents attended and the number of incidents where offences have been disclosed.

The Police Service introduced Domestic Violence Officers in September 1997 and it is after this point that consistent and reliable data became available. The recording systems were developed between 1997 and 2000 and it is after this time that further reliable information became available in respect of victim gender.

Previously the Police Service recorded all domestic violence incidents manually with only crimes being electronically recorded. This has recently changed and all incidents, crimes and non-crimes are now recorded on the Integrated Crime Information System.

Table of domestic violence incidents/offence 1997–2004

	Domestic violence		*Victims*	
	Incidents	*Offences*	*Females*	*Males*
1997–98	10,367	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998–99	14,889	6,761	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	15,269	7,558	n/a	n/a
2000–01	14,325	7,254	6,300	908
2001–02	14,937	7,814	6,659	1,041
2002–03	15,512	7,961	7,627	1,414
2003–04	16,926	8,565	7,103	1,273

n/a = not available

Inward Investment (Strangford)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much inward investment there has been in Strangford during the last four years; how many new businesses have opened in this period; and what plans Invest Northern Ireland have to promote further investment in the area. [220752]

Mr. Gardiner: During the four year period 2000–01 to 2003–04 there were four offers of assistance to inward investment projects within Strangford parliamentary constituency area. The total amount offered to these was £1.3 million, contributing towards a total planned investment of £5.5 million. This assistance is generally drawn down over a number of years.

In addition, there were 350 offers of assistance made to new start-up businesses within the constituency. The value of assistance offered to these start-ups was just over £1 million, contributing towards an estimated total planned investment of £6.7 million.

Since being established in April 2002, Invest NI has been actively working with over 25 client companies in the constituency, providing them with access to a full range of support programmes, a number of projects in these companies are currently at differing stages of development. Invest NI owns 10.6 acres of land in the constituency which is available for industrial development use and its local office network also continues to actively promote enterprise and business start-up in the area through partnerships with local business development bodies and the district councils.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214894]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The cost of staff mobile phone bills to the Northern Ireland Office (excluding its agencies and NDPBs) since 1997 were as follows:

£

	Cost of staff mobile phone bills
1997–98	74,791
1998–99	102,673
1999–2000	100,245
2000–01	100,087
2001–02	90,538
2002–03	113,697
2003–04	129,203

Provisional IRA

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the amount of money earned by the Provisional IRA in advising *(a)* FARC terrorists in Colombia and *(b)* ETA terrorists in Spain on their activities. [219673]

Mr. Pearson: Information about the links between the Provisional IRA and *(a)* FARC and *(b)* ETA is only available from intelligence sources and it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment.

Sea Trout Fishing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Environment and Heritage Service has made of the viability of *(a)* a free-for-all approach to sea trout fishing and *(b)* the introduction of a permit system for sea trout fishing for Strangford Lough; and if he will make a statement. [202946]

Angela Smith: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is responsible for inland fisheries matters, including sea trout in Northern Ireland. The other Departments referred to in the question have no responsibility for such matters.

There has been no assessment of the viability of a free-for-all approach to sea trout fishing in Strangford Lough. Any person fishing in the Lough for sea trout requires an angling licence issued by the Fisheries Conservancy Board. The licence is required to ensure the regulation of fishing and preservation of good order among those fishing. An assessment of the viability of a permit system has been carried out, which indicates that:

1. Fishing in the sea is a public right and is free of charge.
2. There is no legislative provision to allow the issue of permits for sea trout angling in Strangford Lough.
3. The Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 would need to be amended to allow the introduction of a permit system.
4. Persons currently fishing for sea trout in the Lough could challenge the introduction of a permit system under the European Convention on Human Rights with regard to their right to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions and the deprivation of those possessions.
5. A precedent would be created which could impact on the public right to fish in other sea areas around the coast of Northern Ireland.

The Department has no plans to amend the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 to introduce a permit system in Strangford Lough. There are ongoing discussions regarding the sea trout permit issue and the development of Strangford Lough as a sea trout fishery.

Student Support

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent change there has been in the provision of financial support through the education and library boards to students undertaking postgraduate diplomas at universities in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [218311]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department for Employment and Learning has announced that funding for discretionary awards for postgraduate diplomas will be discontinued from the 2005–06 academic year. At the same time, however, stipends for students on higher level postgraduate courses, masters and PhDs have increased from £9,000 pa in 2003–04 to £12,000 proposed for 2005–06, in line with the recommendations of the Government's Science, Engineering and Technology Strategy, "Investing in Innovation".

Alzheimer's Disease

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will meet local representatives of the Alzheimer's Society to discuss the implications of the recent National Institute for Clinical Excellence recommendation that certain Alzheimer's drugs be withdrawn from the NHS. [220461]

Angela Smith: National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance only applies to England and Wales. At present there is a consultation process under way on use of medicines for Alzheimer's disease in the NHS. In such circumstances, it would be better to defer a meeting with local representatives of the Alzheimer's Society.

Bereavement Care

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding was made available by his Department to Cruse Bereavement Care in each of the past five years for which figures are available; and what plans he has to increase the funding. [219767]

Angela Smith: Departmental funding to Cruse Bereavement Care in each of the last five years was:

	Amount (£)
2004–05	45,924
2003–04	44,804
2002–03	43,076
2001–02	42,025
2000–01	41,000

There are no plans to increase the funding allocation to Cruse Bereavement Care other than a possible uplift to reflect cost of living.

Children's Fund

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether all projects already established through the Children's Fund will be sustained following the withdrawal of the fund. [217770]

Angela Smith: The Department does not have the resources available to sustain the projects currently under the Children Fund once the funding cycle is completed. All organisations in receipt of this funding were aware of the fixed term nature of the funding and it was a criterion of the funding arrangements that there needed to be an exit strategy to identify alternative sources of money if the projects were to be sustained once the funding cycle was completed. It is not known how many of the projects have secured alternative funding.

Corporate Manslaughter

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will bring forward legislation to create an offence of corporate manslaughter in Northern Ireland. [211722]

Mr. Spellar: The Government are firmly committed to reforming the law on corporate manslaughter and when proposals are published for England and Wales we intend to consult on the proposal that a Bill's provisions should extend to Northern Ireland.

Crohn's Disease

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children in Northern Ireland are diagnosed as suffering from Crohn's disease; what treatment provision is available to them; what the average cost of treatment is per child; and what provision is available for the counselling of parents of children suffering from the disease. [216927]

Angela Smith: Information on the prevalence of Crohn's disease in children is not available. Some children with Crohn's disease receive treatment from clinicians at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children; with support from the adult service. Children with conditions requiring access to a paediatric gastroenterology service are being referred to hospitals in Great Britain. In the 2003–04 financial year the average cost per inpatient episode with a primary diagnosis of Crohn's disease was £1,692 and the average cost per day-case attendance was £355. No special provision is made for counselling parents of Crohn's sufferers, other than the normal access that they have to their child's paediatrician.

Planning (Strangford)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff in his Department work on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan and the Newtownards area plans; and what progress has been made in reducing time taken to consider planning applications in Strangford. [220753]

Angela Smith: The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan team comprises 31 staff in total. There are currently 13 staff working on the draft Ards and Down Area Plan 2015. It is not possible to provide processing times for planning applications within the Strangford Area as processing times are collated on a district council basis. Nevertheless, the Planning Service is committed in its Modernising Planning Processes (MPP) change programme, through a wide variety of projects and initiatives, to improving the processing times for all planning applications.

Psychiatry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* admissions and *(b)* bed days resulting from admissions of young people under the age of 18 years who were admitted to adult psychiatric wards there have been in the Province in each of the last five years. [206179]

Angela Smith *[pursuant to the reply, 13 January 2005, Official Report, c. 657W]:* The figure given for *(b)* number of bed days in 2003–04 was incorrect. The correct information is as follows:

The number of *(a)* admissions and *(b)* bed days resulting from those admissions of young people under the age of 18 years who were admitted to adult psychiatric wards in the Province in each of the last five years is detailed in the following table.

	(a) Admissions	*(b) Number of bed days*
2003–04	173	5,097
2002–03	194	5,401
2001–02	183	6,346
2000–01	198	6,551
1999–2000	196	7,522

Notes:

1. Figures relate to financial years except for one trust who provided figures for calendar years and for 2004 to 30 November.
2. If a patient was admitted in one year and their episode carried into the next year the number of bed days are attributed to the year in which the admission took place and the admission is only counted once in the year it occurred.
3. If a patient is admitted when aged less than 18 years and the patient turns 18 years of age during their episode, bed days after the patient turns 18 years of age are included in total length of stay.
4. Where possible the number of bed days was calculated excluding days on leave, however one trust was unable to exclude days on leave from their figures.
5. Figures include patients admitted to psychiatric wards in Muckamore Abbey hospital, which normally caters for learning disabled patients.

Source:

HSS trusts

Sewerage

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what methodology was used to form the equality impact assessment's view that *(a)* Protestants and *(b)* Unionists are likely to bear a disproportionately greater burden of the domestic and sewerage bill under the Government Reform of Water and Sewerage Services; by what percentage he estimates they will be disproportionately affected; and by how much he estimates this would affect the income of the average family in the course of a year, based on each broad policy option. [221339]

Mr. Spellar: A spatial analysis methodology was used in the recently published draft Integrated Impact Assessment to assess the equality impact of proposals for domestic charging under the reform of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland. Analysis of impacts in respect of religious belief was performed at electoral ward level using "community background" data from the 2001 census. Analysis of impacts in respect of political opinion was performed at district council level using Electoral Office data based on first preference votes at the 2001 local elections. These data were combined with information regarding recent house sales from the Valuation and Lands Agency. The conclusion that Protestants and Unionists are likely to bear a disproportionately greater burden of domestic water and sewerage charges reflects the fact that there is a markedly higher representation of these groups in those areas of Northern Ireland with higher domestic property prices.

This methodology allows broad assessments to be made, however data are not available on individual properties to enable calculations to be made of the likely average water and sewerage charge for Protestant and Unionist households. Accordingly, it is not possible to estimate the percentage by which Protestant and Unionist households may be disproportionately affected, nor by how much in relation to the average family income for each broad policy option.

Social Workers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many social workers are employed in Northern Ireland; and how many vacancies for social workers there are in each health trust within the Province. [220660]

Angela Smith: Information is only available in respect of Social Work staff working within the Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services.

The information requested is provided in the tables as follows.

Social work staff employed by the NI Health and Personal Social Services as at 28 February 2005

Grade	*Headcount*	*WTE*
Qualified staff in social work posts	2,656	2,375.49
Unqualified staff in social work posts [1]	427	346.31
Total	3,083	2,721.80

[1] Homefirst Community Health and Social Services Trust were unable to provide the number of unqualified staff in social work posts in the specified timescale.

Social work staff vacancies in the NI Health and Personal Social Services by Trust as at 28 February 2005

HPSS Organisation	*Headcount*	*WTE*
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	7	7.00
Causeway HSS Trust	5	5.00
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust [1]	4	4.00
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	0	0.00
Down Lisburn HSS Trust [2]	n/a	9.10
Foyle Community HSS Trust	6	5.50
Homefirst Community HSS Trust [3]	n/a	n/a
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	2	2.00
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	8	7.50
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	11	11.00
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	11	11.00
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	3	2.80
Total	57	64.90

[1] Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust is the only Acute Hospital Trust who directly employs Social Services staff.
[2] Down Lisburn Trust could only provide a whole-time equivalent number of vacancies.
[3] Homefirst Community HSS Trust was unable to provide the number of Social Work vacancies in the specified timescale.
Note:
Temporary vacancies have been excluded from the table. There were a total of 13 temporary vacancies (13 WTE); Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust have 10 temporary posts, Causeway HSS Trust have two and Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust have one.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

European Constitution

Mr. Brady: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list *(a)* individuals and *(b)* organisations that were consulted on the drafting of the question to be asked in the proposed referendum on the EU constitution. [216134]

Mr. Leslie: The question was drafted bearing in mind the Electoral Commission's published guidelines, which are designed to ensure that a question is intelligible, and there was some discussion with the Electoral Commission about the application of those guidelines. The Electoral Commission's published views on Lord Blackwell's Private Member's Bill of July 2004 were also taken into account. No other non-governmental organisations or other public bodies were consulted. The wording of the question was agreed collectively at ministerial level.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what advice was received from the Electoral Commission on the referendum question on the EU constitution; and if he will publish the advice. [217185]

Mr. Leslie: The Electoral Commission published their comments on the intelligibility of the question on 3 February 2005.

The question was drafted bearing in mind the Electoral Commission's published guidelines, which are designed to ensure that a question is intelligible, and there was some discussion with the Electoral Commission about the application of those guidelines. The Electoral Commission's published views on Lord Blackwell's Private Member's Bill of July 2004 were also taken into account.

We have no plans to publish material relating to the formulation of the Government's policy on the terms of the question.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many courts were held each week at Chorley magistrates court in each month in 2004; [220891]

(2) how many cases were transferred from Chorley magistrates court to other courts in 2004; and for what reasons; [220892]

(3) how many court cases have been heard outside Chorley since 1 January where the defendant resided in the Chorley constituency; [220893]

(4) what guidance he issues on the appropriate number of clerks to run a fully operational magistrates court; [220894]

(5) how many clerks are working in magistrates courts in South Lancashire. [220895]

Mr. Leslie: The information is as follows:

(1) Actual figures are not available, however, a typical weekly pattern for Chorley magistrates court in 2004 was as follows:

Court	*Number of sittings per week*
Adult	14
Youth	1-2
Licensing	1
Family	[1]1
Local authority	1
Private prosecutions	[1]1

[1] Per month.

(2) Actual figures for cases transferred from Chorley magistrates are not available. I am advised that trial cases may be sent following consultation with both parties to either Ormskirk magistrates court or Leyland magistrates court if a trial can be listed earlier.

(3) Actual figures for court cases heard outside Chorley are not available. I am advised that most cases when the defendant resides in Chorley are heard in Chorley.

(4) There is no guidance issued centrally and this is a matter for the Lancashire magistrates courts committee (MCC) to determine, as it is with each of the other 41 MCCs in England and Wales.

(5) There are seven full time legal advisers, two-part time legal advisers, a deputy clerk and a countywide justices' clerk in South Lancashire.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Dementia Benefits

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what benefits are payable for people suffering from dementia; and if he will make a statement. [221364]

Maria Eagle: We do not pay benefits based on medical diagnosis.

Incapacity benefit is intended to provide a source of income for sick and disabled people of working age who are unable to work.

Entitlement to disability living allowance is based on walking difficulties and/or the need for personal care which results from severe disability. The customer's medical condition is not, necessarily, the key factor. Rather it is the disablement that results from it and the effects of that disablement.

For those over 65 years of age, attendance allowance is available for anyone who needs frequent attention or continual supervision in order to avoid substantial danger to themselves or others. As with disability living allowance, the customer's medical condition is not, necessarily, the key factor.

For those of working age, we are ensuring that the benefit system encourages and promotes work where possible. However, we recognise that those with the most severe conditions may never be able to work, and benefits provide security for those for whom work is not an option.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee for the Implementation of the Action Programme to Tackle Discrimination and (ii) Restricted Committee of the Safety and Health Commission for the Mining and Other Extractive Industries met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218314]

Jane Kennedy: The EU Committee for Implementation of the Action Programme to Promote Gender Equality meets twice a year in Brussels. The last three meetings were held on 11 November 2003 (during the Italian presidency), 20 July 2004 and 15 October 2004 (both of which were in the Dutch presidency). There was no meeting during the Irish presidency. An official from DTI attended the last two meetings in 2004.

The Restricted Committee of the Safety and Health Commission for the Mining and Other Extractive Industries met once, in Luxembourg on 3 December 2003, during the Italian presidency of the EU. The Committee did not meet during the Irish and Dutch presidencies. A member of the Health and Safety Executive represented the UK Government at the 3 December 2003 meeting.

There have been three Command Papers produced on prospects for the European Union which include highlights from the presidencies in question—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005. They are available in the Library and on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the (i) Committee of the European Social Fund and (ii) Technical Adaption Committee on the Introduction of Measures to Encourage Improvements in the Safety and Health of Workers at Work met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [218456]

Jane Kennedy: An official from the Department for Work and Pensions represented the UK at the European Social Fund Advisory Committee on 26 September 2003 and 5 December 2003 during the Italian presidency; on 16 March 2004, 13 May 2004 and 18 June 2004 during the Irish presidency; and on 24 September 2004 and 23 November 2004 during the Dutch presidency. All of these meetings were held in Brussels.

During the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies the Technical Adaption Committee on the Introduction of Measures to Encourage Improvements in the Safety and Health of Workers at Work did not meet. At meetings of the Technical Adaption Committee on the Introduction of Measures to Encourage Improvements in the Safety and Health of Workers at Work, the UK representatives would be drawn from staff with the relevant technical and policy responsibilities within the Health and Safety Executive.

There have been three Command Papers produced on prospects for the European Union which include highlights from the presidencies in question—Cm6174 laid in April 2004, Cm6310 laid in September 2004 and Cm6450 laid in February 2005. They are available in the Library and on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk/commandpapers.

European Agency for Health and Safety at Work

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the activity of the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work in the UK in the last 12 months; and if he will list its publications and newsletters published over that period. [215203]

Jane Kennedy: The activities of European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in the UK are carried out by the Health and Safety Executive, acting as the Agency's Focal Point.

The HSE maintains the UK Focal Point website, which provides information on health and safety topics and links to other relevant organisations.

In the last 12 months, the UK Focal Point coordinated the national activities for the European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2004. This included, for example, distributing the Agency's Euro Week publications and selecting a UK nominee for the Agency's Good Practice Awards.

List of European Agency publications over the period:

2003 annual report: "Providing the insights for a safer and more productive working environment in Europe"

A summary of the 2003 annual report

CD ROM: "Agency information 2002/2003"

European Agency Magazine, issue 7: "Actions to improve safety and health in construction"

European Agency Work Programme for 2005

Rolling Work Programme for 2005–2008

Information reports:

Issue 107: "SME Funding Scheme 2002–2003"

Issue 108: "Prevention of risks in construction in practice"

Issue 210: "Corporate social responsibility and safety and health at work"

Issue 211: "Quality of the working environment and productivity"

Issue 313: "Mainstreaming occupational safety and health into education"

Issue 314: "Achieving better safety and health in construction"

Forums:

Issue 11: "Monitoring occupational safety and health in the European Union"

Issue 12: "Working with dangerous substances: The European policy challenge"

Factsheets:

No. 48: "Health and safety on small construction sites"

No. 49: "Safe roofwork"

No. 50: "Management of noise in construction"

No. 51: "Asbestos in construction"

No. 52: "Mainstreaming occupational safety and health into education"

No. 53: "Ensuring the health and safety of workers with disabilities"

No. 54: "Corporate social responsibility and occupational safety and health"

No. 55: "Achieving better safety and health in construction"

Bilbao Declaration—'Building in Safety'

European Week poster: "Building in Safety"

European Week leaflet: "Counting down to the European Week for Safety and Health at Work"

European Week Flier: "Good Practice Awards 2004—call for nominations"

There were no newsletters published by the Agency during this period.

Social Fund Applications

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Social Fund *(a)* Community Care Grant, *(b)* Crisis Loan and *(c)* Budgeting Loan applications were received in each of the social fund districts and Jobcentre Plus districts covering Tower Hamlets in each of the last five years; how many were successful in each case; and what the total expenditure was in each case. [221045]

Mr. Pond: The borough of Tower Hamlets was previously in City East Social Fund District and is now in City and East London Jobcentre Plus District. The information is in the tables.

Community Care Grants award

	Applications	*Initial awards*	*Total expenditure (£)*
City East Social Fund District			
1999–2000	2,400	Not available	440,000
2000–01	2,310	670	443,000
2001–02	2,360	900	492,000
2002–03	2,700	1,020	558,000
2003–04 to August	1,150	540	344,000
Area covered by interim City and East London Jobcentre Plus District			
2003–04 September to November	2,880	1,100	725,000
Area covered by City and East London Jobcentre Plus District			
2003–04 December to March	3,650	1,460	930,000

Crisis Loans award

	Applications	*Initial awards*	*Total expenditure (£)*
City East Social Fund District			
1999–2000	5,530	Not available	400,000
2000–01	8,570	5,360	524,000
2001–02	7,320	3,880	407,000
2002–03	7,580	4,740	522,000
2003–04 to August	3,100	2,150	241,000
Area covered by interim City and East London Jobcentre Plus District			
2003–04 September to November	4,770	3,200	349,000
Area covered by City and East London Jobcentre Plus District			
2003–04 December to March	6,330	4,330	453,000

Budgeting Loans award

	Applications	*Initial awards*	*Total expenditure (£)*
1999–2000	7,250	Not available	2,275,000
2000–01	7,730	5,530	2,658,000
2001–02	7,880	5,790	2,825,000
2002–03	8,450	6,030	2,822,000
2003–04 to August	3,450	2,530	1,230,000
Area covered by interim City and East London Jobcentre Plus District			
2003–04 September to November	8,820	5,990	3,011,000
Area covered by City and East London Jobcentre Plus District			
2003–04 December to March	10,370	7,740	3,836,000

Notes:
1. Interim City and East London Jobcentre Plus District was formed in September 2003 by merging City East and Newham Social Fund Districts, together with most of Hackney and Islington Social Fund District and part of Euston Social Fund District. This District was enlarged in December 2003 by the addition of a small area previously in Hackney and Islington Social Fund District to form City and East London Jobcentre Plus District.
2. For each type of award, the tables refer to three different areas, as such data is not comparable.
3. Initial awards do not include awards made after review.
4. Total expenditure does include awards made after review.
5. Numbers of applications and awards are rounded to the nearest 10. Total expenditure is rounded to the nearest £1,000.

Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Targets

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the public service agreement target to reduce the number of children in low-income households by at least 25 per cent. by 2004 was met. [220027]

Jane Kennedy: 2004 figures are not yet available. The most recent assessment of this PSA target was published in December 2004 in the Department's autumn performance report, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to end child poverty by 2020 will be met; [220112]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to modernise welfare delivery so as to improve the accessibility, accuracy and value for money of services to customers, including employers; [220123]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote work as the best form of welfare for people of working age, while protecting the position of those in greatest need; [220141]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to combat poverty for today's and tomorrow's pensioners; [220145]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to promote security and independence for today's and tomorrow's pensioners. [220146]

Jane Kennedy: These are Objectives; progress towards their underpinning PSA targets was published in December 2004 in the Department's Autumn Performance Report, a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to halve the number of children in low-income households between 1998–99 and 2010–11 will be met; [220113]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the proportion of parents with care on income support and income based job-seekers' allowance who receive maintenance for their children to 65 per cent. by March 2008 will be met; [220115]

(3) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the proportion of children living in workless households by 5 per cent. between spring 2006 and spring 2008 will be met; [220120]

(4) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to be paying pension credit to at least 3.2 million pensioner households by 2008 will be met; [220122]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to ensure that customers receive a high quality service, including high levels of accuracy; [220124]

(6) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve housing benefit administration; [220126]

(7) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the average time taken to process a housing benefit claim to no more than 48 days nationally by March 2008 will be met; [220127]

(8) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the average time taken to process a housing benefit claim to no more than 55 days across the bottom 15 per cent. of local authorities by March 2008 will be met; [220128]

(9) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of cases in the deregulated private rented sector in receipt of local housing allowance to 740,000 by 2008 will be met; [220129]

(10) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to increase the number of cases in receipt of local housing allowance where the rent is paid directly to the claimant to 470,000 by 2008 will be met; [220130]

(11) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to improve health and safety outcomes in Great Britain by 2008 will be met; [220143]

(12) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve the control of risks in the workplace; [220144]

(13) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to improve working age individuals' awareness of their retirement provision such that by 2007–08 15.4 million individuals are regularly issued a pension forecast will be met; [220147]

(14) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to improve working age individuals' awareness of their retirement provision such that by 2007–08 60,000 successful pension traces are undertaken a year will be met; [220148]

Jane Kennedy: These targets were agreed as part of the 2004 Spending Review which covers the period 2005–08. It is too early to assess whether these targets will be achieved. Progress will be reported in future in the annual Departmental Report and Autumn Performance Report.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to double the proportion of parents with care on income support and income based jobseekers's allowance who receive maintenance for their children to 60 per cent. by March 2006 will be met; [220114]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the employment rate and decrease the unemployment rate by Spring 2006; [220116]

(3) what recent progress has made towards the Public Service Agreement target to increase the employment rate among disadvantaged areas and groups by spring 2006; [220117]

(4) what recent progress has made towards the Public Service Agreement target to reduce significantly the difference between the employment rate of disadvantaged groups and the overall rate; [220118]

(5) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the proportion of children in households with no one in work by 6.5 per cent. by spring 2006 will be met; [220119]

(6) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to be paying pension credit to at least three million pensioner households by 2006 will be met; [220121]

(7) what recent progress has been made towards the Public Service Agreement target to improve delivery of his Department's services; [220131]

(8) what recent assessment has been made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce losses from fraud and error for people of working age in income support and jobseeker's allowance by 50 per cent. by 2006 will be met; [220132]

(9) what recent assessment he has made of whether the Public Service Agreement target to reduce losses from fraud and error in housing benefit by 25 per cent. by 2006 will be met. [220134]

Jane Kennedy: The most recent assessment of these PSA targets was published in December 2004 in the department's Autumn Performance Report, a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent assessment he has made of whether the public service agreement target to deliver welfare payments into the bank accounts of 85 per cent. of customers by 2005 will be met. [220125]

Jane Kennedy: This PSA target has been met.

I refer the hon. Member to the oral answers given on 24 January 2005, to the hon. Member for South-West Bedfordshire (Andrew Selous), *Official Report*, column 7, and to the hon. Member for Newark (Patrick Mercer), *Official Report*, column 20.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to improve rights and opportunities for disabled people in a fair and inclusive society; [220149]

(2) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to improve the rights of disabled people and remove barriers to their participation in society by March 2008; [220150]

(3) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to increase awareness of the rights of disabled people by March 2008; [220151]

(4) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to increase the employment rate of disabled people by March 2008; [220152]

(5) what recent progress has been made towards the public service agreement target to reduce significantly the difference between the employment rate of disabled people and the overall rate by March 2008. [220153]

Jane Kennedy: These targets were agreed as part of the 2004 spending review which covers the period 2005–08. No assessment of progress against these targets has yet been made. However, progress against the similar SR2002 targets was published in December 2004 in the Department's autumn performance report, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Unemployment Programme

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department has spent on programmes to help the unemployed move back to work in each year since 1997; if he will list the programmes involved, specifying the amounts spent on each

programme in each year since 1997; and what percentage of each amount was spent in Scotland. [211989]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is in the tables.

Expenditure on labour market programmes for the unemployed

	1997-98			1998-99		
	Total spend	Spend in Scotland[1]		Total spend	Spend in Scotland[1]	
Programme[2]	£ million[3,4]	£ million[3,4]	Percentage	£ million[3,4]	£ million[3,4]	Percentage
New Deal for 18–25 +	12	0	0	179	10	6
Work Based Learning for Adults[5]	382	0	0	264	0	0
Project Work	41	0	0	8	0	0
Jobsearch Provision[6]	39	3	9	30	3	11
Employment Zones	0	0	0	1	0	0
Others[7]	21	0	1	13	0	2
Total	494	4	1	495	13	3

	1999-2000			2000-01		
	Total spend	Spend in Scotland[1]		Total spend	Spend in Scotland[1]	
Programme[2]	£ million[3,4]	£ million[3,4]	Percentage	£ million[3,4]	£ million[3,4]	Percentage
New Deal for 18–25 +	353	34	10	335	37	11
Work Based Learning for Adults[5]	264	0	0	2	0	2
Project Work	0	0	0	275	0	0
Jobsearch Provision[6]	32	3	11	30	3	12
Employment Zones	1	0	0	54	6	11
Others[7]	12	0	1	7	0	3
Total	657	37	6	703	47	7

	1999-2000			2000-01		
	Total spend	Spend in Scotland[1]		Total spend	Spend in Scotland[1]	
Programme[2]	£ million[3,4]	£ million[3,4]	Percentage	£ million[3,4]	£ million[3,4]	Percentage
New Deal for 18–25 +	359	36	10	292	42	14
New Deal 50 +	2	0	6	3	0	6
Work Based Learning for Adults[5]	168	1	0	123	0	0
Jobsearch Provision[6]	19	3	17	16	3	21
Employment Zones	93	10	11	86	8	10
Others[7]	7	0	4	11	0	4
Total	648	50	8	531	55	10

	2003-04		
	Total spend	Spend in Scotland[1]	
Programme[2]	£ million[3,4]	£ million[3,4]	Percentage
New Deal for 18–25 +	352	42	12
New Deal 50 +	3	0	6
Work Based Learning for Adults[5]	160	0	0
Jobsearch Provision[6]	19	3	15
Employment Zones	79	10	12
Ambitions	8	0	6
Others[7]	18	1	7
Total	639	57	9

[1] Includes expenditure incurred by Employment Service's Jobcentre Plus' "Office for Scotland" region. Figures exclude expenditure controlled centrally within the Employment Service Jobcentre Plus and DWP DfEE, and expenditure that has been devolved to the Scottish Executive.

[2] The programmes exclude initiatives not primarily aimed at the unemployed.

[3] Figures rounded to nearest million; figures may not sum due to rounding.

[4] Figures comprise DEL programme expenditure only.

[5] Called Training for Work in Scotland. Figures for Scotland excluded as this is a devolved responsibility.

[6] Jobsearch provision includes expenditure on Jobclubs, Jobplan and Jobsearch.

[7] Includes expenditure on Jobfinders Grant, Travel to Interview Scheme, Advisers Discretionary Fund, Worktrials, Job Transition Service/Rapid Response Service, Workwise/Worklink, Jobmatch, Restart, Employment Retention and Advancement Demonstration, and associated programme expenditure (e.g. marketing and research).